Gov. Carney, DPH Prepare For Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine Following FDA Emergency Use Authorization Approval

DOVER (Feb. 27, 2021) – Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) are preparing for a shipment as early as next week of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) Janssen COVID-19 vaccine that was granted Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration Saturday evening. The J&J vaccine is the world's first single-dose vaccine available to combat COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is currently scheduled to meet Sunday to review scientific data related to the vaccine and vote on recommendations for its use. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky must still approve the advisory committee's recommendations, which is expected to occur Sunday as well. The ACIP recommendation and CDC sign-off are the final steps in the approval process before states can begin vaccinating residents.

Delaware is estimated to receive 8,000 initial doses of the J&J vaccine as early as the end of the week beginning March 1. However, ongoing allocations of J&J are expected to be more limited, and while vaccine supply to the state has increased recently, there is still not enough to meet the large demand.

"We are thrilled to be able to have access to a third safe and effective vaccine in our state," said Governor John Carney. "There is light at the end of the tunnel, but we are not out of the woods yet. Let's all do what works until we can vaccinate enough Delawareans. Continue to wear face masks. Avoid gatherings. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently. Stay vigilant."

DPH is still developing its plans to distribute the vaccine once received but has posted a position paper, reviewed by the State Ethics Advisory Group, at https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/177/2021/02/DE-DPH-JJ-Vaccine-Position-Paper_2.26.21_final.pdf which outlines the agency's position. DPH will continue to offer all available vaccines equally to eligible populations, and not target any particular population for use of the J&J vaccine.

The J&J Janssen, Pfizer BioNTech, and Moderna vaccines are all 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19, and all similarly effective at preventing severe disease from COVID-19. The J&J Janssen vaccine is reported to be 85% effective in U.S. trials at preventing moderate to severe COVID disease, and it is 72% effective in preventing symptomatic infection. The vaccine works by inserting a small piece of the coronavirus's genetic material into a weakened version of a common cold virus called an adenovirus. The immune system responds by switching on the cells' alarm systems to activate immune cells nearby. The immune cells then spot the intruder proteins of COVID-19 to fight the infection. The vaccine does not cause coronavirus disease in persons receiving the vaccine.

"Vaccination is a critical tool in bringing this unprecedented pandemic to an end, and I encourage all eligible individuals to get vaccinated with the first vaccine available to you," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "Having different types of vaccines available for use, especially ones with different storage and handling requirements and dosing recommendations, can offer more options and flexibility for vaccine providers. We remain committed to vaccinating as many eligible Delawareans, as quickly as possible."

The J&J vaccine has similar storage requirements as Moderna, and is likely to be approved for use by individuals 18 and older, like Moderna as well. The potential side effects from the J&J vaccine are similar to those experienced by people who received the other two vaccines, with the most common being injection site pain, headache, fatigue, and body aches. J&J

reported no serious side effects from the vaccine, and there were no deaths directly linked to the vaccine itself. The FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 vaccine for safety and effectiveness and any long-term or rare side effects. The J&J vaccine may not be used to complete the vaccine series for other vaccines.

Those with vaccine-related questions can contact the DPH Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-643-1715 or email their questions to Vaccine@Delaware.gov. Individuals can also visit de.gov/covidvaccine for up-to-date information and Myhealthycommunity.dhss.delaware.gov/ for vaccine-related data.