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Department of Health Notes One More Step Required Before Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Approved for Use in 12-15 Year Olds

Harrisburg, PA - The Department of Health today applauded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for taking the next step to make Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine available to 12- to 15-year-olds, but noted one more important step is needed before vaccinations can start.

"We are thrilled that the FDA's research has determined the Pfizer vaccine is safe and effective for individuals as young as 12," Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam said. "This means that approximately 750,000 more Pennsylvanians will be able to get vaccinated against COVID-19."

Before vaccinations in this age group can begin, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) needs to review the data and make an official recommendation to use the vaccine for this age group. ACIP is scheduled to discuss the recommendation on Wednesday, May 12.

"Once all of the approvals are in place Pennsylvania vaccine providers will be ready to begin vaccinating these young people to add them to the more than 5.7 million Pennsylvanians who have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine so far," Acting Secretary Beam said.

Vaccine providers in Pennsylvania are being instructed to be ready for vaccination requests for people in this age group later this week. In Pennsylvania, immunizations, like other general medical services, require consent. The Department of Health recommends that vaccine providers follow their current policy for vaccinations of minors.

The eligibility of 12- to 15-year-olds does not change the Department of Health's criteria for at least 70 percent of Pennsylvania adults to get fully vaccinated for the state's mask mandate to be lifted. According to the [CDC](#), as of this morning, 45.6 percent of Pennsylvanians age 18 and older are fully vaccinated.