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Commissioner

January 13, 2021

TO: Points of Dispensing participating in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program
FROM: Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A. Commissioner 
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Vaccination Eligibility Expansion to Phase 1B Persons Aged 65 and Older and to Phase 1B Persons Aged 16 and Older with a High-Risk Chronic Medical Condition

This memo serves to alert you to an expansion in the phased rollout of New Jersey’s COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Phase 1B continues to expand. **Effective January 14, 2021, persons aged 65 and older are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination.** Also, **effective January 14, 2021, persons 16 to 64 who have at least one high-risk chronic medical condition are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination.** Further information is enclosed.

Phase	Sub-Population	Start Date
1A	Healthcare Personnel	December 15, 2020
1A	Long-term Care Residents	December 15, 2020
1B	Frontline First Responders	January 7, 2021
1B	Persons aged 65 and older	January 14, 2021
1B	Persons aged 16 to 64 years old who have at least one high-risk chronic medical condition	January 14, 2021
1B	Other 1B Sub-Populations	<i>To be announced pending vaccine supply and demand. Additional sub-groups may be defined.</i>
1C	1C Sub-Populations	
2	General Population	

The priorities are to serve those at highest risk of work-related exposure to acquiring COVID-19 and to serve those at highest risk of severe COVID-19 illness. In the phased rollout, phases overlap and build systematically. People eligible in Phase 1A (healthcare personnel and long-term care residents) and those previously announced in Phase 1B (frontline first responders) remain eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination. The expansion from Phase 1A to Phase 1B will be staggered. Further guidance about the definition of Phase 1B and Phase 1C is forthcoming.

Please share this information with all the appropriate staff in your vaccination program and begin vaccinating or scheduling appointments for those who self-identify as part of these groups.

Thank you for your partnership in this initiative. This memo supplements the other materials circulated by NJDOH regarding the provision, delivery and administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/topics/covid2019_vaccination.shtml. Points of dispensing may contact the New Jersey Department of Health Vaccine Operations Center at Vax.Operations@doh.nj.gov with any further questions.

Who are eligible for vaccination starting January 14, 2021?

1. **Healthcare personnel** are paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. More information here: [New Jersey's Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination: Phase 1A](#) (12/28/2020).
2. **Residents of long-term care settings** are adults who reside in facilities that provide a range of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently. More information here: [New Jersey's Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination: Phase 1A](#) (12/28/2020).
3. **Frontline first responders** are paid and unpaid sworn law enforcement, fire and rescue services, and search and rescue organizations. Personnel in emergency medical services, corrections, juvenile justice, and county jails were included in Phase 1A and remain eligible as the State progresses into Phase 1B. More information here: [COVID-19 Vaccination Eligibility Expansion to Phase 1B First Responders](#) (1/8/2021).
4. **Persons 65 years of age**
5. **Persons 16 to 64 years of age with one or more high-risk chronic medical conditions.** For the purposes of COVID-19 vaccination, high-risk medical conditions that place persons at high-risk for severe COVID-19 illness and death include:
 - Cancer
 - Chronic Kidney Disease
 - Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
 - Down Syndrome
 - Heart conditions (e.g. heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies)
 - Immunocompromised (weakened immune system) due to solid organ transplant
 - Obesity (e.g. body mass index of 30kg/m² or higher)
 - Severe Obesity (e.g. body mass index of 40kg/m² or higher)
 - Pregnancy
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Smoking
 - Type 2 diabetes mellitus

This definition is adopted from the CDC's list of [People with Certain Medical Conditions at Increased Risk](#).

A person must have at least one of the above conditions to be considered high-risk. A doctor's note is not required.

Note: Points of dispensing should encourage persons with high-risk medical conditions to continue to seek care for these high-risk chronic medical conditions. Please see these resources to [find a Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\)](#) for routine care and for [insurance enrollment information](#).

Note: CDC's [Vaccination Considerations for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#).

Note: CDC's [Vaccination Considerations for Persons with Underlying Medical Conditions](#).

When will New Jersey change phases?

Specific dates are not known at this time. New Jersey is using a phased approach to COVID-19 vaccination to ensure that limited vaccines are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

Factors like supply of vaccine, public confidence and uptake, time, and federal guidance will inform data-driven decisions. Governor Phil Murphy and Commissioner of Health Judith Persichilli will announce when New Jersey changes phases.

How did New Jersey determine the Phased Approach?

New Jersey's phased approach is informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP), the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), the New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Professional Advisory Committee (PAC), the Coronavirus Task Force (CTF), and extensive stakeholder engagement.

How does a consumer prove that they are eligible for vaccination?

A person is eligible if they live, work, or are being educated in New Jersey and can self-identify as meeting the criteria for the current sub-phase. No professional nor medical documentation is required.

How can a consumer schedule an appointment to be vaccinated?

New Jersey has launched a statewide vaccine scheduling system to help consumers connect with identified nearby points of dispensing sites. The New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) is available here: <https://covidvaccine.nj.gov/>.

There are also some points of dispensing not participating in NJVSS. To schedule an appointment at one of those sites, please contact PODs directly using information available on the NJ COVID-19 Information Hub: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/covid-19-vaccine-locations-for-eligible-recipients>.

Note: Whenever New Jersey expands eligibility, it may take several weeks for appointments to be available to all eligible. Vaccine availability remains very limited in New Jersey.

What data will vaccine recipients need to share to be vaccinated?

NJIS will securely store the vaccine recipient's name, address, date of birth, race, ethnicity, and gender. These are standard data elements that have been used across vaccines administered in New Jersey. These will be requested during pre-registration and/or on-site. Information about the vaccine provider, substance, and administration will be collected from the POD personnel.

There are other data that may be asked of vaccine recipients and that will not be stored in NJIS. Depending on the POD and its scheduling process, New Jerseyans can also expect to provide additional demographic and occupational data to ensure equitable and efficient scheduling of vaccinations. These data points will be informed by ACIP recommendations about prioritization (e.g. Phase 1A will include healthcare personnel).

Finally, medical screening questions will be asked to assess eligibility under the EUA and ACIP recommendations specific to the vaccine product offered at the point of dispensing.

For the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (authorized for persons aged 16 and older), please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)

For the Moderna vaccine (authorized for persons 18 and older), please consult these FDA fact sheets:

- [Fact Sheet for Moderna Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)
- [Additional Information and Translated Materials](#)