

## Governor Walz Announces Pfizer Booster Doses Now Available for 16- and 17-Year-Olds

Minnesota continues to be first in the Midwest, second in the nation for administering boosters

Governor Tim Walz today announced that Minnesotans 16- and 17-years-old are now able to get a Pfizer COVID-19 booster dose, following an expansion of eligibility by federal public health officials.

Beginning immediately, all Minnesotans 16- and 17-years-old who finished their primary series of the Pfizer vaccine at least six months ago should get their Pfizer COVID-19 booster shot. While officials allow "mixing and matching" COVID-19 vaccine boosters for adults age 18 and older, individuals who are 16 and 17 years of age can only receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine as their booster dose. Pfizer remains the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized for this age group. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are currently only authorized for adults age 18 and older.

Minnesotans 16- and 17-years-old will be able to get a booster dose anywhere Pfizer vaccine is being administered. Beginning tomorrow, the Mall of America Community Vaccination Clinic will welcome 16- and 17-year-old booster dose walk-ins.

Expanded booster eligibility means more Minnesotans will be able to maximize their protection against COVID-19 during the current surge of cases. Governor Walz and state health officials are encouraging all Minnesotans 16 years of age and older to get their booster dose as soon as they are due in order to be best protected as life moves indoors for the winter and holiday celebrations.

"Minnesota is proud to be a strong national leader in administering booster doses, and we are excited to expand eligibility to even more people today," said Governor Walz. "Boosters are a vital part of staying best protected against COVID-19. As we continue to battle this current surge, face uncertainty with the Omicron variant, and prepare to gather indoors with loved ones for the holidays, every Minnesotan 16 and older should get their booster as soon as they are due."

"Offering booster doses for our 16- and 17-year-olds is an exciting development for our holiday preparations," said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. "We know there are so many tools in our toolbox to keep us safe as we gather with loved ones — from vaccines, to testing, to masking in public, and now we can add getting our teens boosted to the list."

"We continue to learn more about how boosters can help strengthen protection against COVID-19, and it's great news to see this opportunity now available to Minnesotans ages 16 and 17," said Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. "With the Delta wave still affecting our state and with the new concerns about the Omicron variant, now is the right time to add this layer of protection for Minnesotans in the 16-17 age group."

Minnesota continues to be a national leader in administering booster doses. Minnesota is first in the Midwest and second in the country for percent of fully vaccinated adults with booster doses, trailing only Vermont. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 40% of fully vaccinated Minnesota adults, about 1.32 Million people, have received their booster.

COVID-19 vaccines are effective, especially at preventing serious illness and death. Evidence is increasingly clear that boosters, given at the appropriate time after their primary vaccination series, can help extend the protection and keep it at a high level.