VA Manila Updates - Final Call for COVID-19 Booster Vaccines

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| **VA Manila (RO&OPC) <VAManila@va.gov>** |

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**MANILA VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMINDERS**

January 27, 2022

**LAST CALL FOR COVID-19 BOOSTERS & PRIMARY DOSES**

Back in November, VA Manila Outpatient Clinic began providing COVID-19 booster doses to eligible Veterans.  We have had a very positive response from our Veteran community and have administered nearly 1,700 boosters to date, plus many more first and second dose vaccines. I remain grateful for the staff at VA Manila, who continue to show their commitment to VA’s ICARE values by working weekends, holidays, and evenings to get Veterans scheduled and vaccinated. It’s truly been a team effort among our nurses, our scheduling staff, and our physicians providing oversight on vaccine days and guidance to Veterans with questions.

We are also hearing from many of our Veterans who live outside of Metro Manila that they have been able to receive vaccines and boosters from their local government units, which some Veterans prefer as it saves them a trip to Manila.

Either way – whether from VA or in your community, the single most important thing you can do to prevent getting seriously ill or hospitalized from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated and to receive a booster. VA Manila wants to encourage all Veterans who have not yet gotten a vaccine or booster to please reach out to VA Manila or your LGU and schedule your appointment today.

Our current supply of Pfizer vaccine, which can be used for booster doses and first/second doses, will expire at the end of February 2022. I would encourage all Veterans who are still looking to be vaccinated to contact the OPC immediately and take advantage of the available vaccine supply at VA Manila right now. We do not have any further details of future COVID-19 vaccines deliveries right now, so this may be your last opportunity get your VA-provided vaccine/poster in Manila.

To help make the vaccination process as simple as possible, VA Manila has the following dates still available for COVID-19 vaccines:

**Appointments are still available on the following weekend mass vaccine clinic days:**

Saturday, January 29, 2022               9 am – 230 pm

Saturday, February 5, 2022                9 am – 230 pm

Sunday, February 6, 2022                  9 am – 230 pm

The Clinic will also have limited numbers of mid-week appointments on the following Tuesdays and Thursdays:

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Thursday, February 10, 2022

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Thursday, February 24, 2022

**To schedule your vaccine:**

* Phone the clinic at +63 (02) 8550-3888, press option 2 to reach the Outpatient Clinic. You can also use VA Manila’s toll-free phone from your Philippine mobile number (Sun, Smart, Globe): #MyVA (#6982).

**VA Manila will have our phone lines open on Saturday, January 29, 2022 from 8 am to 12 pm to accommodate scheduling requests.**

* Email ManilaCovidVaccine@va.gov or send a secure message to your team.  Please include your preferred date and time in your message and we will schedule within one hour of your preferred time if available and confirm your appointment via email / secure message.

**Who is eligible for booster shots?**

Service-connected Veterans who received their J&J or Pfizer vaccines at the VA Manila Outpatient are eligible to receive booster shots. We can also provide booster doses to Veterans who received COVID-19 vaccines from other VA medical centers in the United States, or from community providers in the Philippines. If you were not vaccinated within the VA healthcare system, when you contact VA Manila to schedule your booster, please email VA Manila a copy of your vaccine card so we can document your first and second doses. VA Manila is following the US CDC Guidelines for providing boosters, and Veterans are eligible for boosters along the following recommending schedule:

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| **Primary Vaccine Series** |  | **Timeline for Booster Dose** |  |
| Pfizer |  | 5 months from date of second dose |  |
| Moderna |  | 5 months from date of second dose |  |
| Jansen / J&J |  | 2 months from date of first dose |  |

**If You Were Vaccinated Outside of the United States**

If you completed a Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, or J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine primary series outside of the United States, you should follow the guidance above for booster shots.

If you were vaccinated abroad with other COVID-19 vaccines you can get a booster shot if you either:

* Received all the recommended doses of a [World Health Organization emergency use listing (WHO-EUL) COVID-19 vaccine](https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/vaccines/vaccinescovid-19-vaccine-eul-issued), not approved or authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
* Or completed a mix and match series composed of any combination of [FDA-approved, FDA-authorized, or WHO-EUL COVID-19 vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html)

If you meet the above requirements you can get a single booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at least 5 months after getting all recommended doses or completing a mix and match COVID-19 vaccine series. Please contact your VA Manila care team if you have more questions about when you should get a vaccine/booster.

