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Coronavirus Update

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PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Announces Vaccine Appointment Booking for Individuals Ages 65+, Individuals with 2+ Certain Medical Conditions to Begin on February 18th

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

2/17/2021

Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

Governor's Press Office

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BOSTON — Today, the Baker-Polito Administration announced individuals ages 65 and over and those with 2+ certain medical conditions, including Asthma, can visit **www.mass.gov/covidvaccine** (/covidvaccine) to start booking an appointment for vaccine beginning tomorrow, February 18th.

With this announcement, almost 1 million individuals are newly eligible for vaccine.

Due to extremely high demand for appointments and limited vaccine supply, it could take more than a month for all eligible individuals to secure an available appointment, unless federal supply significantly increases. Recently, Massachusetts has been receiving approximately 110,000 first doses per week from the federal government. Residents are encouraged to keep checking the website as appointments are added on a rolling basis.

Individuals 65 and over:

Individuals 65 and over, including residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing are eligible to receive vaccine effective tomorrow, February 18th.

Residents and staff of low income and affordable public and private senior housing can learn more about vaccination options **here.** (/info-details/covid-19-vaccinations-for-senior-housing-settings)

Individuals with 2+ Certain Medical Conditions:

Individuals 16 and older with two or more of certain medical conditions (defined below) are eligible for vaccine, effective tomorrow.

In concert with CDC guidelines, the Commonwealth has adopted the list of conditions that cause individuals to be at an increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Massachusetts has also identified moderate to severe asthma as an eligible medical condition. ()

Phase 2 eligible conditions:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m2 or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Learn more from **CDC: COVID-19: People with Certain Medical Conditions** (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html)

Mass Vaccination Appointments:

Tomorrow morning, over 70,000 appointments are scheduled to be posted at mass vaccination sites (Eastfield Mall in Springfield, Double Tree Hotel in Danvers, Fenway Park in Boston and Gillette Stadium in Foxboro).

Details for booking can be found via the **COVID-19 Vaccine Finder** (https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/), which enables residents to search for a vaccination location and view appointment availability before scheduling. The tool can be accessed via the state's vaccination website at **www.mass.gov/COVIDvaccine** (/COVIDvaccine) or directly at **https://vaxfinder.mass.gov** (https://vaxfinder.mass.gov/).

Individuals that are unable to access appointments via the internet can call 211 and follow the prompts for vaccine appointments.

There are currently over 170 vaccination locations across the Commonwealth. Currently, almost 95% of our population lives within a 45-minute drive of a mass vaccination site or within 30 minutes of a regional (high volume site) - not counting the pharmacies, provider and community health center vaccination sites.

Local Boards of Health:

Today, Local Boards of Health were informed of the Commonwealth's streamlined vaccination distribution plan that prioritizes equity and high-capacity throughput vaccination, particularly as vaccine supply from the federal government remains extremely constrained.

This streamlined distribution plan will increase vaccine access at high throughput vaccination locations such as mass vaccination sites or regional sites and at pharmacy sites. In addition to increasing efficiency in administering the vaccine, the Commonwealth will ensure that the program is equitable and meets the needs of communities that have been the most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

Utilizing the social vulnerability index as a starting point, the Department of Public Health has identified 20 municipalities that have had the greatest COVID burden and have the greatest per centage of non- white residents. These municipalities are: Boston; Brockton; Chelsea; Everett; Fall River; Fitchburg; Framingham; Haverhill; Holyoke; Lawrence; Leominster; Lowell; Lynn; Malden; Methuen; New Bedford; Randolph; Revere; Springfield; and Worcester.

These municipalities will continue to distribute vaccine at the local level, are prioritized for the retail pharmacy program, and are served by community health centers and other health care providers administering vaccine.

Local Boards of Health will continue to play a crucial role in our collective plan to curb COVID-19.

The Administration is asking Local Boards of Health to support these critical objectives:

- Planning to vaccinate homebound individuals in their community and older adults in private and public low income and affordable housing.
- Encourage residents to get vaccinated at mass vaccination sites, retail pharmacies and other locations that are open to all residents.
- Increase vaccine awareness of safety and efficacy so that when the Commonwealth does have more incoming vaccine from the Federal Government, and as more groups become eligible, communities are ready and willing to accept vaccine.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is the largest secretariat in state government and is comprised of 12 agencies, in addition to 2 soldiers' homes and the MassHealth program. Our efforts are focused on the health, resilience, and independence of the one in four residents of the Commonwealth we serve. Our public health programs touch every community in the Commonwealth.

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Department of Public Health (/orgs/department-of-public-health)

DPH promotes the health and well-being of all residents by ensuring access to high-quality public health and healthcare services, and by focusing on prevention, wellness, and health equity in all people.

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