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State of Vermont
Office of Governor Phil Scott

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Governor Phil Scott Announces Next Phase of Vermont's Vaccine Rollout

PRESS RELEASE

March 2, 2021

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott today announced that the next phase of the State's vaccination efforts will begin on March 8 for Vermonters with certain high-risk conditions. With additional supply coming to the state, Governor Scott also unveiled a new track of the vaccine rollout starting next week to include school staff and childcare providers, as well as an expansion of the definition of first responders under Phase 1A.

"Our strategy since the start has been to protect those most at risk and to preserve life. We know age is a top risk factor, and we're already seeing the positive impacts of our strategy with deaths declining and decreasing case counts amongst our elderly population," said Governor Scott. "With Johnson & Johnson receiving approval over the weekend, on top of increased supply from Moderna and Pfizer, we'll be able to scale up and move quicker to get more people vaccinated."

High-Risk Health Conditions

People with high-risk conditions, which includes approximately 75,000 Vermonters, will be divided into two segments: Phase 5A (Vermonters 55 years old and above with high-risk conditions) will be eligible to register beginning March 8, and Phase 5B (Vermonters 16 and older with high-risk conditions) can register beginning March 15. These groups will be able to register through the State's standard registration process once their category is opened.

In addition to previously announced high-risk conditions, this phase will also include current cancer, heart disease, pregnancy and disabilities that involve chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome and those with compromised lung function. People with these conditions will not need to get documentation of these conditions to receive the vaccine. The full list of conditions can be seen at healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine.

Dr. Levine explained the state developed the list of conditions based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was refined using Vermont-specific data.

"We're glad to be that much closer to protecting these Vermonters, who, as the data shows, are at

higher risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19," said Dr. Levine.

Education System: School Staff and Child Care Providers

Beginning next week, the State will begin to offer teachers and school staff and childcare providers the option of registering for clinics in their district. Alternatively, this group will be able to make appointments for the two-dose Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at Walgreens, which is part of the federal pharmacy program.

"As our mental health data shows, our kids are not doing well and there have been serious public health impacts due to the limitations of hybrid and remote learning," said Governor Scott. "We know getting our kids back in school for in-person instruction five days a week is essential, and this is a step forward on that goal."

Public Safety System: Extension of Group 1A

The State will expand the definition of first responders to include police staff such as sergeants, lieutenants, and others, 911 call takers who are needed to direct personnel to emergencies, and staff who work in state correctional facilities that house detainees and incarcerated individuals. A list of these employees will be given to Walgreens to allow for registration through that program, and correctional facilities will also have the option of onsite clinics.

"With our additional supply – in parallel with our age banding and high-risk condition strategy – we can make these changes with a focus on getting and keeping the public safety and education systems fully operational, with an emphasis on the well-being of our kids," added Governor Scott.

The State will provide more details on registration for these groups later this week.

Vaccination Progress

These announcements come as Vermont surpassed the milestone of 100,000 people receiving at least their first dose. Registration opened to Vermonters age 65 and older on Monday and as of Tuesday morning, more than 20,000 people in this age group had registered for an appointment. By March 15, all those over the age of 16 who are at the highest risk of severe illness and death - whether due to age or a health condition - will be eligible to register for their vaccine.

State officials also welcomed the upcoming introduction of the newly approved Johnson & Johnson vaccine into the state's vaccine supply.

"This third vaccine will be a game-changer," said Dr. Levine. "It means more of us can get vaccinated more quickly — our pathway out of this pandemic."

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is rated as highly effective at preventing serious illness, as are the two vaccines we already have. It's a single shot that can be kept in normal refrigeration, which makes it

easier to distribute and administer. Data for this vaccine showed 100% protection against hospitalization, ICU admission and death. “This is the protection that matters most,” Dr. Levine said.

Human Services Secretary Mike Smith announced that vaccine allocation from the federal government will allow the state to increase its capacity to administer vaccines to 25,000 first doses of vaccine per week by March 15, and to 35,000 per week by the end of the month.

For information about getting vaccinated and to register for an appointment if eligible, visit healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine. Anyone who is unable to make their appointment online, needs help, or who wants to speak with someone in a language other than English can call 855-722-7878. The call center is open Monday through Friday 8:15 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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