Date: December 22, 2021
Topic: Preferential Recommendations for mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines
Contact: Susan Vilardi, RN, Nevada State Immunization Program
To: All Health Care Providers and Facilities; Local Health Authorities; Pharmacists

Background:
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met on December 16, 2021, concerning the risk of Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) and Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) following the receipt of the Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine. The data presented to ACIP shows that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines have higher effectiveness and are associated with fewer severe adverse events than the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine, receipt of which continues to be associated with an elevated risk of TTS and a substantially higher risk of GBS. The ACIP voted unanimously to give a preferential recommendation to the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna for those ages 18 years and older, given their greater effectiveness and stronger safety profile.

Key Considerations Regarding the Preferential Recommendation for mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines:

- Individuals who are unable or unwilling to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should continue to have access to the J&J COVID-19 vaccine following a thorough review of the vaccine’s risk for the rare adverse risk of TTS.
- Vaccinating providers can still choose to order the J&J COVID-19 vaccine from the Nevada State Immunization Program.
- The benefits of receiving the J&J COVID-19 vaccine continue to outweigh the known risks compared to not receiving any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals who have already received a primary single dose and booster dose of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine do not need to be revaccinated with a mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
- Individuals who developed TTS after receiving one dose of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine should not receive a booster dose of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine. These individuals are recommended to receive a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna).
- Individuals who received an initial J&J COVID-19 vaccine dose, and who did not experience any adverse events, are recommended to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for their booster dose.
- As always, patients should seek advice from a trusted health care provider when deciding which COVID-19 vaccine product is right for their situation.

Resources:
- Interim Clinical Considerations for COVID-19 Vaccines
- Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet Updates from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Questions:

For updated guidance, please review the DPBH Technical Bulletin [website](#) and the Nevada Health Response [website](#) regularly. If you have other questions regarding the preferential recommendation for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, please email dpbhcovid19vax@health.nv.gov.

Lisa Sherych, Administrator  
Division of Public and Behavioral Health

Ihsan Azzam, Ph.D., M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer