STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
Governor Dan McKee

Governor McKee Announces COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for Teachers, School Staff, and Child Care Workers

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Published on Wednesday, March 10, 2021

PAWTUCKET, RI – Joined by colleagues from across government, Governor Dan McKee on Tuesday, March 9 announced that the state of Rhode Island is partnering with cities and towns on an ambitious plan to get first doses of COVID-19 vaccine to all K-12 teachers, school staff, and child care workers by the end of the month.

"Getting our teachers, school staff, and child care workers vaccinated is one of the best things we can do right now to support students, families, schools, and our economy," said Governor McKee. "Here in Rhode Island, we've heard President Biden's directive, and his goal is our goal. Child care and in-person learning are essential services, and we should treat them that way. I want to thank the leadership of our cities and towns for stepping up to help us meet this moment and get these workers vaccinated quickly, efficiently, and safely."

Teachers, school staff, and child care workers at centers and family child care sites licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) will be vaccinated at the existing 30 city- and town-operated clinics throughout Rhode Island. Some clinics are serving more than one community. School staff includes administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, support staff, clerical staff, custodial or maintenance staff, bus drivers and bus monitors.

Clinics will be open to teachers and staff from public, private, parochial, and independent schools. Many will start vaccinating on Friday and Saturday. This week, municipal Emergency Management Agency Directors will reach out to school leaders (district superintendents, charter school leaders, non-public school leaders) and DHS licensees for child care centers to share information about how they can get vaccinated. People will be vaccinated based on the community where they work, not where they live. After doing first doses in March, these clinics will start administering second doses in April.

Given the high volume of staff and the large number of child care workers in Providence, the city of Providence will use an alternate approach. Through support from the Partnership for Rhode Island and Lifespan, a designated clinic for Providence teachers, school staff and licensed child care workers has been established for three weeks at 335R Prairie Ave., Providence, RI 02905. Beginning Wednesday, March 10, eligible individuals can call (401) 444-8139 to schedule an appointment.

Governor McKee presented this school and child care vaccination plan at a socially-distanced press event today at St. Anthony's Parish Center in Pawtucket, the site of the city's community vaccination clinic. He was joined by Pawtucket Mayor Donald R. Grebien; Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH; Tom McCarthy, Executive Director, COVID Response, Rhode Island Department of Health; Rhode Island Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green; Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals President Francis Flynn; National Education Association Rhode Island President Lawrence E. Purtill; Pawtucket School Committee Chairman Gerard Charbonneau; and Pawtucket Teachers' Alliance President Ronald Beaupre.

"Minimizing the [illegible]

"Minimizing the spread is imperative to ensuring our youth, many who have missed a year outside t classroom, are back in a safe and conducive learning environment. Our teachers, school staff and child-care workers will be in contact with our children every day," said Pawtucket Mayor Donald R. Grebien. "I thank the McKee Administration, RIDOH, and RIDE for their efforts and partnership in prioritizing our educators for the benefit of our youth."

"Getting teachers, school staff, and child care workers vaccinated allows us to continue the great momentum we've built up in our vaccination campaign over the last month," said Director of Health Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH. "Along with testing and treatment, vaccination is a critical part of our work to get Rhode Island through the COVID-19 pandemic."

"This effort to get teachers, school staff, and child care workers vaccinated is in line with the approach Rhode Island has taken throughout this pandemic: prioritize learning for our kids, and do what it takes to create environments where the most learning possible can happen," said Tom McCarthy, the Executive Director of RIDOH's COVID Response. "We look forward to working with cities and towns throughout the state over the next three weeks to get shots into the arms of these critical workers."

"Our teachers and school staff are and always have been, a top priority. We know that our classrooms are spaces that should be protected in any way we can in order to provide the best possible educational experiences for our students, especially in these challenging times," said Rhode Island Education Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green. "I want to thank Governor Dan McKee for his continued advocacy and his work to ensure that every one of our school staff has access to a vaccination."

In addition to getting vaccinated at city- and town-run clinics, teachers are also able to make appointments at select CVS and Walgreens locations. Teachers, school staff, and child care workers are not currently eligible to get vaccinated at one of the State-run sites.

Rhode Island will remain on schedule for the next groups in its vaccination timeline because 14,040 doses of surplus vaccine from the long-term care facility pharmacy partnership are being reintegrated into Rhode Island's general inventory. Roughly 18,500 teachers, school staff, and child care workers need to be vaccinated, based on uptake trends and estimates on how many of these workers have already been vaccinated. In mid-March, RIDOH anticipates opening eligibility to the next groups in the timeline: people who are 60 to 64 years old and people who are 16 to 64 with specific underlying health conditions. More information about Rhode Island's COVID-19 vaccination timeline is available online at covid.ri.gov/vaccination.

General information about COVID-19 is also available online at covid.ri.gov.