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NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Governor Cooper Outlines Updates on Winter Storm and State COVID-19 Response

RALEIGH

Today, Governor Roy Cooper and Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry outlined impacts and response to today's winter storm, including weather-related delays to vaccine distribution.

"Delays in vaccine shipment from the federal government are frustrating to us all, but providers are working to get appointments scheduled and we are pushing to get more vaccine to our state," said Governor Cooper.

Winter weather across the nation this week has resulted in shipping delays from vaccine manufacturers to health departments and

medical providers across the country. NCDHHS is in communication with the CDC and providers to give as much information as possible about when new shipments will arrive so appointments can be rescheduled.

As of today, North Carolina has administered almost two million doses of vaccine. The state continues to make progress in equity of vaccine distribution. Last week, 23% of doses were administered to black North Carolinians, up from just 13% five weeks ago.

Effects of today's ice storm were being felt most significantly in northern and western counties. North Carolina utility companies reported nearly 23,000 power outages statewide as of 1:35 pm Thursday. These were largely due to ice accumulation bringing down trees and power lines. Extra utility crews are at work to restore power as quickly as possible.

On Wednesday, Governor Cooper declared a state of emergency and granted transportation waivers to help speed power restoration. He has also authorized the activation of up to 40 National Guard personnel to assist with fallen tree and debris removal.

Emergency Management Director Mike Sprayberry asked residents to refrain from calling 911 to report power outages, and to report those directly to utility companies. He offered a critical safety rule if your power goes out: Do not operate a generator or gas grill inside your home or garage. This can result in a buildup of deadly carbon monoxide fumes.

The Governor thanked first responders, emergency managers, law enforcement, utility workers and others across the state who are

working on storm response.

“They have worked tirelessly to help get people to safety and already have begun repairing the damage,” said Governor Cooper. “I am grateful for their resilience.”

Temperatures will fall below freezing Thursday night and into Friday morning where any lingering moisture will re-freeze, creating hazardous road conditions. Conditions will improve Friday, as temperatures will rise above freezing across North Carolina.

With periods of moderate to heavy rainfall expected Thursday afternoon and evening, the threat for flash flooding will increase within the eastern half of North Carolina currently under a Flash Flood Watch. River levels will continue to rise, with two locations expected to reach Major Flood Stage – the Tar River at Greenville and the Lumber River at Lumberton.

Visit FIMAN.nc.gov for the latest flood information from the state’s network of more than 500 river, stream and coastal gauges.

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This press release is related to:

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