

AmerisourceBergen<sup>®</sup>  
rapidly deploys a COVID-19  
vaccine tracker for  
Mass General Brigham



With multiple vaccine options, stringent storage and delivery requirements, and an urgency felt throughout the world, health systems were faced with significant logistical complexities that required swift and practical resolution. There were no easy answers, leading many health systems to seek help in turning the tide in this protracted battle.

Mass General Brigham, one of New England's premier health systems and an AmerisourceBergen customer, is a critical provider of COVID-19 vaccines for its region. To ensure the most efficient administration of COVID-19 vaccines for patients and team members, they sought a solution to augment their inventory control systems to solve the unique challenges presented by COVID-19 vaccine tracking and distribution.

"When we knew COVID vaccines were coming, we searched frantically to find a perpetual inventory system that had the capabilities to meet the complexities of managing multiple vaccines across multiple sites. AmerisourceBergen had that inventory system and closely partnered with us to build and optimize it within days. We continue to utilize the system daily and have successfully managed the supply of 420,000 COVID vaccine doses with it," said Chris Fortier, PharmD, FASHP, Chief Pharmacy Officer at Mass General Hospital.

AmerisourceBergen constantly strives to be at the forefront of innovation and service quality, and as such, it frequently uses customer feedback as it creates and customizes products and programs. By listening to customers and understanding their aspirations and concerns, AmerisourceBergen can address specific needs with real-world solutions.

### Key challenges and solutions

**Urgency:** The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine had to be handled swiftly to combat the virus, but it also had to be done carefully. With so many people seeking vaccination, quickly devising and deploying a system capable of accurately tracking and reporting every dose—from receipt through inoculation—was essential to facilitating success while minimizing waste.

To expedite the tracking system development, AmerisourceBergen utilized a system based on one of its popular medication tracking solutions. The initial rollout of this customized vaccine tracker occurred approximately 18 days after initial discussions with Mass General Brigham about their needs.

**Flexibility:** While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) authorized the use of three vaccines in the United States, each one had its own specific requirements. Vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen had different injection schedules, labeling conventions, and temperature requirements.

Given the scale, complexity, and urgency of the vaccination effort, most existing tracking solutions were ill-suited for quick and effective implementation. Mass General Brigham offered AmerisourceBergen feedback as AmerisourceBergen rapidly refined the tracking system's features to address the unique requirements associated with each vaccine. For enhanced safety and convenience, the system automatically adjusts vaccine expiration dates in the database due to the movement of product from one temperature to another.

**Granularity:** In addition to detailed lot and expiration reporting, the tracking system needed to effectively identify and record first and second doses of certain vaccines.

AmerisourceBergen's tracking solution enables users to generate detailed reports to meet federal, state, and local requirements. Mass General Brigham kept AmerisourceBergen apprised of any changes in reporting requirements from internal and external stakeholders. Thanks to clear and open communication, tracking and reporting parameters were easily adjusted to stay current.

Since vaccine inventory flowed through Mass General Brigham's central hub before being dispensed through its expansive network, the tracking system was designed to collect and provide highly detailed information system-wide.

**Usability:** The sheer number of doses that needed to be tracked meant that any effective system would need to be easy to use in multiple environments, from technologically advanced hospital settings to makeshift vaccination clinics housed in tents. Mass General Brigham shared their ideas to bolster the system's usability, and AmerisourceBergen used their feedback to help shape the vaccine tracker.

AmerisourceBergen focused on building an intuitive, web-based system to accelerate implementation and to avoid any potential conflicts with health systems' existing hardware and software. Frontline personnel can be trained to use the system efficiently and accurately in minutes and without the need for specialized hardware.

### The benefits of responsive communication

The open dialogue between Mass General Brigham and AmerisourceBergen during this time-sensitive project benefitted both parties considerably.

Mass General Brigham was able to offer real-time feedback on a solution to a challenge they—and other health systems—faced during a global health crisis and received early access to a tracking system that met their needs in a stunningly short amount of time.

AmerisourceBergen benefitted from a practical, current perspective provided by a valued customer with a clear need. Mass General Brigham's timely input helped keep development of the vaccine tracker focused on essential elements with an eye toward accelerating the tracker's speed to market.

"It is tremendously humbling and rewarding that Mass General Brigham engaged AmerisourceBergen as a trusted innovation provider to address such a time-critical and complex operational challenge," said Dustin Roller, Vice President of Innovation Technology, AmerisourceBergen. "We are thrilled that our platform provided a foundation that supported the rapid development and deployment of a completely novel solution that leverages the vast clinical and operational expertise that Mass General Brigham brought to this pilot program. As our customers continue to do the hard work to battle the COVID pandemic on the front lines, we remain dedicated to providing creative products and solutions to support those heroic efforts."

