Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force Issues Statewide Operations Plan

First-of-its-Kind Tactical Operations Plan Provides Detailed Framework and Methodology for Reaching Vulnerable Communities
Announces New Community Vaccination Clinic at First Baptist Church in Glenarden For Prince George's County Residents
Task Force Pursuing Mobile Vaccination Clinics for Western Maryland and Eastern Shore

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan and Brigadier General Janeen Birckhead today announced the release of the Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force Operations Plan to ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines for hard-to-reach and underserved communities. They were joined by Lieutenant Governor Boyd K. Rutherford.

Watch today's press conference.

View the slides from today's press conference.

"We are announcing the very first vaccine equity operations plan in America to further address health disparities and the issue of equity, and to get more vaccines to people in every community who need them most," said Governor Hogan. "Just as important as making sure shots get into arms quickly is that we work each and every day to ensure fairness and equitable access to vaccines."

"Growing disparities in these communities make it necessary to be intentional and concrete in steps that we are going to take to remove these barriers and improve the rate of 'vaccine in arms' in vulnerable populations," said General Birckhead. "What you need to know is that we are committed to ensuring access to the vaccine by reaching out to the community and faith-based organizations, and intentionality is our mantra: it is meeting the people where they are."

vaccine, increases."

VACCINE EQUITY TASK FORCE

The Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force (VETF) is working with the state's 24 local health departments to focus COVID-19 vaccination efforts on underserved, vulnerable, and hard-to-reach populations to ensure the equitable delivery of vaccines.

In addition to evaluating the county plans and targeting resources at equity-focused vaccination efforts, the task force will serve as a clearinghouse for proposals and requests from nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations seeking to serve vulnerable populations.

Learn more about the VETF.

VACCINE EQUITY OPERATIONS PLAN

The VETF is today issuing a first-of-its kind tactical operations plan that provides a detailed framework for the creation of community vaccination sites. The framework begins with the community proposal submission process and encompasses assessment, resource allocation, and operational support. The process is guided by a flexible and data-driven methodology, and is grounded in cultural awareness, community and private partnerships, and a robust communications plan.

Read the operations plan here.

TARGETED OUTREACH

The VETF is guided by the careful use of recognized socioeconomic variables to identify communities and individuals who are vulnerable, under-served, hesitant, or difficult-to-reach. Key variables include:

- Population over 65 years old
- Population with an annual income below $49,000
- Unemployment rate
- Population older than 25 years old without a high school diploma
- Minority composition of the community
- Single parent households
- Housing with more than one person per room
- Households without access to a vehicle
- Total COVID cases
- Amount of population receiving at least the first dose

Data is sourced from the 2020 Census, the American Community Survey, CRISP (the State Designated Health Information Exchange), IMAP (Maryland's mapping and geographic information systems portal), and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Social Vulnerability Index.

NEW COMMUNITY VACCINATION CLINIC IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

The Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force will partner with the First Baptist Church in Glenarden and University of Maryland Capital Region Health to establish a large, community focused-vaccination site in Prince George's County in Upper Marlboro.

This site has come about thanks to the leadership of Pastor John K. Jenkins, a trusted voice in the Prince George's County community, who offered the church's 63,000-square foot family life center to UMMS to dramatically expand the hospital's vaccination clinic.

UMMS and First Baptist Church began planning for this site earlier this year, but they have agreed to dramatically accelerate timelines and open in less than two weeks. They will also significantly expand vaccination capacity to 900 doses per day, with the possibility of further expansion later in the spring.

The University of Maryland Capital Region Health will supply vaccine and support personnel, which means no vaccine or other resources will be diverted from the county government or the Six Flags America mass vaccination site.

MOBILE VACCINATION CLINICS FOR WESTERN MARYLAND AND EASTERN SHORE

the Eastern Shore, and is coordinating with FEMA to deliver additional, larger mobile clinics on the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland.

RECENT COMMUNITY CLINICS

Reid Temple A.M.E. Church, Prince George's County
On February 12, following a vaccine confidence event led by Lt. Governor Rutherford, General Birckhead, and church leadership, eligible community members received vaccinations through a partnership with Doctors Community Hospital. View the photos.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, Baltimore City
The VETF partnered with Bishop Bruce Lewandowski and John Hopkins Medical Institute to host a clinic at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church. The clinic administered 176 vaccines on February 26. View the storyboard.

New Shiloh Baptist Church, Baltimore City
The VETF coordinated the New Shiloh Baptist Church clinic on February 27 with support from Safeway. 64 vaccinations were administered February 27, with 250 doses projected for a follow-up clinic on March 6. View the storyboard.

VACCINE EQUITY EFFORTS TO DATE

During his opening remarks at today's press conference, Governor Hogan detailed the state's vaccine equity efforts to date, including:

- In December, Maryland was one of the first states to post racial data for vaccinations to ensure transparency in vaccine equity.
- Governor Hogan stood up the Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force, led by General Janeen Birckhead and members of MDH's Office of Minority Health and Disparities. The state asked each county to appoint a liaison to General Birckhead, and to work with her team to develop individual plans for their local jurisdictions.
- In January, Maryland launched a statewide vaccine confidence campaign featuring trusted ambassadors such 20th U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams, UMBC President Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, Reverend Matthew Watley of Kingdom Fellowship AME Church, Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks, and Coppin State University Men's Basketball Coach and former NBA player Juan Dixon.
- The Biden administration's plan for ensuring equity in vaccine distribution calls for using community health centers, and each week, the state allocates doses directly to a range of federally qualified health centers, also known as FQHCs.
- Distribution planning is inclusive, and takes into account requests from vaccinators willing to reach vulnerable communities. Half of the allocations to Giant, Walmart, and Safeway are now dedicated to clinics for vulnerable populations. Walmart has begun holding closed clinics for residents from Prince George's County's pre-registration list.
- The state stood up a COVID-19 vaccination support center with English- and Spanish-speaking advocates available to make appointments for mass vaccination sites, answer vaccine questions, and direct people to local providers.
- The state's first four mass vaccination sites are located in heavily minority areas, including Prince George's County, Baltimore City, and Charles County. The Baltimore City Convention Center is transitioning to focus entirely on underserved populations.
- Maryland will soon launch a statewide pre-registration system for mass vaccination sites that is accessible for residents with and without internet access.

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