

# Talking Points



## Rationale for CAC worker and partner priority for priority vaccine access as first responders

February 2021

- Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) staff and partners provide critical services to children and families as a response to the crime of child abuse, many of which are services which must be delivered in person.
- Early on in the pandemic, CAC personnel were classified as first responders by many public health authorities in states across the country. Virtually everywhere, CACs were classified as essential services, and workers were not only willing to put themselves at personal risk to maintain services to vulnerable kids, but were also required to do so.
- CAC workers and partners should have priority access to the coronavirus vaccine alongside other first responders, including our multidisciplinary team partners in law enforcement and child welfare.
- There is precedent for providing adequate and priority protection to CAC workers given the risk inherent in their work and the importance of it. In order to continue their critical services to children suffering from abuse at a time of grave risk and uncertainty, while minimizing health risks to workers and families in the CAC setting, CACs were granted access to PPE, then in short supply, and in many cases granted emergency funding and other resources from states and localities to take additional safety measures.
- Nearly all CACs remained open for services to children during the pandemic, and still provided services to nearly 160,000 children in the critical first half of the year.
- There is still a backlog in service delivery and in the reporting of child abuse, and CACs have a critical need for workforce safety to begin processing the immense need of children and the expected wave of child abuse reports after the pandemic begins to wane.
- When forming your state/local plan to allocate the first doses of the coronavirus vaccine, we ask that you classify CAC workers and partners as first responders eligible for vaccination at the same level of priority as other types of first responders.