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**Sent:** Monday, March 15, 2021 1:13 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** COVID Vaccine Roll-out: Important phase update



## Department of Public Health

Dear Connecticut Health Departments and COVID Vaccine Providers,

We are writing to let you know about several important updates in the phasing and pace of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. These will be formally announced this afternoon at the Governor's 4pm news conference.

- The next phase of roll out, to individuals 45-years and older, will begin ahead of schedule, starting this Friday, March 19. Providers can begin scheduling individuals 45 years-of-age and older on Friday at 8am. No scheduling of individuals under 55 should begin until Friday morning.
- General availability to all individuals 16-years-of-age and older will begin ahead of schedule, tentatively scheduled for Monday, April 5. No scheduling of individuals under 45 should begin until date is confirmed.

Please read on for the rationale for these changes as well as steps providers must take.

### **Reasons for these changes**

Increases in vaccine supply as well as progress in the vaccine roll-out to-date are enabling these changes.

Specifically:

- The currently weekly volumes the State of Connecticut is receiving – across State allocation, pharmacy chains, and through our Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) partners – continues to grow.
- We are on pace to reach more than 50% coverage among individuals 55-64 this week; in addition, tens of thousands of individuals 55-64 already have secured appointments for subsequent weeks. Experience tells us that we will then begin to see slack in some schedules beginning this weekend.
- Many individuals in the 16-34 and 35-44 cohorts have already received a COVID vaccine in Phase 1a, as residents and staff of congregate facilities, or through education and childcare clinics. Combining these age cohorts will enable a faster, simpler roll-out as well as enable efficiencies in outreach efforts to vulnerable populations, including individuals within high-Social Vulnerability Index areas, during general availability.

### Steps providers should take

- **By Thursday of this week, please extend your schedules by one week only, from April 8 to April 15.** No first dose appointments should be scheduled beyond April 15. Preventing scheduling of currently eligible individuals further out avoids disruptive cancellations as individuals move up to more convenient appointments. Only schedule against baseline allocations. More information about posting schedules for later in April will come later in the month as we move towards general availability.
- **Immediately post schedules for any additional inventory you have for the upcoming week.** Doing so early in the week will allow for remaining 55+ individuals to find appointments before opening to 45+.
- **Between Friday at 12:01am and Friday at 8am, update scheduling portals to indicate expanded eligibility to individuals 45+.** Please double check that your technology and web teams are ready to make and implement these changes.

### Final notes

We know that transitions between phases leads to excitement as well as great public interest. Thank you for everything you are doing to help meet the demands of this moment. We know your call centers and access lines will be busy and that not all individuals will be able to get appointments immediately. However, your collective efforts are helping Connecticut to emerge from this pandemic stronger and safer.

On Wednesday March 10, our FQHCs, Local Health Departments, Hospitals, and Pharmacies administered a combined total of approximately 40,000 doses of vaccine. This pace and volume is what is allowing us to proceed towards offering every Connecticut a first dose as quickly as we are.

Further, your collective efforts to conduct dedicated outreach and enable access for Connecticut's vulnerable residents are critical to ensuring an equitable roll-out. We will continue to focus on these efforts.

Finally, as we look ahead, we anticipate that supply will likely start to exceed demand by late April or early May. Our efforts on outreach and access – already significant – will need to grow even more at that time.

Thank you for everything you are doing to meet the needs of this moment.

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