DPH Completes 11,000 Vaccinations in Weekend Events

DOVER (Jan. 24, 2021) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) vaccinated 11,154 individuals at events held Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Delaware City and Georgetown. Those vaccinated included Phase 1B seniors ages 65 and older and Phase 1A health care personnel.

The total in Delaware City includes 500 vaccinations Friday, 3,318 Saturday and 2,396 Sunday. In Georgetown there were 2,690 vaccines administered Saturday and 2,250 Sunday. Appointments were provided to Phase 1B Delawareans 65 and older who had requested vaccination though the state's new system. The state has vaccinated more than 21,000 people over the past 8 days. As of midnight, Saturday, Jan. 23, 67,475 administered doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been reported to the state's immunization information system.

DPH and its partners worked to make adjustments to the drive-through vaccination process after identifying a number of factors that led to slow lines and stacked-up traffic on Saturday. Delays were caused by people arriving without an appointment, those with appointments not completing their pre-vaccination screening online before arriving, and technology issues resulting from the cold temperatures.

Several process and traffic improvements implemented on Sunday included:

- A separate area in Delaware City and separate lane in Georgetown for Phase 1A health care workers, who had not been registered through the online system and thus took longer to process.
- Additional laptops and IT personnel at the Delaware City site, along with generators to keep laptops and wi-fi systems charged. Georgetown switched to a paper-based system for Sunday, and manual data entry will be used to enter the information into the state's immunization system.
- So as not to start the day with a backlog, Georgetown began vaccinations at 8:30 a.m. instead of 10 a.m. to accommodate individuals who arrived hours before their appointment time
- State troopers were added in both locations to assist with traffic flow.
- An email was sent early Sunday morning to individuals with Sunday appointments with instructions for completing the pre-registration forms. Staff and volunteers reported higher pre-registration completion rate Sunday, which sped up the process on site, requiring fewer lanes in Delaware City devoted to those with incomplete screening.

By 1 p.m., wait times were reported at approximately one hour in Delaware City and as low as 15 minutes in Georgetown, with traffic largely cleared from surrounding roads and highways at both locations. All vaccinations were completed Sunday by 4:45 p.m.

"The issues Saturday were not what we planned, not what we wanted to see, and certainly not what we wanted our residents to experience. Our hardworking volunteers and staff stayed more than 3 hours later than scheduled Saturday to vaccinate all those with appointments, and then the DPH team and our partners worked into the night to identify the issues and take steps to improve things for Sunday," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "Sunday went much more smoothly and was more the event we intended to have. It was a learning experience and, most importantly, we extended the first dose of vaccine protection to more than 11,000 Delawareans."

Dr. Rattay recognized and thanked the agencies and organizations that participated in the events with DPH, including:

- Beebe Healthcare
- ChristianaCare
- DelDOT
- Delaware Emergency Management Agency
- Delaware Medical Reserve Corps
- Delaware National Guard
- Delaware State Police
- Department of Technology and Information
- Individual volunteers and staff
- New Castle County EMS
- Sussex County EMS

Rattay said vaccination opportunities will expand beyond large vaccination events at DMV locations to smaller events focused on communities around the state. The state is also expanding the number of pharmacy and primary care providers who are able to offer vaccinations.

Additional information about COVID-19 vaccine rollout is available at de.gov/covidvaccine. Questions can be directed to the Vaccine Call Center at 1-833-643-1715. People who are deaf or hard of hearing should call 2-1-1 or text their ZIP code to 898-211. Individuals can email their questions concerning the vaccine to Vaccine@Delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware's response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.