



The U.S. COVID Vaccine Distribution Plan: Challenges and Solutions

The OnPage Solution in a nutshell



Reach recipients via multiple channels



Create distribution lists



Receive message acknowledgements



Create editable templates

As coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread and new virus strains emerge, the public is frantically looking for answers regarding the U.S. government's vaccine distribution plan. A sound vaccine distribution plan is especially crucial in times like these. All U.S. states, stretching from both coasts, are experiencing a vast number of COVID-related deaths and hospitalizations. The dire situation underscores the importance of having an effective, accelerated vaccine delivery process.

In this post, we'll discuss everything we know about the COVID vaccine and the health department's vaccine distribution plan. We'll conclude the blog by highlighting how healthcare organizations can accelerate vaccine delivery without compromising vaccine efficacy.

What We Know About the COVID Vaccine (So Far)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines, allowing millions of doses to be available to the public. The U.S. agency approved the vaccines in December 2020.

The fast-tracked vaccine discovery and approvals, only a year after COVID was first detected, is a testament to the effort made to control the virus that has killed over 2 million people worldwide.

This progress, however, comes at a time when infections are surging due to the emergence of new variants, forcing the U.S. government to impose new restrictions on travel and business.



The Current Vaccine Distribution Plan

It takes time for manufacturing lines to stabilize, perfect their operational efficiency and meet the manufacturing capacity. Moderna, after experiencing initial delays, has scaled up its vaccine generation. It is expected to deliver over 100 million doses to all U.S. states by March 2021.

Regarding U.S. vaccine distribution, President Joe Biden states, “[There’s] immense challenges ahead, including scaling up manufacturing, distribution, and the monumental task of vaccinating hundreds of millions of Americans. We need to make sure we have the resources to do all of this and to do it quickly.”

To assist the government in meeting its ambitious goal, Amazon has offered its scale of operations to distribute the COVID vaccine.

Healthcare organizations will be at the forefront of vaccine delivery and distribution. The onus is on care teams to efficiently administer the vaccine to patients. Timely vaccination makes the difference between life and death during the pandemic.

Vaccine Distribution Challenges in Healthcare

While the focus is on the manufacturing and distribution speed of the COVID vaccine, we cannot undermine the role of hospitals in ensuring last mile vaccine delivery.

FDA-approved vaccines must be stored in frigid temperatures to preserve their effectiveness. However, some healthcare organizations experienced equipment failures that compromised the vaccines. Accordingly, vaccine delivery was delayed in some cities across the country.

As doses become more available, healthcare organizations must organize vaccine campaigns and notify patients of their scheduled vaccination times. To simplify this process, hospitals require a solution to communicate with patients and inform them of their COVID-related treatments.

According to OnPage Healthcare Director Britton Davis, “Hospitals must prioritize those that fall within a specific age bracket or occupation. They need to receive real-time appointment reminders and messages on post-vaccination care. Immediate hospital-to-patient communication makes all the difference in today’s global health crisis.”

The Solution

To gear up for what could easily be dubbed as the largest vaccine distribution plan of the decade, U.S. hospitals need to implement a three-pronged approach.

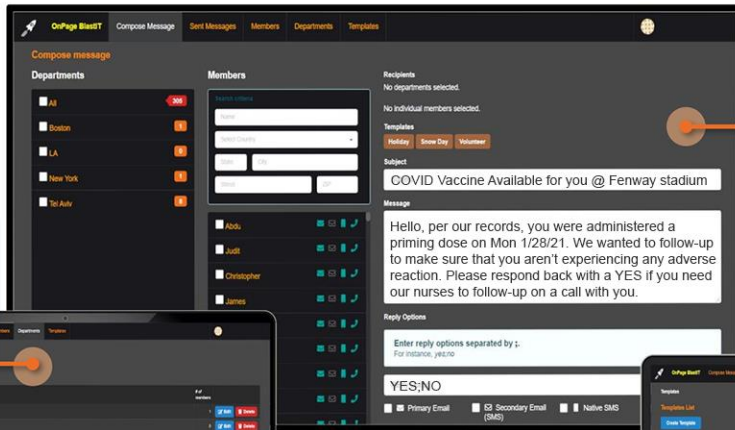
The first pillar focuses on safeguarding the effectiveness of COVID vials when stored. This can be achieved by complementing cold storage built-in alarms with OnPage’s critical alerting solution. When temperatures shift, storage alarms will trigger an OnPage alert to the technician’s phone and ensure the incidents are resolved promptly.

