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Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 12:46 PM

To:

Subject: Important Phase 1b Updates for All Vaccine Providers

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Dear Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

This note is going to key contacts at provider organizations administering COVID-19 vaccine.

This note contains important updates about administering vaccine to individuals 75 years and older as well as Phase 1b. Please read this message and be prepared to act this week.

Phase 1b: Soft start for individuals 75+ can begin this week

We expect to start Phase 1b in the next 1-2 weeks— further announcement will be coming soon. Starting immediately, we would like to ask that all providers:

- Conduct outreach to all remaining Phase 1a-eligible individuals so they schedule appointments ASAP.
- Starting tomorrow, you can conduct outreach to 75-and-older patients and begin scheduling their clinic appointments – if you have available slots this week that cannot be filled with a Phase 1a-eligible individual, they can be used to administer vaccine to individuals 75 and older [A VAMS form for 75+ will be available soon; you can also directly schedule these individuals by using a third-party VAMS clinic and your own scheduling system].
- If you cannot successfully fill schedules with Phase 1a and 75+ populations, only then can you schedule other Phase 1b-individuals – preliminary guidance on Phase 1b is below; finalized guidance will come later this week.

Further information about Phase 1b access and providers

Vaccine will be offered and accessed in many ways:

- **Individuals 75+:** Providers can do dedicated outreach to these groups and invite them in; Connecticut will launch a direct VAMS enrollment process on ct.gov/CovidVaccine in the next days. We are working on a 211-based phone scheduling system that can be used across providers.
- **Frontline essential workers:** VAMS enrollment for these employer groups will begin this week. In addition, providers may develop dedicated relationships with employer groups to offer vaccine. Local Health Departments may focus on municipal frontline essential workers.
- **Congregate settings:** We will be launching an effort to arrange for on-site vaccination at congregate settings. For those providers who already do testing on-site in congregate settings, please make plans to do vaccine clinics in these settings – more information will be forthcoming.

Updates to access and information for the public will be hosted at ct.gov/CovidVaccine.

Access and equity

We are currently actively working to ensure that we enable access to ALL people in Connecticut. There are known challenges with our existing scheduling approaches (whether with VAMS or through EPIC portals) – we want to enable walk-up appointments as well as scheduling by phone through access lines. If you can offer an access line, we will share this information on our website or with our 211 call representatives who can help direct appropriate traffic (e.g., based on geography) to your access lines. We will have more information about a potential phone-based scheduling service that can be used across clinic locations soon, using the appointments platform Appointments-Plus.

Draft phase 1b eligibility

Three primary groups will be eligible to receive vaccine in Phase 1b:

- **Individuals 75 years of age and older;**
- **Frontline essential workers:** People who work in designated sectors AND face work-related exposure to COVID 19;
- **Residents and staff of congregate settings.**

In addition to this, the Governor's Advisory Group Allocation Subcommittee is crafting additional recommendations for inclusion of additional priority populations.

DRAFT list of frontline essential workers

Frontline essential workers include individuals who work in select sectors **AND** are at risk for work-related exposure to COVID-19 because their work-related duties must be performed on-site and involve being in proximity (<6 feet) to the public or coworkers. A finalized list of sectors will come shortly, but will likely include:

- Healthcare personnel not vaccinated in 1a
- First responders not vaccinated in 1a
- Education (K-12, early childhood, childcare, higher ed)
- Manufacturing
- Grocery, restaurant, food service & essential retail
- Agriculture and farm workers
- Delivery (e.g., USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc.)
- Public Transit
- Social and governmental services (e.g., food banks, public health, town clerks, clergy offering in-person services, meal delivery to elderly, elected officials)
- Drinking water, wastewater and solid waste workers
- Inspectors who work in the locations above

Reminder regarding throughput and inventory management

Our primary goal remains rapid access – which means administering all doses that are shipped within one week of arrival. Please continue to work with us on any throughput challenges.

We are working to provide greater forward-looking visibility into supply volumes so that you can plan farther ahead.

You may have seen public press regarding plans from the Biden Administration to release second doses and first doses in parallel. No change has yet been made to Connecticut's allocation from the federal government, and we do not know if any change will come. You will continue to receive second doses automatically on schedule (21 days for Pfizer; 28 days for Moderna). In the future, if you did not administer much of your first dose inventory for any reason when it was first received, we may delay shipment of second doses.

Your inventory is your inventory. If you have slack in scheduling for boost doses (second doses) (e.g., due to the patient being delayed in returning to complete course, or because first-dose administration was delayed), you may use your inventory to administer more primary doses. However, in this case, it is your responsibility to manage your inventory with the goal of enabling all individuals to complete their vaccine course on schedule (21 days for Pfizer; 28 days for Moderna). We cannot guarantee more boost doses if you use boost doses as primary doses.

Please continue to schedule boost dose appointments at the time of the primary dose administration. Send reminders, conduct follow-up, and help ensure people complete the course on schedule!

Thank you

Thank you to every COVID Vaccine provider who has done an incredible job of administering vaccine to Connecticut's Phase 1a-population. We look forward to continuing to work with you through Phase 1b and beyond!

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