Thank you for helping our patients receive the COVID-19 vaccine, your efforts in reaching out to our patients is valued and will help end the pandemic. As you know many of our patients have been able to schedule their vaccinations at family physician offices, an AHS site or with a community pharmacy offering vaccinations. However, there are some patients, around 10-15%, who are likely to accept an offer of vaccination if we reach out to them. There are other patients who may have questions about whether this vaccine is right for them. This is why your role is so important to the vaccination effort as you can help patients who will accept an invitation of vaccination and connect those patients with questions to their family physician who can make a personal recommendation. It is important to note that not all patients are open to receiving the COVID vaccine and that their choice to decline this offer is accepted.

The Health Quality Council of Alberta is supporting our practice with a list of patients who have received the COVID vaccine. Please look up patients on the unvaccinated list and call those 12 years and older. It may be helpful to start with older patients as they have been eligible for a longer period of time. Please note some patients may be listed as unvaccinated who have recently received the vaccine – if this occurs, please update the EMR to record that the patient has received the vaccine. Also note that some patients on the proxy panel list may not be attached to this physician so being sensitive to patient cues regarding their attachment to the physician.

The following information will assist you in responding to common questions and assist in you when calling patients:

Clinic vaccination date (if offering vaccines): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nearest AHS Sites: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nearest Community Pharmacy Sites: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Patients can book their appointment by calling 811 or [Ahs.ca/covidvaccine](http://ahs.ca/covidvaccine)

(Have Healthcare card ready and email address)

**Creating Key Messages**

Creating a script that is customized for each physician practice is encouraged so that there is an agreement around what the outreach communications will include. The following key messages have been provided as sample messaging.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What patients need to hear** | **What patients need to know** |
| * Vaccinating for COVID-19 is a personal choice.
* Being unsure about the decision to vaccinate is normal and that the family physician and team are here to help you.
* The family physician and team are a trusted source of information.
* The family physician and team have been educating themselves on the COVID-19 vaccine.
* The family physician and team are specialists in you. They know your history, family, circumstances and are able to make recommendations for you about COVID vaccine.
 | * They are eligible for the first (or second) dose of the COVID vaccine.
* If they are ready to vaccinate, booking an appointment is through: 811, the AHS website, through a participating pharmacy, or (in some cases) through a family physician office.
* If they have questions about the vaccine that may be able to answer common questions about the vaccine.
* If they have concerns or would like the physician to help them make a decision about the vaccine, an appointment can be booked.
 |
| **What messages to avoid*** Patient is being called because they have not been vaccinated.
* Their fears or concerns are not real or are dismissed.
* Debate about public health measures.
 |

**Common questions patients may ask**

It is helpful to review the list of common questions before outreaching to patients to prepare yourself to respond. The Alberta Health Services [website](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx) maintains a list of frequently asked questions and these are updated regularly. It is important to remember that if you are not sure about a response to a patient question that it is ok to say you don’t know that answer and either follow up later or suggest having this discussion with their family physician.

**Documenting the Interaction**

Recording the response to the patient outreach (telephone call) is an important step so the family physician and other team members can support any follow up conversations. Each clinic may have a different process for documenting the outreach and many will use their Electronic Medical Record to do so. It is recommended that, at a minimum, the status of the conversation is recorded in a standardized manner.

* COVID Vaccine Outreach Declined – means that the patient has declined to receive the vaccine and declined to talk to the family physician about the decision.
* COVID Vaccine Outreach Accepted – means the patient has accepted the offer to be vaccinated and is booking an appointment.
* COVID Vaccine Outreach Hesitant – means the patient has declined to receive the vaccine but has accepted an appointment to speak to the physician about concerns.
* COVID Vaccine Outreach Incomplete – means that the outreach occurred but resulted in voicemail or unanswered phone.

**Sample Scripting**

The following sample script has been created using the above key messages and may be used or adapted.

Telephone answered

Hi, this is <name> calling may I speak to <Patient name>. I am calling from Dr. <name> office. Dr. <name> thinks the COVID vaccination is important for your health has asked me to reach out to you to offer any assistance in helping you get your COVID vaccination. Do you have a few minutes to talk about this?

Voicemail

Hi, this is <name> calling for <Patient name>. I am calling from Dr. <name> office. Dr. <name> thinks the COVID vaccination is important for your health has asked me to reach out to you to offer any assistance in helping you get your COVID vaccination. You are eligible for your vaccination now and you can book through Alberta Health Services or a local pharmacy. If you have any questions about whether this vaccine is right for you please call <### ### ####> and we can schedule a telephone call with Dr. <name>. If you have already received or scheduled your vaccination there is no need to call us back. Have a good day.

Positive Response

That is great, we have been thinking a lot about the vaccine and its importance in protecting our patients. Do you have any questions about the vaccine that I can help you with?

<[Respond to questions about how to book an appointment](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx); [address any mis-information](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17389.aspx); schedule appointment with physician for specific recommendation>

<Record outcome of call in the EMR – Left a message, First/Second dose completed, First/Second dose booked, Declines offer, Follow appointment booked or unable to contact>

Negative Response

That is fine. Dr. <name> just wanted you to know that you are eligible for the vaccine and that if you had any questions about whether the vaccine was right for you that we could schedule an appointment to discuss. Please feel free to call us if you need any support.