COVID-19 vaccination efforts in Rhode Island continue to accelerate rapidly with eligibility now open to all Rhode Islanders 65 years of age and older, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is announcing.

People who are 65 and older can register to be vaccinated at one of two State-run vaccination sites in Rhode Island, located in Providence at the Dunkin' Donuts Center and in Cranston at Sockanosset Cross Road. To register to be vaccinated at a State-run site, visit VaccinateRI.org. People who cannot register online can get help by calling the automated line at 844-930-1779. People who are 65 and older can also register to be vaccinated at select CVS or Walgreens retail pharmacies, or through their city and town. (However, appointments may not be immediately available for all eligible Rhode Islanders. For example, many cities and towns are continuing to vaccinate their oldest residents first, and supply of vaccine remains limited at all sites.) Instructions on how to register at all three types of locations are available online.

Approximately 9,900 Rhode Islanders were vaccinated at the two-State run sites over their first three days of operation, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. More than 10,000 new appointments will be made available today. Rhode Island's vaccine administration rate has increased by 89% over the last 6 weeks. In December, an average of 1,300 doses were administered per day. That figure was 2,700 doses per day in January and climbed to 5,100 doses per day in February. More than 203,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered to date in Rhode Island.

There is no insurance requirement to get vaccinated, and no one has to pay to get vaccinated. For general information about COVID-19 vaccination in Rhode Island, visit C19vaccineRI.org.

As the state's vaccine administration rate continues to increase, Rhode Island has seen significant declines in cases and hospitalizations. Rhode Island's percent positivity was at or below 2% several days last week, and there was a decline in cases and percent positive in all age groups. Rhode Island has seen even greater decreases among healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities - the focus groups for the first portion of the state's strategic, targeted vaccination campaign. Overall, Rhode Island's daily hospital admissions are down 47% since the last month.

This improving data situation allows Rhode Island to plan the suspension of patient care at its two alternate hospital sites. Envisioned as sites that could absorb low-acuity COVID-19 patients, should the state's existing hospital infrastructure be overwhelmed, Lifespan is operating an alternate hospital site at the Rhode Island Convention Center and Care New England is operating an alternate hospital site at Sockanosset Cross Road (near the current State-run vaccine site). The last day for patient care at the Rhode Island Convention Center hospital will be February 26th. The last day for patient care at Sockanosset will likely be in the next two to three weeks.

After all patients are discharged, each facility will be cleaned and sanitized. The equipment and supplies will remain at the two alternate hospital sites, should a surge in hospitalizations require them to be reactivated.

Since the alternate hospital sites opened for patient care, they have treated 633 patients: 444 patients at the Rhode Island Convention Center alternate hospital site and 208 patients at Sockanosset Cross Road.