**Who is not eligible for COVID-19 vaccines from VA Manila?**

Non-service-connected Veterans, spouses, caregivers, and Veterans’ children are not eligible to receive a COVID vaccine or booster from VA Manila. The VA Office of General Counsel determined that the Save Lives Act is not applicable overseas.

**REMINDERS AHEAD OF YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE BOOSTER APPOINTMENT:**

On the day of your scheduled COVID-19 booster/vaccine appointment,

1. Please bring your previously issued CDC COVID-19 vaccine administration card that was provided to you during your first two vaccine appointments by the VA Manila OPC. The Clinic will record your booster dose on this same card.

1. Unless it is absolutely necessary for your mobility, we ask that you not bring a spouse/companion with you to the Clinic during your booster appointment. This will help to ensure we have sufficient space in our waiting rooms and can ensure social distancing inside the clinic

1. Please be here 15 minutes before the scheduled appointment time. There is no reason to arrive earlier than 15 minutes before your scheduled time.

1. Please cancel and reschedule your appointment if you feel any of the following COVID-19 symptoms in the days leading up to your scheduled booster appointment:

•               shortness of breath, chest pains,

•               fever,

•               dry cough,

•               tiredness,

•               aches and pains,

•               sore throat, and/or

•               rash

1. There are still limited parking options available in front of the Manila Outpatient Clinic due to ongoing construction of the Roxas Blvd Service Road by the Pasay City Government and MMDA. We recommend Veterans have their driver provide door-to-door service and drop and pick up Veterans for their vaccine appointments. Those who are driving themselves may be able to find parking north of the Clinic adjacent to Cuneta Astrodome at the intersection of Roxas Boulevard and A. Arnaiz Avenue.

**Other VA Manila Announcements:**

1. **COVID-19 Self-Testing Kits Distributed by the US Postal Service**

Several Veterans have inquired if VA Manila is providing COVID-19 testing, or if VA Manila will be distributing COVID-19 at home, rapid antigen tests. Currently, VA has not announced any plans for a mass distribution of COVID-19 tests for Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare services. VA Manila patients who have access to a Fleet Post Office may be able to request COVID-19 home antigen tests through the current distribution system that has been set up by the US Postal Service. You must have a US address to request these at home test kits through the US Postal Service. Additional details about this program are available online: [COVIDtests.gov - Free at-home COVID-19 tests](https://www.covidtests.gov/).

1. **UPCOMING CLINIC CLOSURES:**

The U.S. Embassy, along with the VA Manila Regional Office and Outpatient Clinic, will be closed in recognition of the following public holidays:

**PH Chinese New Year**

**Tuesday, February 1, 2022**

**US Washington’s Birthday / President’s Day.**

**Monday, February 21, 2022**

**PH EDSA Revolution Anniversary**

**Friday, February 25, 2022**

NOTE: Plan ahead and order your refills 10 workdays in advance of holiday closures.  Air21 is also closed on these holidays so medications will be delayed if you fail to request refills 10 days in advance. If you run out of medications for a service-connected condition, you can buy a short-term supply of needed medicine and file a claim for reimbursement from the FMP.

1. **VA MANILA REGIONAL OFFICE AND OUTPATIENT CLINIC TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

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| VA Manila Main Line |  | +63 (02) 8550-3888 |  |
| VA Manila Toll Free Phone:           |  | +63 1 (800) 1888-5252; or#MyVA (#6982)  |  |
| AudioCare (Pharmacy Refills):      |  | +63 (02) 8556-8387 |  |
| Clinical Fax (Medical Records):     |  | +63 (02) 8550-3964 |  |
| Patient Advocate:                           |  | +63 (02) 8396-3716 |  |
| Clinic Manager:                              |  | +63 (02) 8396-3735 |  |

Option 1 – Regional Office

Option 2 – Outpatient Clinic

Option 3 – Transfer to Veterans Evaluation Services (VES)

Option 4 – Transfer to the Foreign Medical Program’s Hotline

Option 5 – Transfer to VBA Offices in the United States

Option 6 – Transfer to the VA MISSION Act Hotline

Option 7 – Transfer to the Veteran’s Crisis Line

Option 8 – Transfer to VA Manila’s AudioCare Line (Pharmacy Refills)

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**Daniel Gutkoski, MHA**
Clinic Manager, VA Manila Outpatient Clinic

US Embassy to the Philippines

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