Governor Carney, DPH Announce Transition to Vaccinate Phase 1B

Registration for new DE Vaccine Roster to open Wednesday

WILMINGTON, Del. — Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) announced Tuesday, January 19, that the state will transition to Phase 1B in its COVID-19 vaccination plan starting today, with a focus on persons 65 and up.

More than 200,000 Delawareans qualify for vaccination in this phase, and multiple options for residents to be vaccinated will begin this week and then expand in coming weeks, including large vaccination events with a new appointment request system.

> ***MEDIA ADVISORY:*** *Governor Carney and Dr. Karyl Rattay will hold a COVID-19 Update and Public Q&A on Phase 1B vaccine rollout* ***TONIGHT, January 19 at 7:00 p.m.*** *Delawareans can submit questions to townhall@delaware.gov. The Q&A will be streamed on facebook.com/johncarneyde and livestream.com/stateofdelaware.*

As one of many options in coming weeks, DPH, county EMS agencies, the Delaware Medical Reserve Corps, and hospital partners including Beebe Healthcare, have scheduled five drive-through vaccination events for persons 65 and older, as well as for remaining Phase 1A personnel, on Friday, January 22 at the Delaware City Division of Motor Vehicles and on Saturday and Sunday, January 23 and 24, at both the Delaware City and Georgetown DMV locations.

These vaccination events are **by appointment only.** Delawareans who are 65 or older can register at de.gov/covidvaccine. Registration will open at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, January 20.

> *"We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable Delawareans from COVID-19," said* ***Governor Carney****. "Our goal is to get as many Delawareans vaccinated as quickly and safely as possible. That's how we'll beat this virus, get back to normal, and rebuild. The reality is that will take some time and some patience, so in the meantime, let's do what works. Wear a mask. Wash your hands. Avoid gatherings. Stay vigilant."*

"We are excited to be able to move into this next phase of vaccinating Delawareans but must ask for patience as everyone in this group simply cannot be vaccinated in a matter of days," said **Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director of the Delaware Division of Public Health**. "With limited resources, there will be some attention within Phase 1B based on the risk factors we know, and the focus will be – especially in the first large vaccination events – on those 65 and over. We are looking forward to growing our vaccine options in the coming weeks to give people statewide multiple options for COVID-19 vaccination, as they now have for COVID-19 testing or flu shots."

Phase 1B includes all individuals 65 and over, and frontline essential workers including: fire, police, correctional officers, teachers and education staff (including child care providers), U.S. postal workers, food manufacturing, agriculture, transportation, and grocery store workers. Efforts will also continue to vaccinate Phase 1A health care personnel and nursing home residents and staff who have not yet been vaccinated.

With limited vaccination doses available from the federal government, officials strongly caution that it could take weeks or months for all 200,000 Phase 1B eligible individuals to be vaccinated. The multiple options available will include the

following.

K-12 educators: This week, the Department of Education will be announcing vaccination options specifically for educators and school staff. The Department is partnering with Acme/Safeway pharmacies to host vaccination events for educators at multiple school sites throughout the state, and to allow educators to be vaccinated at Acme/Safeway pharmacy locations. These options will become available the week of January 25.

Child care workers: The Department of Education's Office of Child Care Licensing will be providing vaccination options specifically for child care workers. This model will closely resemble the K-12 educators and school staff and will be released the week of January 25.

Correctional officers: The Department of Correction began receiving vaccine earlier this month. Officers performing 1A functions have been offered the opportunity to get vaccinated, as have a small number of inmates and officers over the age of 65 with serious medical conditions. DOC will continue receiving vaccine as supply allows and will continue vaccinating inmates and officers in order based on age and health condition.

Other frontline essential workers: Vaccination planning for eligible frontline essential workers is underway and is a partnership between DPH and the Division of Small Business. The Division of Small Business will release information in the coming days that will assist employers who want to host their own vaccination events for their employees or who want to help their employees learn where to get vaccinated. In the meantime, questions from frontline employers about the vaccination process can be directed to the Division of Small Business at Covid19faq@delaware.gov.

Pharmacies: A list of pharmacies taking COVID-19 vaccine appointments will be available at de.gov/covidvaccine starting the week of January 25. The list will grow as additional pharmacies receive doses. Pharmacies are expected to be a primary choice for vaccinations as more vaccine becomes available, but as with other methods, they will have limited doses in the early part of the effort. Pharmacies are asked to limit their efforts in their stores at this time to Phase 1A and Phase 1B individuals 65 and over.

Primary care providers: Vaccines will be available to those 65 and over from some primary care and specialty care providers, such as medical practices, urgent care sites, and for patients of Federally Qualified Health Centers. Some providers will contact their own patients to offer vaccination appointments, and others may invite the public to request appointments. Medical providers who wish to vaccinate individuals must enroll in the state's immunization system through a separate process. Information and instructions can be found on the Medical Provider page of de.gov/covidvaccine.

DPH vaccination events: DPH and its partners have scheduled five drive-through vaccination events for persons 65 and older, as well as for remaining Phase 1A personnel, on January 22 at the Delaware City Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and on January 23 and 24, at both the Delaware City and Georgetown DMV locations. These vaccination events **are by appointment only**. The Delaware City DMV will close at noon on Friday to accommodate the vaccination event.

The registration system currently for Delawareans ages 65 and older will have the following steps: (1) An individual will request an appointment at de.gov/covidvaccine which will put them on a waiting list and (2) when appointments become available, invitation emails will be sent to individuals to schedule an appointment online for an upcoming event. These invitations will be unique and cannot be shared. Seniors with computer access are advised to request an appointment through this online system, which will be available in English, Spanish and Haitian Creole. For seniors without computer access only, a phone line will be announced Wednesday to take requests for an appointment and, as slots become available, to help complete the appointment process.

DPH expects more requests for vaccination event appointments than doses and slots available for the first weekend and the

foreseeable future. Sending of invitations to schedule appointments will occur based on age, medical condition and other risk factors. Delawareans age 65 and older who request an appointment but do not immediately receive an invitation email will continue to be on the waiting list to receive an invitation for future vaccination events. Multiple requests will not increase the chance of receiving an invitation for an appointment.

Any individuals who arrive without an appointment for this weekend's events should not expect to be vaccinated. In the next few weeks, additional large-scale vaccination venues are expected to be brought online to vaccinate Phase 1B individuals and future phase groups. As the state progresses through and past Phase 1B, the appointment system will be used for individuals in future phases.

Those who receive appointments for vaccination events are reminded to please dress in appropriate clothing so that your upper arm can be exposed, including not getting out of the vehicle at a drive-through event to remove a coat or shirt. Also, if someone has received a flu, shingles or other vaccination recently, they cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccination within 14 days of the prior vaccination.

As a reminder, both before and after receiving a vaccine, people should continue to wear face coverings, social distance, avoid hosting or attending large gatherings, and wash and sanitize hands frequently.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, whether related to medical or social service needs, should call Delaware 2-1-1. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Download COVID Alert DE in the App Store or Google Play.

Report a business for COVID-19 non-compliance using this form.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

###