EMERGENCY ALERTS

Coronavirus Update

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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces $4.7 Million for Vaccine Equity in Hardest-Hit Communities; Regional Vaccination Collaboratives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/24/2021

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

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NATICK — The Baker-Polito Administration today announced a new $4.7 million initiative to promote COVID-19 vaccine equity in the 20 communities most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The Administration also announced 11 high-efficiency regional vaccination collaboratives involving local health officials and other regional partners. Governor Baker made the announcements after touring the new mass vaccination location in Natick.

Vaccination Appointments: Tomorrow, around 50,000 new appointments will be added at mass vaccination locations across the Commonwealth. This includes the mass vaccination locations at Fenway Park, Gillette Stadium, Springfield, Danvers, Dartmouth and Natick. Retail pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens will also administer over 20,000 doses next week as well.

Residents can go to **www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine** (/COVIDvaccine) tomorrow morning to find and schedule their appointments. Appointment availability is very limited due to the constrained supply of vaccine doses that the Commonwealth is receiving from the federal government.

$4.7 Million for Vaccine Equity: The Administration today announced a $4.7 million effort to support its **vaccine equity initiative announced last week** (/news/baker-polito-administration-launches-targeted-outreach-initiative-in-20-hardest-hit), which focuses on reducing barriers to vaccination in the 20 hardest-hit communities in the Commonwealth. The Administration will work with Archipelago Strategies Group (ASG) and Health Care for All (HCFA) to best leverage these funds.

The initiative will support and coordinate with local leaders and community- and faith-based organizations to strengthen existing efforts in these cities and towns. These efforts will specifically focus on communities of color, homebound seniors, disabled individuals and other hard-to-reach populations. ASG and HCFA will provide hyperlocal, population-specific communication resources as well as hiring local residents and working with local organizations with cultural and linguistic competencies to reach disparately impacted populations in each priority municipality. ASG specializes in grassroots mobilization, partnering with local leaders, community organizations, and media partners to develop community-based solutions. As a subcontractor, HCFA will provide high-touch support for priority communities, including direct service support, community organizing, education, and outreach.

This work will complement the Commonwealth's $2.5 million public awareness campaign, "**Trust the Facts, Get the Vax** (/trustthefacts)," adapting the campaign's messaging for specific communities. The initiative will focus on the 20 municipalities with the greatest COVID-19 case burden, taking into account social determinants of health and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of color. These communities are Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield and Worcester. This work will be coordinated with targeted opportunities for increased vaccine access through existing and new locations, including pop up sites and mobile clinics.

Regional Collaboratives: In addition, the Administration today also designated 11 new regional collaboratives that will support efforts to streamline vaccination efforts. These collaboratives will leverage local health officials, regional hospitals and others to deliver high-throughput, efficient vaccination sites for all eligible residents across the Commonwealth beginning March 1. Collaboratives must meet several criteria:

- Have capacity to vaccinate a minimum of 750 individuals per day, 5 days per week (subject to vaccine availability);
- Meet an administration rate threshold of 85% and report doses within 24 hours;
- Be open to all residents of the Commonwealth (collaborations may focus outreach efforts towards those who live or work in the area, but must be open to all Massachusetts residents)
- Provide public links for vaccine appointments on **www.mass.gov/COVIDVaccine** (/COVIDVaccine).

New and existing collaboratives announced today:

- Barnstable County
- Berkshire County Boards of Health Association
- Franklin County Regional Collaborative
- Harrington Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Heywood Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Lawrence General Hospital, in Collaboration with LBOH
- Marshfield-Plymouth
- Northampton & Amherst
- Randolph – Collaboration between Avon, Holbrook, and Randolph

- Rutland
- Worcester, Worcester State University, Commonwealth Medicine and St. Vincent Hospital

Information about booking appointments through these collaboratives will be available on **www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine** (/COVIDvaccine) in the coming days.