Second, healthcare organizations must invest in a [mass notification system](#) that improves hospital-to-patient communications. An effective system broadcasts messages to recipient groups via different channels (e.g., email, phone and SMS). Patients can receive appointment reminders, rescheduling notifications and wellness check messages. Mass notification solutions create communication efficiencies and speed up vaccine deliveries.



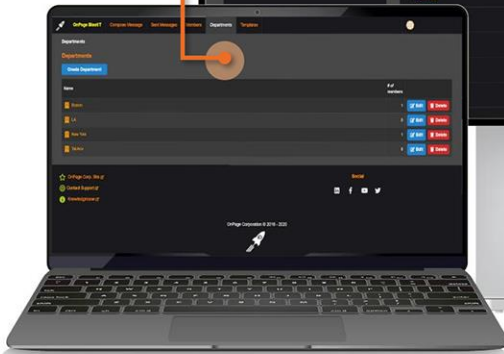
Create “departments” or messaging groups. Determine who to include in specific departments. View the status of sent messages.

CREATE DEPARTMENTS



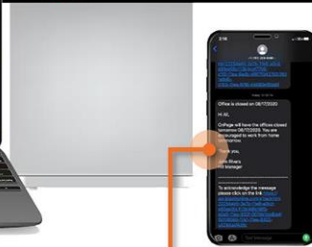
Select message members and departments. Free form a message or create message templates. Configure reply options if needed.

COMPOSE MESSAGES



Immediately send mass alerts to recipients. Messages distributed to SMS, email and phone. Reply options available.

REACH RECIPIENTS

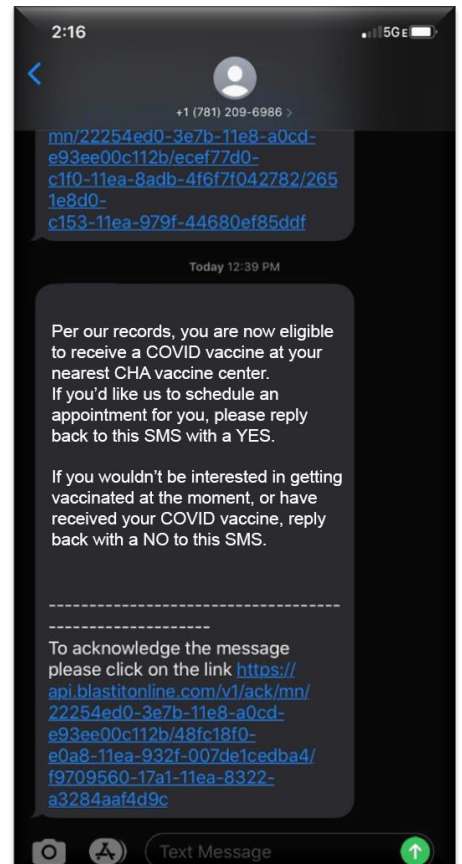


Last, hospitals require systems that supplement post-vaccination care. Dedicated phone lines and live calls allow patients to connect with their physicians in real time. Physicians can get live feedback from patients and keep track of their health through follow-up calls.

“OnPage live call routing can be used as a dedicated helpline for those who want immediate, post-vaccination assistance,” suggests Davis. “Patients have 24/7 access to physicians should something go wrong.”

Conclusion

As COVID continues to spread, it is critical that healthcare organizations are well prepared to speed up vaccine delivery. The three-pronged approach solidifies vaccine campaigns and complements alerting during storage-related incidents. OnPage’s mass notification platform enhances mass messaging and improves the speed of vaccination delivery, all while providing a slight sense of relief during these uncertain times.



The OnPage Solution for Vaccine Rollout

Prevent vial damage due to freezer failures



Cold Storage alerting solution

Cold storages that are used to store COVID vaccines can be complemented with OnPage's critical alerting solution. When temperature excursion is detected, storage alarm triggers OnPage alert to technician's phone, helping salvage precious vials. These alerts are persistent and intrusive, continuing for up to eight hours until acknowledged.

