

CDC to Launch Bridge Access Program to Provide Free COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments

The program, launching this fall, will help uninsured people and those whose insurance does not cover free vaccines.

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CDC to Launch “Bridge Access Program” in Fall 2023 to Provide Free COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments to Uninsured and Underinsured Adults

To help ensure that millions of uninsured and underinsured American adults continue to have access to no-cost COVID-19 vaccinations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is launching the [Bridge Access Program for COVID-19 Vaccines](#) this fall.

There are an estimated 25-30 million adults without insurance in the U.S., and there are additional adults whose insurance will not provide free coverage for COVID-19 vaccines after these products transition to the commercial market for procurement, distribution, and pricing, later this fall. The pandemic highlighted longstanding barriers to adult vaccination, including lack of accessibility, lack of availability, and lack of confidence.

Under the management and oversight of CDC, the Bridge Access Program -- for a limited time -- will allow adults who are uninsured or underinsured to receive free COVID-19 vaccinations.

“Protecting people from COVID-19 remains a top priority for CDC,” CDC Director Dr. Mandy Cohen said. “CDC is partnering with state and local public health agencies, health centers, and pharmacies to ensure that all adults nationwide maintain access to lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines. Ultimately, we know that vaccines save money and lives. Vaccination is especially important as we head into fall and winter, a time when COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases are likely to circulate.”

A dedicated team within CDC’s Immunization Services Division has been established to help launch the new program this fall. CDC will purchase COVID-19 vaccines and allocate them, along with the funding needed to implement this new program, through CDC’s established network of state and local immunization programs.

These partners will then facilitate distribution of these vaccines to participating community-based providers, including local health departments and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-supported health centers. In order to broaden access, CDC is also working closely with select national pharmacy chains, as well as vaccine manufacturers, to enable uninsured adults to receive free COVID-19 vaccines at participating retail pharmacy locations.

CDC has [published](#) its intent to modify existing [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\) program](#) contracts with those select pharmacy partners with proven capacity to reach and vaccinate millions of adults. It is expected that through such agreements with participating pharmacy chains that the Bridge Access Program will reimburse pharmacies for the administration fees, enabling pharmacies to administer vaccine doses for the Program. CDC has also been working closely with manufacturers, as their voluntary collaboration is critical to ensure that there is an adequate supply of vaccines for this program.

It's important to note that the Bridge Access Program serves as a "temporary bridge" and is scheduled to end in December 2024. A longer-term solution is the Vaccines for Adults (VFA) program, proposed in both the FY 2023 and 2024 Presidential Budgets, which would create a permanent initiative modeled after the successful [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\)](#) program, and would cover all recommended vaccinations at no cost for uninsured adults. This proposal has not yet been enacted into law.

Efforts related to the Bridge Access Program launch are ongoing, and additional details will be shared in the coming weeks and months.

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/bridge/index.html> for more information.

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