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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER EXPANDING ACCESS TO
VACCINES AMID UNCERTAINTY IN WASHINGTON**

***Governor Signs Executive Order To Ensure New Yorkers Can Receive Updated
2025-26 COVID Shot***

***Order Declares Emergency Due to Recent Federal Actions Related to Vaccine
Access***

***Governor Will Partner With Legislature on Long Term Solution To Protect
Immunization Access in New York***

In the face of attacks on science and healthcare from the federal government, Governor Kathy Hochul today is taking steps to protect vaccine access across New York State. With the availability of COVID shots under imminent threat, the Governor today signed an [Executive Order](#) that will allow pharmacists to administer COVID vaccines, providing access for all New Yorkers who wish to be vaccinated. The Executive Order will be in place for at least 30 days while a long-term legislative solution is developed to address access to all vaccines in order to combat the Trump Administration's misguided attack on immunization and healthcare.

"I promised New Yorkers that their family would be my fight. In the absence of federal leadership, we must do everything we can to ensure that New Yorkers have access to the vaccines and preventative healthcare they have come to rely on," **Governor Hochul said.** "By signing this executive order, we are sending a clear message that when Washington Republicans play politics with public health, New Yorkers can still get the care they need, close to home, from trusted providers in their own communities."

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said, "Governor Hochul's Executive Order provides access to the COVID vaccine for New Yorkers who choose to get vaccinated, sets us up for a smoother transition to the updated 2025-26 vaccine and restores pharmacies as a vital part of our vaccination network. While New York State does not require COVID vaccines, vaccination remains one of the most effective tools we have to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID."

The Trump Administration's Federal Vaccine Restrictions

Most pharmacies in New York rely on “standing orders” — non-patient-specific prescriptions that give them authority to administer vaccines to broad groups of people. These standing orders are typically based on recommendations from the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Just this summer, the federal government pulled more than \$500 million in mRNA vaccine funding — undoing what had once been considered a signature achievement of the first Trump Administration — creating further uncertainty around access.

In June, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. replaced a majority of ACIP members with individuals known to oppose vaccination. Since then, ACIP has not issued updated guidance for the 2025-26 COVID vaccine and is not scheduled to meet until September 18.

Without that federal guidance, many pharmacies in New York began restricting access to the COVID vaccine, particularly for:

- Children ages 3–17
- Pregnant people
- Adults under age 65 without underlying conditions

Governor Hochul’s Executive Order addresses this gap by declaring a 30-day statewide emergency and expanding who can prescribe and administer COVID vaccines. The EO allows physicians and nurse practitioners to issue patient-specific or non-patient-specific orders to pharmacists for patients as young as age three, expands pharmacists’ authority to administer vaccines to children under 18, and, for the first time, permits pharmacists to prescribe COVID vaccines themselves. Together, these actions ensure that all eligible New Yorkers — including children, pregnant people, and healthy adults under 65 — can continue to receive COVID vaccinations at their local pharmacy without delay.

The Executive Order is part of Governor Hochul’s long-term strategy to protect access to vaccinations in New York. The Governor will begin working with the Legislature on a legislative solution that will ensure permanent and continuing access to vaccines, including administration of vaccines by health care professionals, school immunization schedules, and insurance coverage of vaccines.

Governor Hochul’s Executive Order Will Accomplish the Following:

- Allow physicians and nurse practitioners to prescribe and order a patient-specific or non-patient-specific regimen for pharmacists to administer COVID vaccines to patients age three or older.
- Authorize pharmacists to administer COVID vaccines to patients age three or older pursuant to a patient-specific or non-patient-specific order.
- Allow pharmacists to prescribe and order COVID vaccines for patients age three or older — a new authority that enables them to prescribe off-label.

To support this expansion, Commissioner McDonald will also be issuing a standing order for the COVID vaccine, ensuring that pharmacists statewide can continue to provide timely and convenient access. In the coming days, Commissioner McDonald and the Department of Health will issue detailed guidance to support pharmacies, clinicians and other vaccine administrators.

New York is also working in coordination with — and helping to lead — a regional multi-state public health collaboration among Northeast states, which brings together public health leaders across the region to develop evidence-based recommendations and approaches on vaccination, disease surveillance, and emergency preparedness.

The collaborative also supports state public health laboratories in sharing resources and expertise to strengthen regional readiness.

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