Regional collaborative leaders on their programs:

Marshfield-Plymouth: "The Marshfield Fairgrounds drive-through site is a place for residents on the South Shore to get vaccinated while in their cars without the worry of parking, walking, or waiting in line. Special thanks to Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito and their administration for supporting this site to service so many people in South Eastern Mass. The more people we can get vaccinated the closer we get to 'herd immunity.' This pandemic does not recognize town borders, and neither can we." – ***Michael Maresco, Marshfield Town Administrator***

Lawrence General Hospital, in collaboration with local health departments: "Our Lawrence General Hospital vaccination team is currently vaccinating over 1,000 people a day including some of the most vulnerable in our community. The communities we serve have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and Lawrence General Hospital remains committed and eager to continue working closely with city leaders and state health officials as we ramp up vaccination efforts here in the Merrimack Valley." – ***Deborah J. Wilson, President and CEO of Lawrence General Hospital***

Berkshire County Boards of Health Association: "We recognized early-on that working together would be the most effective way to vaccinate our community here in the Berkshires. Our local health care organizations and public health departments had been partnering since the beginning of the pandemic, and collaborative vaccination clinics were the natural next step. We are grateful to the Commonwealth for helping us to formally create the Berkshire Vaccine Collaborative, and we look forward to continuing our work to vaccinate our entire community." – ***Laura Kittross, Director of the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association, and Darlene Rodowicz, Executive Vice President of Berkshire Health Systems***

Randolph: "Since February 5th, Randolph has been operating as a regional Covid-19 vaccination site in collaboration with our neighboring communities of Avon and Holbrook. As our efforts ramp up to vaccinate Massachusetts residents through the different phases of eligibility, we are grateful for this opportunity and partnership with the COVID Command Center. This step towards vaccine distribution equity is important and Randolph is proud to partner with the state to ensure a smooth and efficient process." – ***Gerard F. Cody, REHS/RS, Randolph Public Health Director***

Rutland: "The Town of Rutland is pleased to operate a regional COVID vaccination site. Rutland is the geographic center of the Commonwealth. We anticipate operating at 750 vaccine doses daily / 5 days a week. We are happy to fulfill this need in Central MA." – ***Richard C Stevens, Rutland Health Agent***

Heywood Hospital, in collaboration with local health departments: "In partnership with the City of Gardner, Heywood Healthcare opened its Covid-19 Vaccine Clinic on January 28, 2021. Located at the Polish American Citizens Club in Gardner, the clinic is staffed primarily by community volunteers consisting of retired physicians and RNs, in addition to Mount Wachusett Community College nursing students. It's an honor to provide this service to our community, and we look forward to expanding that service to more individuals eligible for

vaccine. We are grateful for our partnership with the state as we work through this pandemic and look forward to coming out on the other side. During its first month of service, operations at the clinic quickly ramped up from 200 doses administered during one session per week to nearly 2,500 doses now being administered during three sessions per week." – ***Rozanna Penney, Vice President of Perioperative Services and Clinic Director at Heywood Hospital***

Harrington Hospital, in collaboration with local health departments: "Harrington began providing vaccine to its employees in mid-December and quickly moved to vaccinate first responders. We then began working with the State to receive more vaccine to become a Statewide site and partnered with the local and regional communities. We worked closely with Southbridge to utilize their community center and gained support from local police and fire/EMS. This is an ongoing critical partnership! We went from vaccinating about 150 per day and now are doing more than 500 per day. The Commonwealth has supported our program as essential to provide vaccine to all those that are eligible." – ***Ed Moore, President and CEO of Harrington Hospital***

Northampton & Amherst: "I'm proud that Northampton has been chosen to fulfill this critical role for the people of Western Massachusetts. We take our responsibility very seriously as we work to get everyone vaccinated and get all our lives back to normal. I'm proud to have strong partners in the Town of Amherst and the State Department of Public Health to accomplish our mission as fast as possible." – ***Merridith O'Leary, Northampton Public Health Director***

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