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NCDHHS

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Former Gov. Hunt, Coastal Plain Area Leaders Receive COVID-19 Vaccines

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RALEIGH

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“Mrs. Hunt and I are thankful the COVID-19 vaccines are available,” said Former Governor Hunt. “We're deeply grateful for the leadership of Governor Roy Cooper and his team, and encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible.”

Julius Walker, Jr., who serves as Washington County Commissioner and in several other roles in the community, says the COVID-19 vaccine is key to protecting yourself and loved ones.

“I'm active in my church and throughout the community, and I’m excited to educate my family friends and others about my experience getting vaccinated against COVID-19,” said Walker, Jr.

He hopes others will be inspired to do the same. “Get vaccinated; not only for yourself, but for others too.”

For Representative Shelly Willingham (D-23), the COVID-19 vaccine offers a beacon of hope and he believes a growing number of North Carolinians will be eager to receive the vaccine over time.

“As someone who is 70 plus and with some of my health conditions, I jumped at the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine,” said Willingham. “I want to be around my grandkids. I enjoy being out. The sooner people get vaccinated, the sooner we can finally get ahead of this. Just as more and more people began wearing masks, I think we’ll see a growing number of people who want to get vaccinated to protect themselves and others.”

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced this week that people 75 and older are now eligible to receive the vaccine as part of the state’s Phase 1b, Group 1, in accordance with North Carolina’s updated COVID-19 vaccine rollout

plan. (https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/NCDHHS-Vaccine-Infographic.pdf)While some counties have started, others will begin vaccinating this population over the next week.

This phase follows the vaccination of health care workers caring for patients with COVID-19. Independent state and federal health advisory committees recommended prioritizing those who are at the highest risk of exposure, hospitalization or death cause by COVID-19.
The first phases of vaccine rollout will continue in the following groups as vaccine supply becomes available:

- **(Current) Group 1:** Anyone 75 years or older regardless of medical condition or living situation.
- **Group 2:** Health care and frontline essential workers who are 50 years of age or older.
- **Group 3:** Frontline workers of any age and health care workers of any age, regardless of whether they work directly with COVID-19 patients.

The COVID-19 vaccine will be available to all North Carolinians, per the state's rollout plan, free of charge, regardless of access to health insurance or legal status.
As the vaccine rollout moves to next phases, those within earlier prioritization groups will remain eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

"While supplies are very limited, prioritizing those who are at greatest risk of exposure, hospitalization or death caused by COVID-19 is critical as we work to save lives and slow the spread of COVID-19," said NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. "Everyone has a spot to take their shot. We are working to ensure that all North

Carolinians receive accurate information about the safety, benefits and effectiveness of the COVID-19."

NCDHHS launched this week it's new campaign, "You have a spot. Take your shot." The program aims to provide all North Carolinians with honest information about COVID-19 vaccine development, testing, safety, side-effects and reactions.

"We want to direct people to "their spot" for reliable information from both official and community-based resources to ensure access to resources and the vaccine are equitable and inclusive," said Cohen.

At this time, most doctors cannot provide COVID-19 vaccines in their office. Those who are currently eligible and would like to receive the vaccine must make an appointment with their local health department or hospital.

A searchable list of participating health departments and hospitals is available at yourspotyourshot.nc.gov (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines) and by calling 1-877-490-6642, the COVID-19 Line managed by Community Care of North Carolina.

As Walker, Jr., Willingham and others note, North Carolinians should continue to practice the 3 Ws - wear, wait, wash - until everyone has their shot at fighting COVID-19. It may take months before the vaccine can get to enough people.

For more information, visit yourspotyourshot.nc.gov. (https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines)

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