Health Department: COVID vaccine that exceeds hospital uptake can go to any eligible groups

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In light of a busy but successful first day of vaccine distribution to pharmacies, the Department of Health has given guidance to hospitals that any remaining current or future vaccine allotments that exceed hospital uptake can be used for any currently eligible groups.

“We are so encouraged by our residents’ clear demand for the COVID vaccine,” said Dr. Courtney N. Phillips, Secretary of LDH. “While demand is clearly outpacing supply, this is just the start. We do anticipate vaccine will become increasingly available in the coming weeks and months, and as it does we will continue to bring additional vaccination sites online. For now, 10,700 newly eligible residents will have the opportunity to get vaccinated this week, and that’s progress. Thank you for your patience

“In the meantime, we will continue to work with our hospital partners to make the COVID vaccine increasingly available for their eligible patients and community members,” Dr. Phillips added.

LDH remains in support of the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations for vaccination. On December 20, 2020, ACIP recommended vaccination for Phase 1A (healthcare personnel and long-term-care facility residents). ACIP also recommended that if vaccine was still available, the 1B priority group should also be offered vaccine. Louisiana's 1B COVID vaccine priority group includes persons ages 70 years or older; and various outpatient healthcare provider types.

Effective immediately, LDH is encouraging hospitals to begin using any remaining current and future vaccine allotments that exceed hospital uptake to begin vaccinating any and all of the following:

- Persons ages 70 years or older in the community,
- Outpatient clinic providers and clinic staff,
- Urgent care clinic providers and staff,
- Community care clinic providers and staff,
- Behavioral health providers and staff,
- Dialysis center providers, staff and clients (if not already being vaccinated by their dialysis centers),
- Home health service providers and recipients,
- Dental providers and staff, and

ACCESSIBILITY

- Students, residents, faculty and staff of allied health schools (if not already receiving vaccine or in a plan to receive from their respective schools).

Reminders:

- LDH cannot make appointments at participating pharmacies for eligible residents. LDH has published the list of participating pharmacies, along with their locations and contact information, on its website: covidvaccine.la.gov. Eligible residents must contact a participating pharmacy and make an appointment at the pharmacy.
- We are committed to the equitable distribution and administration of vaccines, and are actively working to enroll more pharmacies in our LINKS system — especially those in underserved communities.

Louisiana is still in the middle of a pandemic: Wear a mask

On January 4, LDH reported 1,891 COVID hospitalizations — the highest number of COVID hospitalizations since April 16, Louisiana's first surge of the pandemic. And, the impact of the holidays remains to be seen.

Residents should continue to follow public health measures, like wearing a mask and practicing social distancing, to keep themselves, their loved ones and their communities safe.

For information from the Louisiana Department of Health on COVID-19, click here.