

# Louisiana Independent Pharmacies Association

## What's New and What to Watch

### LIPA Newsletter:

Bringing you the latest news and information concerning independent pharmacies and the profession at-large....



### COVID Booster Vaccines in Long Term Care Facilities

Approximately 80 independent pharmacies in Louisiana have been paired with one or more skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, or I/DD group homes to administer onsite COVID booster vaccines for residents and staff who received their second dose of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccine six or more months ago. **If you have not already made arrangements for the first onsite clinic at LTC facilities, please reach out to them immediately, as LDH has stipulated that the initial clinic should be held within two weeks of vaccine approval (October 22 was approval date for Moderna boosters).**

Please let LIPA know if you are having any issues with onsite boosters at LTC facilities or we can assist you in any way. Have you already completed your first COVID booster vaccine clinic? We expect to see a survey requesting information on booster vaccines going out from LDH this coming week.

LIPA is continuing to work with smaller assisted living facilities and group homes to pair them with an independent pharmacy vaccine partner. Keep in mind that you can bill Medicare and Louisiana Medicaid for home administration of booster vaccines at both assisted living facilities and I/DD group homes (but not skilled nursing homes) in certain situations.

As a reminder, the LIPA office has additional doses of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Please contact us should you need additional doses for your pharmacy. The LIPA staff is ready to assist you at (225) 308-2030.

### Great COVID Vaccine “Algorithm” Resource, Courtesy of APhA

With COVID booster shots now approved—in addition to initial first/second doses and third “additional” doses for persons with compromised immune systems and differences in dosage, COVID vaccines are getting increasingly complex. Here is the link to the best resource we have

seen to help you keep track of “who is eligible for what” that was created by APhA and just updated this week: [APhA COVID Vaccine Algorithm 1021\\_web\\_FINAL.pdf](#) You may want to print it and refer to it.

## **Louisiana Medicaid Reimbursement for Booster Vaccines**

As some of you have likely already discovered, some Louisiana Medicaid MCOs are still completing changes in their claims system that are necessary to correctly pay claims for COVID booster doses. All Medicaid MCOs should have their systems updates completed by November 15<sup>th</sup>.

LIPA has been having discussions with LDH regarding the role independent pharmacies can play in increasing COVID vaccine rates for Medicaid enrollees of all ages—age 5 and older for now—in our state. Stay tuned for more news on this topic.

## **Zoom Presentation on Vantage MA Plan & DeSiard Pharmacy Network **This Sunday Afternoon****

LIPA is hosting a Zoom webinar this Sunday afternoon (October 31<sup>st</sup>) at 3:00 PM during which Vantage Health Plan, a statewide Medicare Advantage (MA) Plan headquartered in Monroe, will provide information about DeSiard Pharmacy Network (DSN), their “DIR-free” Medicare Advantage Plan and preferred network of independent pharmacy providers that is available in Louisiana for 2022. The information was presented at the LIPA Board Meeting last Friday, and because of the interest by pharmacists in attendance in “hearing more”, LIPA is providing this opportunity for the entire membership to get information about the Plan and ask questions. DPN indicated they are working to build lasting relationships with select independent pharmacies while working with providers to improve medication adherence and other positive health outcomes for our members. You can link to a one pager with more information [here](#)

Here is the information you will need to join the Zoom meeting:

- **Join:** [Zoom Link - DPN](#)
- **Dial:** 312-626-6799
  - **Meeting ID:** 827 0405 7225
  - **Passcode:** 793907

## **Making the Most of Medicare Annual Open Enrollment Opportunity**

We are already two weeks into the Medicare (and Medicaid) Annual Open Enrollment Periods when members can change to a different health plan that better meets their needs without the need for a “good” reason. If you have not yet started assisting your customers in comparing plans and choosing a plan for 2022 **it is not too late**. The overwhelming majority of Medicare and Medicaid

enrollees do not proactively compare plans—despite the massive marketing efforts underway—and those who do are prone to waiting until near the deadline (December 7<sup>th</sup> for Medicare and November 30<sup>th</sup> for Medicare. Furthermore, people can change plans multiple plans during the Open Enrollment Period, with the last plan they select being the Plan they will be enrolled in effective 1/1/22.

It is well documented that DIR fees differ greatly depending on the health plan and that in many cases, switching to a Medicare Drug (Part D) Plan or Medicare Advantage (Part C) that uses a different PBM can result in lower co-pays for your patients while at the same time, reducing your DIR fees. That is what we call a “win-win”.

### **Tools to Help Independent Pharmacies Help Patient Compare Health Plans**

So where do you begin? How do you go about developing a strategy? One thing you will want to do is be strategic in identifying patients to reach out to and offer plan comparison services rather than using a “scattershot” approach. Amplicare’s Match software uses your pharmacy’s data and their knowledge of Medicare Drug Plans and Medicare Advantage Plans’ formularies and contract PBMs for 2022 to help you target potential “win-win” patients. Their Match comparison tool is the only comprehensive Medicare Plan comparison tool out there and formerly known as iMedicare) Amplicare notes that as few as ‘8 or 9” patients switching health plans can make a noticeable difference in your pharmacy’s bottom line, using and collection of Medicare resources, including guides and videos that explain everything from Medicare Essentials and Medicare Part D to plan options and when to enroll. One of the benefits of your LIPA membership is access to **Match** at no additional charge to you.

