Iowa Moves Forward with Vaccination Campaign

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Today the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is sharing the following guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine priority populations for Phase 1B, based on the recommendations put forward by the Iowa Disease Advisory Council (IDAC) and accepted by Kelly Garcia, IDPH interim Director. Today the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is sharing the following guidelines for COVID-19 vaccine priority populations for Phase 1B, based on the recommendations put forward by the Iowa Disease Advisory Council (IDAC) and accepted by Kelly Garcia, IDPH interim Director. “I am grateful for the incredible work of the Infectious Disease Advisory Council. The work of this group is critical to ensuring Iowa’s most vulnerable are protected and have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. In a situation where there is not a playbook to follow, the thoughtful dialog and recommendations reflect their deep commitment to equity and making the right decisions in the best interest of all Iowans,” said Garcia. IDAC Recommendations Due to the current and short-term projections for vaccine allocation for Iowa, IDAC recommendations for Phase 1B focus on individuals who are age 75 and over, as well as other high risk populations.

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This includes Iowans who are most vulnerable to exposure to COVID-19 or high-risk for illness as the result of a COVID-19 infection, with a significant focus on equity. Some examples include individuals with disabilities living in home settings, correctional facilities, other congregate settings and meatpacking plant workers. Acceptance of Recommendations Garcia accepted IDAC’s recommendations in full, modified with two additions. In addition to IDAC’s

recommendations for inclusion in Phase 1B are inspectors responsible for health, life and safety as well as government officials, including staff, to ensure continuity of government, engaged in state business at the Iowa Capitol during the legislative session. Please see the IDAC recommendations and response here. Tentative Timeframes It will require approximately 300-400,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to complete Phase 1A statewide. Iowa has, to date, been allocated approximately 226,000 doses. Vaccination of Phase 1B populations will begin no later than the first of February, and will take several weeks to complete. This timeline is subject to change. In order to assure that we are moving through the Phase 1A schedule swiftly, IDPH is monitoring allocation data and utilization rates as well as through discussions with healthcare providers to identify challenges with administration or uptake.

There will be more details soon on where Phase 1B populations will receive their vaccines. Many of these vaccines will be administered via employer-based clinics. There are also approximately 1,700 enrolled vaccine providers in the state. Many of these providers are pharmacies and clinical offices that are equipped to handle screening and scheduling for vaccination efforts. County health departments may partner with these providers to ensure their residents have access to the vaccine when it becomes available. In addition, to the above recommendations, IDAC strongly supports that no individual shall be restricted from obtaining vaccine based on residency or citizenship as noted in the **memo from the Iowa Department of Public Health (/sites/default/files/press-releases/Vaccine%20Memo-Regardless%20of%20Residence.pdf)** Re: Administration of COVID-19 Vaccine – County/State of Residence, dated December 11, 2020.

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As of today we've learned from the federal government of significant increased availability of the vaccine based on each state's ability to distribute supply quickly and number of residents over age 65, or under age 65 with significant health conditions. Once we have reasonable confidence that supply meets the

demands of this broader eligibility criteria, we will activate the broader distribution criteria. From the very beginning from this distribution effort, it has been our goal to reach all Iowans. IDPH continues to urge Iowans that while the vaccine is still a scarce resource, to practice virus mitigation efforts. Wear a mask or face covering Practice social distancing with those outside your household Clean your hands frequently with soap and water Stay home if you feel sick View the full IDAC recommendations here and vaccine administration data here.

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