Starting Monday, Gov. Edwards Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Another 475,000 Louisianans, Including K-12 Teachers, Daycare Staff, Some People with Health Conditions

February 18, 2021

Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced that beginning Monday, February 22, an additional group of Louisianans – K-12 teachers, school support staff, day care staff, those who are pregnant and Louisianans aged 55 to 64 with certain health conditions – are eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine. This group represents around 475,000 Louisianans and will bring the total population eligible in Louisiana to nearly 1.65 million people. Louisiana is currently vaccinating people in Priority Group 1B-Tier One.

Louisiana's COVID vaccination strategy relies on making vaccine doses available across the state through community clinics, pharmacies, hospitals and other health care providers. So far 812,962 total vaccine doses have been administered in Louisiana, with 271,216 Louisianans receiving both doses.

As dose allocations of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines from the federal government have increased week over week through direct allocations to the states and to a federal pharmacy program Louisiana opted in to, the Governor decided to expand the population that is eligible for the vaccine.

"Teachers, school support staff and daycare employees have played a critical role throughout this pandemic and their safety is important to our continued recovery. We also know that those people with certain underlying health issues are more likely to have severe or devastating outcomes from COVID, which is why we are expanding vaccine access to people ages 55 to 64 with certain health conditions as outlined by the CDC," Gov. Edwards said. "Thanks to continued increases in the availability of vaccine doses to the state of Louisiana from our federal partners, I am confident that now is the right time to continue to expand eligibility. People will still have to be patient and the vaccine doses are still limited, but this is a positive step forward for our state. It is my hope that soon even more people will be able to get these safe and effective vaccines in Louisiana."

The Louisiana Dept. of Health has published the list of participating providers on its website: covidvaccine.la.gov. In addition, residents can call 211 to find a vaccine provider near them.

Eligible residents must contact a participating provider to make an appointment. Patients who arrive without an appointment will not be vaccinated. LDH cannot make appointments for patients; only providers can.

Patients should receive their second dose of the COVID vaccine at the same location where they received their first dose. Second-dose appointments should be made during the administration of the first dose.

There are some expected delays associated with vaccine delivery this week because of extreme winter weather. Some providers may have to reschedule vaccine appointments for both first and second doses. The CDC guidance states that the second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval, which is 21 or 28 days between doses, as possible, but the shot will still be effective if there is a delay in getting the second dose. There is no need for people to restart the vaccination series if the second dose must be delayed because of weather, but people should contact their providers to reschedule.

PRIORITY GROUPS IN LOUISIANA

Within priority groups and tiers there is no particular sequencing. Participating providers must make available vaccine available to anyone who is eligible. Failure to do so will inform future decisions about distribution.

Priority Group 1-A: Ongoing (around 249,000 eligible people)

- Health care workers at Tier 1 and Tier 2 hospitals
- Staff and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- First responders to serve as vaccinators (Emergency Medical Services, fire personnel, law enforcement)

Priority Group 1-B, Tier One: As of Monday, February 22, 2021 (around 1,391,000 eligible people)

- Dialysis providers and patients
- Ambulatory and outpatient providers and staff
- Behavioral health providers and staff
- Urgent care clinic providers and staff
- Community care providers and staff
- Dental providers and staff
- Nonemergency Medical Transportation staff
- Professional home care providers (including hospice workers) and home care recipients (including older and younger people with disabilities over the age of 16 who receive community or home-based care, as well as clients of home health agencies)
- American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and Support Service Providers (SSPs) working in community and clinic-based settings, and clients who are both deaf

- Health-related support personnel (lab staff, mortuary staff who have contact with corpses, pharmacy staff)
- Schools of allied health students, residents and staff
- Law enforcement and other first responders
- Persons 65 years old and older
- Louisiana Unified Command Group
- State and local essential COVID emergency response personnel
- Some elections staff ahead of March and April elections
- **Teachers and any other support staff working onsite in K-12 or daycare**
- **Individuals aged 55-64 with at least one of the conditions listed by the CDC as placing them at an "increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19." The CDC list of conditions can be found here. (/action.cfm?md=communication&task=addMessageClickThru&msgid=3100&uid=0&encoded=1&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ecdc%2Egov%2Fcoronavirus%2F201**

- **Cancer**
- **Chronic kidney disease**
- **COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)**
- **Down Syndrome**
- **Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies**
- **Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant**
- **Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30kg/m^2 or higher but < 40kg/m^2)**
- **Severe obesity (BMIC >40kg/m^2)**
- **Pregnancy**
- **Sickle Cell Disease**
- **Smoking**
- **Type 2 diabetes mellitus**
- **All pregnant persons, regardless of age.**

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