DPH System for Vaccination Requests Starts With More Than 56K Signups In First Day

Dover, DE (Jan. 20, 2021) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) on Wednesday successfully launched a system for individuals to request an appointment at vaccination events, as the state entered the Phase 1B stage of the vaccination plan.

As of 4:00 p.m., more than 56,000 requests had been successfully submitted. For the first phase of this system, requests are only being taken from Delawareans age 65 and over, who are at higher risk for COVID-19 incidence and mortality.

The requests being submitted create a waiting list for vaccination appointments, and do not immediately provide an appointment time and location, which will be offered to requesters as they become available.

DPH drive-through vaccination events to be held Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Delaware City and Georgetown will provide the first opportunity for persons who requested an appointment to be vaccinated. Invitations to make appointments for these events will be extended on Thursday, with highest priority for the limited slots going to individuals with age and health conditions that put them at greater risk.

Some notes on today's launch:

· 56,276 requests total between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., with the first 33,000 requests by 10:00 a.m.

· About 27,000 requests were from New Castle County, 24,000 were from Sussex County and 5,200 were from Kent County

· The COVID-19 website was slow loading for some users this morning because of high traffic, but the website and registration were operational at all times

· Staffing at the call center was increased to handle additional call volume today. While wait times at the call center to speak to an operator were higher this morning, wait times were down to 4 minutes by early afternoon

The request system generated a confirmation email that the request had been submitted. Some individuals reported that their email provider sent those to Spam folders, so individuals who did not get a confirmation email from their online submission may want to check their Spam folder. After this report was initially received, developers made adjustments to settings to reduce the chance the message would be marked as spam.

"We are really proud of the way the request system worked today,' said Director of Public Health Dr. Karyl Rattay. "Now that we have requests from so many, we can begin through a process of getting them vaccinated. The first opportunity will be at our drive-through clinics this weekend, but that certainly will not accommodate all these requests. Even though people have submitted a request, if they get an opportunity with their medical provider or employer or pharmacy, they should take that. We are building a system with multiple paths to get vaccinated, and this requests system is a part of it."

Email invitations to create an account and schedule an appointment will come from VAMS, the Vaccine Administration Management System created by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for use in multiple states. It will contain an individualized link and instructions. Because it is a national product that has been used in previous phases, the emails issued Thursday may say "Your organization or employer designated you in a priority group for vaccination" even though people

submitted their own requests.

Phase 1B includes vaccinating persons 65 and older as well as frontline essential workers. Approximately 200,00 Delawareans are eligible for vaccination in this phase, which will focus heavily on vaccinating those 65 and older first. Vaccines available through pharmacies are currently only for persons 65 and older, and are more likely to be available to Phase 1B essential workers in the coming weeks.

As of midnight, Tuesday, Jan. 19, 49,873 administered doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been reported to the state's immunization information system, DelVAX. Delaware's latest COVID-19 vaccination statistics can be found under the Vaccine Tracker dashboard at de.gov/healthycommunity. Additional information about COVID-19 vaccine rollout is available at de.gov/covidvaccine. Questions can be directed to the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-643-1715. People who are deaf and hard of hearing should call 2-1-1 or text their ZIP code to 898-211. Individuals can email their questions concerning the vaccine to Vaccine@Delaware.gov.

Information about testing events, including community testing sites, permanent fixed testing sites, and free-standing sites operated by the health care systems and hospitals, will be listed on the testing section of the Delaware coronavirus website at de.gov/gettested.

Delawareans over the age of 18 are encouraged to download COVID Alert DE, Delaware's free exposure notification app to help protect your neighbors while ensuring your privacy. Download on the App Store or Google Play.

Individuals with general questions about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211, or email delaware211@uwde.org. Hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Medically related questions regarding testing, symptoms, and health-related guidance can be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

Individuals who have complaints about individuals violating public gathering restrictions should contact state or local law enforcement. Concerns that a business may be violating operating restrictions should be directed to: HSPContact@delaware.gov. Questions related to business re-openings or operations as businesses re-open should go to COVID19FAQ@delaware.gov. Questions regarding unemployment claims should be emailed to: UIClaims@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus