Governor Carney, DPH, DEMA Announce Expansion of COVID-19 Vaccination Program

State of Delaware focusing efforts on reaching vulnerable, underserved 65+ Delawareans

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney, the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH), and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) on Tuesday announced an expansion of Delaware's COVID-19 vaccination program with a statewide focus on vaccinating Delawareans in underserved, minority communities.

Over the last two weeks, the state has piloted a series of efforts aimed at vaccinating the hardest-to-reach seniors. This included partnering with community organizations to invite seniors to an event at Salesianum School and to an event at the Wilmington campus of Delaware Technical Community College hosted by Vault. This past weekend, the state reached out to seniors, including those in low-income communities, to provide them appointments to a vaccination event at the Chase Center in Wilmington.

As of Monday, February 1, the State of Delaware and its partners had administered 103,791 COVID-19 vaccinations. Despite state and partner efforts, just 4 percent of those vaccinated are Black, according to Delaware's vaccine tracker. Just 2 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino.

In **31 percent of vaccination records**, race remains unreported. Governor Carney plans to announce steps this week to ensure that enrolled vaccination providers promptly report race and other demographic information to DPH.

Additional efforts the state announced on Tuesday include:

- The **Community Health Services unit** at DPH will begin partnering with the Wilmington Housing Authority (WHA) this week to vaccinate 65+ Delawareans in senior high-rises as part of a larger effort to reach seniors who don't have access to technology or who may have mobility challenges.
- **Enrolled pharmacies** will receive an allocation of 4,000 doses this week, with a focus on pharmacies serving underserved communities.
- **Hospital systems and specialty care providers** – including ChristianaCare, Beebe Healthcare, ENT & Allergy of Delaware, and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) – also are creating events in partnership with the State of Delaware to vaccinate 65+ Delawareans, including underserved populations.

Delaware is in Phase 1B of its COVID-19 vaccination program. Delawareans aged 65+ and certain frontline workers are eligible for vaccination. Learn more at de.gov/covidvaccine.

> *"Our goal remains the same: we're working to vaccinate as many Delawareans as possible, as quickly as possible," said* ***Governor Carney.*** *"We also need to make sure we're distributing the vaccine equitably and reaching especially those Delaware seniors who are less mobile and don't have access to a computer or smartphone. These additional efforts by the Division of Public Health and their partners will expand access to the COVID-19 vaccine among those populations, so we can reach all of our neighbors with this life-saving vaccine."*

Additional vaccination efforts this week include:

- **SECOND DOSES:** First responders previously vaccinated by DPH will receive second doses in a series of events. The first of those events was held on Monday in Dover operated by Curative. Another six events will be held at first responder facilities around the state between February 3 and February 18, coordinated by DPH staff.
- **PARTNER EVENTS:** Curative will vaccinate about 2,000 individuals at indoor events from Tuesday through Friday in Dover. All appointments have already been filled from outreach to the waiting list at vaccinerequest.delaware.gov. Vault Health will resume its vaccinations in Wilmington next week, and Curative appointments will be scheduled in Dover as well, with invitations made available to individuals registered on the waiting list.
- **PROVIDERS:** Hospitals will receive about 4,000 doses this week to administer to 65+ Delawareans, as well as their own Phase 1A health care workers. Health care systems have also been asked to coordinate with underserved communities and faith-based communities to vaccinate vulnerable seniors.
- **EDUCATORS:** The Delaware Department of Education (DOE) is coordinating vaccination for 1,200 educators and school staff this week.

"We are proud to have reached the mark of 100,000 doses delivered so far in our COVID-19 vaccination efforts. That's about a tenth of our population who has reduced their risk already even before the second dose, since the first dose has 52% to 80% effectiveness," said **Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of the Division of Public Health**. "Our goal is to keep expanding the network of options for getting vaccinated, including finding ways to reach individuals and communities where large vaccination events are not a suitable option."

Learn more about Delaware's COVID-19 vaccination program at de.gov/covidvaccine.

Are you 65 or older? Sign up for the State of Delaware's vaccination waiting list at vaccinerequest.delaware.gov. Delawareans also may call DPH's Vaccination Call Center at 1-833-643-1715.

Individuals with general questions about COVID-19 should call Delaware 2-1-1. Those 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.

Visit de.gov/coronavirus for the latest information on Delaware's COVID-19 response. Find testing events and locations at de.gov/gettested.

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