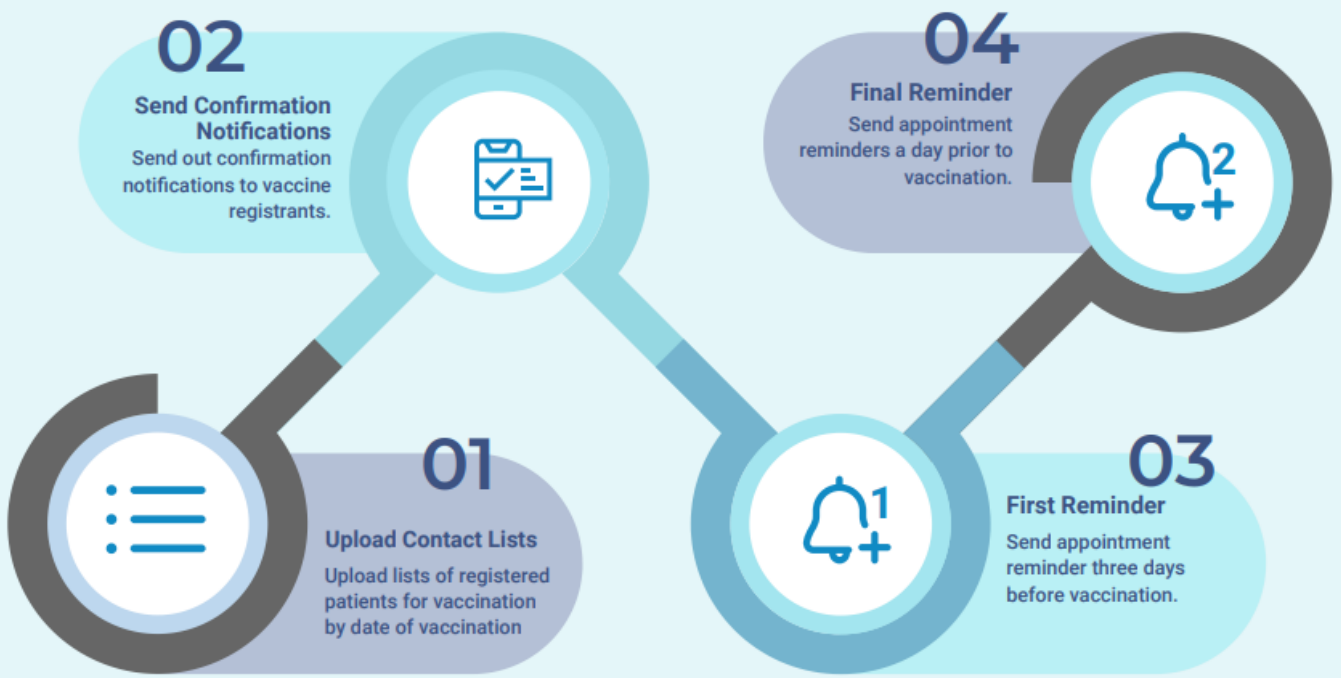
COVID vaccine roll-out notifications



Mass notify patients about their immunization schedule via OnPage BlastIT

With OnPage BlastIT, hospital administrators can create groups by vaccination date. Confirmed vaccine registrants can be uploaded to these groups. Further, they can create **editable message templates** and broadcast notifications via different channels (e.g., email, phone and SMS) to these groups.

Here is one of the several ways in which OnPage's mass notification system can be implemented by hospitals to communicate with their registered patients. To save time, these templates can be edited and reused for different groups.





Supplement post-vaccination care

Mass notification platform and direct live-call routing

With OnPage, specialty nurses can run a wellness check on vaccine recipients. They can send out mass messages to the recipients, requesting them to acknowledge if they're experiencing a vaccine-related side effect. **OnPage's** dedicated [phone line and live call](#) can be used to connect those experiencing side effects with a post-vaccination care team member.

Here's an example on how to implement OnPage's mass notification platform and direct live-call routing to supplement post-vaccination care.

01

Send wellness check message to recipients after **first** vaccine. They can respond back with a YES/NO, where YES indicates that they need help.

If the response is NO, do nothing.

If they respond with a YES, send them a follow-up message with a phone number that connects to an on-call physician

02

Send wellness check message to recipients after **second** vaccine. They can respond back with a YES/NO, where YES indicates that they need help.

If the response is NO, do nothing.

If they respond with a YES, send them a follow-up message with a phone number that connects to an on-call physician

The dedicated phone number will connect a patient experiencing severe side-effects to an on-call physician. Powered by OnPage's scheduler and dedicated line, OnPage routes the live call to an on-call physician's mobile device. If the patient's call is not answered, OnPage will escalate it to the next person on call. In the unlikely case that all on-call physicians do not answer, the patient is then prompted to leave a voicemail with a callback number. The voicemail is escalated within the [on-call team](#) until addressed and responded to. The process concludes with the generation of detailed OnPage reports, audit trails and status updates.

