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NC Governor Roy Cooper

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North Carolina Continues its Commitment to Equitably Distribute COVID-19 Vaccines

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RALEIGH

Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D., outlined today how North Carolina is working to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. They were joined by Charles Evans, president of the North Carolina Association of Black County Officials and Chairman of the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners.

“Speed is critical, but we are also emphasizing equity,” said Governor Cooper. “Communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by this devastating pandemic, and the state is working to reduce the high rates of sickness this population is experiencing.”

Among the strategies that the state is implementing are requiring all vaccine providers to collect race and ethnicity data. The state is also prioritizing a portion of its weekly vaccines to events that focus on underserved communities and allocating a baseline weekly amount of vaccine based on county population to ensure geographic equity with vaccine available in all 100 counties. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has formed a dedicated team to track and provide technical assistance to vaccine providers to ensure they are hitting targets for speed and equity.

“We are embedding equity into all aspects of our vaccine plan and holding ourselves and vaccine providers accountable for ensuring that underserved and marginalized communities have access to vaccines,” said Sec. Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. “The vaccine is still in short supply, but all North Carolinians will have a spot to get their shot.”

The state continues to engage historically marginalized communities and share accurate information from trusted messengers. Commissioner Evans encouraged everyone, especially people of color, to get their vaccine when it’s their turn.

"Some Black and Brown citizens may mistrust the vaccine, and I understand why based on longstanding and continuing racial and ethnic injustices in our health care system," Commissioner Evans said. “I trust the vaccines because they have been tested. They are

safe and effective. If we are going to gain control of our lives, we need to get vaccinated."

North Carolina is making some progress in improving vaccine access for Black North Carolinians. The state has seen a 65% increase in the weekly number of first doses administered to our African American population over the past four weeks. The week of February 3rd, 18 percent of the vaccines administered in the state have gone to our Black/African American population, up from 11 percent the week of January 13th. African Americans make up 22% of North Carolina's population. There is still more work to do in our Latinx/Hispanic community where rates have stayed around two percent of vaccines administered in the state.

Last week, North Carolina became one of the first states in the country to release statewide race and ethnicity data for COVID-19 vaccines. The Department added new county demographic data including data by race, ethnicity, gender, and age group for COVID-19 vaccinations to the vaccine data dashboard.

NCDHHS also expanded its COVID-19 vaccine help center to answer people's questions and help them determine when they are eligible for a vaccine. The hotline, 888-675-4567, is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Callers can get help with general COVID-19 vaccine questions, information on eligibility groups, clinical questions about the vaccine, and how to find vaccine locations and transportation services.

Because vaccine supply is limited, states must vaccinate people in groups. North Carolina is currently vaccinating people in Groups 1 and 2, which include health care workers, long-term care staff and

residents and people 65 and older. Detailed information about each vaccine group is online at YourShotYourSpot.nc.gov (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Fcovid19.ncdhhs.gov*2Fvaccines&cf=13425&v=f63bbc2245d38c55d1e461077808623762fc11a66154a806673d72c3e764ec5e__;JSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RVKkyZOztrjXC1$) (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Fcovid19.ncdhhs.gov*2Fvaccines&cf=13425&v=f63bbc2245d38c55d1e461077808623762fc11a66154a806673d72c3e764ec5e__;JSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RVKkyZOztrjXC1$)(English) or covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vacuna (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Fcovid19.ncdhhs.gov*2Fvacuna&cf=13425&v=1f16fac59b6d1843bc52f44866fbe98a293f2b156124f23d387335c108078f42__;JSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RVKkyZO3Du3bRf$) (Spanish).

Governor Cooper also issued Executive Order No. 193, which amends and extends Executive Orders Nos. 130 (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2FEO130-Meeting-North-Carolinas-Health-and-Human-Services-Needs.pdf&cf=13425&v=188f8871c9d6b3ca8c9b45d28aeea65531126a46ad1ff70a735c0822651d4cba__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RV

O3o0R8zp$) and 139 (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2FEO139-DHHS2.pdf&cf=13425&v=01d250b22994876637f13e21a2eff8d48bec2a15ee5841ec9c9791051f378907__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RVOw419BPR$). Today's Order also gives the NCDHHS Secretary the authority to expand the types of providers who may have the authority to administer FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines. Through this Order, providers with this authority will now include dentists licensed in North Carolina. As the state continues to fight the pandemic and protect North Carolinians, the Order directs state officials to marshal all state resources, including property, facilities, and personnel, upon request by NCDHHS, towards vaccination efforts.

Today's Order received concurrence from the Council of State.

Read Executive Order No. 193 (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://click.icptrack.com/icp/relay.php?r=39781839&msgid=486746&act=20YB&c=1346310&destination=https*3A*2F*2Ffiles.nc.gov*2Fgovernor*2Fdocuments*2Ffiles*2FEO193-DHHS-Extension.pdf&cf=13425&v=6d54965203ce535ef30ccc3677229161706716ad832dc8edb618e43ac0c631f8__;JSUlJSUlJQ!!HYmSToo!PUGXQxzVecnN0IlZwwkVhulzigHBE_1xHfW2_xrBoMiChUCyMmHx5RVO066tQ96$).

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This press release is related to:

CONTACT

Ford Porter

919-814-2100 (tel:919-814-2100)