### **The Fine Print: 14-Dose Vial of Moderna = 20 Maximum Doses (Even if All Boosters)**

Moderna’s updated Provider Fact Sheet states that a vial of Moderna vaccine should not be punctured more than 20 times. The maximum doses of vaccine from a 14-dose vial of Moderna vaccine is 20 doses. The rest of the vaccine should be discarded. LDH issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) [memo](#) on Monday with this important clarification.

### **Approval of Pediatric COVID Vaccines Tentatively Expected Thursday 11/4**

COVID vaccine providers who placed initial orders in LINKS for pediatric vaccine by Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup> can expect to begin receiving delivery of the vaccine next week, in advance of the official approval to begin administering the vaccine in Louisiana, which is tentatively expected to be on Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup>. We have independent pharmacies throughout the state—many of them located in rural areas—that have placed orders and will be providing vaccines to 5-11 year olds.

If you are in a position to offer vaccine to pediatric patients, keep in mind that the Pfizer's pediatric COVID vaccine for children ages 5-11 comes in different packaging (orange lid rather than purple lid). The configuration, packaging, storage, and the NDC are all be different for pediatric COVID vaccine. It is not appropriate to administer a lower dosage of Pfizer vaccine for adults and adolescents to children ages 5-11.

If you have questions about COVID vaccines for children—or any aspect of COVID vaccines for that matter—please do not hesitate to contact us. We are happy to help and find you the answer if we do not know it!

### **Are You Interested in Learning More About Pharmacists Ordering and Administering Monoclonal Antibodies?**

As we previously noted, the 9<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the PREP Act gives qualified pharmacists the authority to both order and administer monoclonal antibody treatment. One model is to have a single station. Regeneron can be administered subcutaneously (four simultaneous injections) in addition to by infusion. [Here](#) is the link to free CPE training that we highly recommend if you wish to complete if you are interested in offering Regeneron via subcutaneous injection. This course is offered in partnership with LIPA's federal partner NCPA with ACPE accreditation provided by Oregon State University College of Pharmacy. **Every pharmacist is eligible to receive 1 hour of ACPE-continuing education credit at no cost once the course and short final exam are completed. This program is supported by the State of Oregon and contains open-source documents intended to support pharmacists across all 50 states.**

This week, pharmacist Leah Michaels reviewed the information LIPA compiled on pharmacists ordering and administering monoclonal antibody treatment. Here is the [link](#) to the current version. Note that the weekly deadline for requesting MAB is **Mondays** at 4 PM.

### **Medicaid Cost of Dispensing Survey Response Deadline is Fast Approaching (November 17th)**

The deadline for pharmacies to submit their responses to the Louisiana Medicaid Cost of Dispensing Survey was extended by LDH to Wednesday, **November 17th**. Please make sure that you devote sufficient time to survey completion to capture all your costs of dispensing. In January 2020, a national survey showed that the actual cost of dispensing Medicaid prescriptions in Louisiana exceeded the current dispensing fee by a considerable amount.

If you have questions or need technical assistance with completion of this important survey, contact the Myers & Stauffer Cost of Dispensing Help Desk:

Email: [disp\\_survey@mslc.com](mailto:disp_survey@mslc.com)

Call: 800-374-6858

### **NADAC Price Appeal**

While you are completing this information for Myers & Stauffer and the state Medicaid program, remember that Myers & Stauffer also produces NADAC pricing for Medicaid and MCO's reimbursements. We frequently hear reports of NADAC particularly on brand drugs not meeting your cost of acquisition. The way to have that changed is through a NADAC Medicaid Reimbursement Review reminding you that when we had the state average acquisition cost methodology, there were usually more than 350 pharmacies participating in the pricing survey. NADAC pricing is prepared with about 250 pharmacies nationwide providing data. Please let us when you do this. Click [here](#) to access the link to the link to the NADAC Request for Medicaid Reimbursement Review.

## **LIPA Communications**

Although LIPA sends this newsletter to over 500 recipients each week, it may not be going to every member of your team who could benefit from the information. We encourage you to contact the LIPA office to have their e-mail address added to the mail list. Send us an email with the address you would like to add to [communications@lipa.org](mailto:communications@lipa.org).

LIPA continues to add pharmacy team members to the *GroupMe* chat group that we have been using to rapidly respond to COVID-related vaccine (and other) questions and get real time feedback from you: our "boots on the ground." To be added to the chat group (the *GroupMe* application can be downloaded from the App Store on your smart phone) call Danielle Hodge at 225-308-2030 or email her at [hodge@lipa.org](mailto:hodge@lipa.org) with your name, pharmacy name, and cellphone number.

### Dates to know

Today-December 7<sup>th</sup>, Medicare and Louisiana Medicaid Open Enrollment

November 13, LPA 2021 Virtual Convention

November 17, Medicaid Cost of Dispensing Survey Due

November 20, LIPA hosted ULM/LSU Tiger Stadium (Baton Rouge, LA)