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State of Rhode Island

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

21-20

March 3, 2021

EXPANDING RHODE ISLAND'S VACCINATION EFFORTS

WHEREAS, it has been almost a year since a state of emergency due to the dangers to health and life posed by COVID-19 was declared;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death;

WHEREAS, over 125,000 Rhode Islanders have tested positive for COVID-19, and more than 2,500 have died from it;

WHEREAS, the State has issued numerous executive orders, emergency regulations and policy guides to curb the spread of COVID-19, with such measures including travel restrictions, business closures and capacity limits, working and meeting remotely, masking, physical distancing and sanitary measures;

WHEREAS, the sickness, death and restrictions resulting from COVID-19 have made it the most urgent public health crisis in the last 100 years;

WHEREAS, safe and effective vaccinations against COVID-19 are now available;

WHEREAS, a widespread and equitable vaccination distribution program is necessary to protect the health and welfare of the people of this State and to reignite the State's business, civic, cultural and religious life;

WHEREAS, municipalities have extensive connections to the residents they serve and can have a huge impact on the success of any mass vaccination program; and

WHEREAS, all available resources must be used to expand the reach and speed up the current vaccination distribution system, including mobilizing the underused resources of our partner cities and towns.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DANIEL J. MCKEE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island, pursuant to Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution, Title 30, Chapter 15, and section 23-8-2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, do hereby order as follows:

1. The voluntary mass COVID-19 immunization program (Program) established by Governor Raimondo pursuant to section 23-8-2 of the Rhode Island General Laws is hereby reaffirmed and expanded.

2. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) shall continue to be the lead state agency in the administration and operation of the Program.

3. RIDOH shall engage the State's municipalities so that they can be full participants in the administration and expansion of the Program.

4. All state and municipal employees are encouraged not only to get the COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible but to become advocates and ambassadors for increased participation in the Program in their community. State and municipal employees are urged to assist their friends and neighbors, subject to State eligibility rules, in booking appointments and in facilitating transportation to and from vaccination sites.

5. RIDOH, in concert with the Governor's Office, shall update its comprehensive state and local level communications and outreach plan to reduce COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, directed especially to those communities whose proportionate participation in the Program lags that of the statewide average.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:

Daniel J. McKee
Governor