Governor Mills Announces Acceleration of Maine's COVID-19 Vaccination Timeline

March 19, 2021

Governor Janet Mills announced today that Maine is accelerating the timeline of its vaccination plan to make more people eligible for COVID-19 vaccines earlier.

Beginning Tuesday, March 23, 2021, Maine residents age 50 and older will be eligible for the vaccination. Beginning Monday, April 19, 2021, all Maine residents age 16 and older will eligible for vaccination. The accelerated timeline comes as some Maine vaccine providers are reporting availability of appointments and as Maine anticipates an increase in vaccine supply from the Federal government.

> *"Maine has been working around the clock to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible. As we continue to make progress, and with more appointments becoming available and an increase in supply expected in the coming weeks, we believe it is appropriate to accelerate our timeline and make more people eligible earlier,"* ***said Governor Janet Mills****. "While this is certainly welcome news, Maine people should keep in mind that, even though they may be eligible, it still may take time to get an appointment and get shots into arms. We will continue to work with vaccine providers across Maine to expand our ability to deliver shots, and we are pleased that we are able to take this important step forward."*
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> *"With nearly two out of every three Maine residents age 60 and older now protected with at least one dose of vaccine, we're prepared to open up appointments to even more Maine people,"* ***said Jeanne Lambrew, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services****. "As more vaccine becomes available in the coming days and weeks, we'll continue to work with our valued partners throughout the state to match eligible Maine people, particularly those who are at high risk, with those doses and move Maine closer to recovery."*
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> *"The fine work of vaccination clinics throughout Maine makes it possible to get shots into the arms of more residents sooner than originally projected," said* ***Dr. Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention****. "With weekly vaccine allocations expected to increase in the near future, we can move ahead with vaccinating all Maine adults."*

In announcing Maine's age-based vaccination approach on February 26, Governor Mills said the timeframe could be accelerated. Vaccination for residents aged 50 and older was previously scheduled to begin on April 1, 2021, and for all adults on May 1, 2021.

The vaccine schedule is now as follows:

- March 3: Age 60 and older
- March 23: Age 50 and older
- April 19: All Maine residents age 16 and older

Maine is also implementing the Biden Administration's directive to vaccinate teachers, school staff, and licensed child care workers this month. The Maine Departments of Education and Health and Human Services have hosted vaccination clinics for Maine teachers age 60 and older.

As with all changes in eligibility, it will take some time for some vaccine clinics to begin to schedule appointments and administer COVID-19 vaccines. Some vaccine sites may now begin accepting appointments for residents aged 50 and older, while others are preparing to offer appointments in the coming days. To find a vaccination site, visit the State's vaccine website.

To date, more than 352,000 Maine people have received their first dose of the vaccine – more than 26 percent of our population, with nearly 16 percent being fully vaccinated. To date, approximately 64 percent of Maine people age 60 or older have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, with 35 percent completing the vaccine series. Maine currently ranks 5th best nationwide for the percentage of its population fully vaccinated.

The Mills Administration continues to take steps to expand the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine in Maine, including standing up large-scale vaccination sites – most recently in Portland, Sanford, and Auburn – that are prepared to expand their capacity to get shots into arms with an increase in the supply of vaccine from the Federal government.

Further, the Mills Administration is continuing to expand vaccinations in rural and hard-to-reach communities and for Maine people who are homebound. The State and the Federal Government are also providing vaccine to Community Health Centers for underserved areas. Independent pharmacies and emergency medical services clinicians are visiting independent senior living communities to vaccinate residents on-site, and public health nurses are holding clinics throughout the state to meet the needs of at-risk Maine people who cannot easily travel to large-scale community vaccination clinics.

Despite having the oldest median age population in the country, Maine, adjusted for population, ranks third lowest in total number of COVID-19 cases and fourth lowest in number of deaths from COVID-19, according to the U.S. CDC. The state's seven-day positivity rate is the fourth lowest in the nation, according to Johns Hopkins testing tracker.Additionally, according to Moody's Analytics and CNN Business's "Back to Normal Index",Maine is best in New England in returning to pre-pandemic economic activity.

Additional information on vaccination for people in Maine is available at Maine's COVID-19 vaccine website.

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