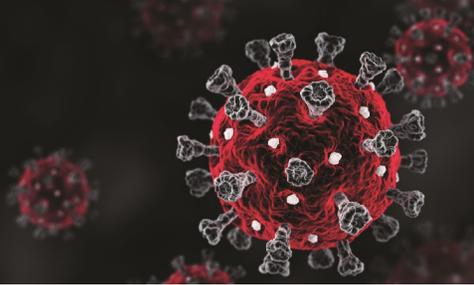


# Vax Matters



January 8, 2021



## News

### Commissioner Builds On Vaccine Outreach

New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Commissioner Judith Persichilli has continued to engage with stakeholders weekly as part of the state's outreach efforts to help build public confidence in the vaccine and the process.

Since summer, she has engaged with over 5,470 stakeholders from 80 groups including interfaith-based organizations, pharmacies, higher education, elected officials, disabilities advocates, unions, healthcare associations, counties and local health departments, medical boards, law enforcement and first responders.

The Commissioner has provided insights on the types of vaccines, distribution process, prioritization phases, and the work of NJDOH's COVID-19 Vaccination Task Force and its review of all actions through a health equity lens.

### Resources

[Volunteer with the New Jersey Medical Reserve Corps](#)

[COVID-19 Information Hub Vaccine Page](#)

[NJDOH COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#)

[New Jersey COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#)

[Sign up for Vax Matters](#)

### Vaccinations Begin for Sworn Law Enforcement and Fire Professionals

The state has begun opening up Phase 1B for vaccinations. First up: Sworn law enforcement and fire professionals.

Governor Murphy, NJDOH Commissioner Judith Persichilli, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal and Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Patrick Callahan marked the start of these vaccinations in a Friday visit to the Morris County Regional Vaccination Center in Rockaway, one of six state-supported megasites opening over the next weeks.



*John "Jay" Alderton, a career firefighter and EMT with the Morris Township Fire Department, receives the vaccine.*

"We're all used to charging head-on into potentially dangerous situations, but COVID-19 has added a whole new layer of uncertainty and change for all of us," said John "Jay" Alderton, a career firefighter and EMT with the Morris Township Fire Department who was vaccinated. "This vaccine is the first step of us moving in the right direction."

As of midday Friday, there have been 175,157 vaccinations statewide, including first and second doses.

All sworn law enforcement and fire professionals in New Jersey are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which is estimated to include about 55,000 individuals. They are the first individuals in Phase 1B to become eligible for vaccination. EMS professionals, also considered first responders, are already eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1A as healthcare workers.

Movement between phases will be very fluid and one phase will overlap with another, said NJDOH Commissioner Persichilli during a press briefing this week on the initial opening of Phase 1B.

"We will not wait for all individuals in one phase to be vaccinated before opening up to additional groups," she said.

Individuals in Phase 1A will continue to be eligible and those in high risk and congregate care settings will remain a priority. NJDOH will continue to update the public on the progress of the phases so residents will know when vaccines will be available to them.

### Six megasites slated to open

The megasites are part of a network of community-based sites to provide vaccinations initially to healthcare workers in Phase 1A, along with sworn law enforcement and fire professionals.

A megasite at Rowan College of South Jersey in Sewell also opened Friday. The remaining sites include: Atlantic City Convention Center; Racetrack at Meadowlands, East Rutherford; Moorestown Mall; and the New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center, Edison.

*(See Megasite, continued on Page 2)*

## Online Pre-Registration Opens for Healthcare Workers, Initial Phase 1B to Pre-Register For Vaccines

Online pre-registration for Phase 1A healthcare workers and sworn law enforcement and fire professionals who have yet to be vaccinated at one of the state's community-based sites is now open through the [New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System](#) (NJVSS).

When more vaccine is available for essential workers, older adults and the general public over the next few weeks/months, there will be a public announcement.

Some vaccination sites – particularly hospitals – have their own registration and so registering in the NJVSS is not necessary.

Most healthcare workers, including staff in urgent care centers, physician and dentist offices, etc., do not have a point of dispensing at their workplace so the NJVSS is a way to pre-register for when appointments become available.

“As we move through the phased-vaccination process, we will be able to schedule additional targeted groups and eventually members of the public,” said Commissioner Persichilli.

Phase 1A includes healthcare workers, who are paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. Phase 1A also includes residents and staff of long-term care facilities under the federal pharmacy partnership with CVS and Walgreens.

Those who are eligible and registered will be notified via email to schedule an appointment. Registrants in later phases will be notified to schedule an appointment when they become eligible for vaccination.



*University Hospital Emergency Department Nurse Maritza Beniquez, the first healthcare worker in the state to be vaccinated, received her second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine this week joined by Governor Murphy and Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.*

(Pool photo: Amy Newman/The Record)

### ***Multi-Phase Vaccine Public Awareness Campaign Underway***

New Jersey has launched a multi-phase, statewide public awareness campaign which will help educate healthcare workers, other essential workers and the public about COVID-19 vaccine safety.

Following a competitive bid process, NJDOH chose Princeton Partners to create the six-month multi-media, multi-lingual campaign.

Funded by federal Coronavirus Relief Funds, the campaign will include TV and radio ads, digital ads, billboards, social media and transit ads, as well as extensive community outreach.

The first phase of the campaign targets 650,000 paid and unpaid healthcare workers in Phase 1A who work in a setting that place them at high risk of acquiring COVID-19.

As part of the initial phase, the campaign is producing videos with doctors, including [Dr. Shereef Elnahal](#), President/CEO of University Hospital and former state Health Commissioner, nurses and other healthcare workers in several languages on the importance of getting vaccinated.

### ***(Mega site, continued from Page 1)***

“The mega sites will serve as vaccination hubs for phased priority groups, part of a critical network of over 200 sites tasked with carrying out the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan fairly and equitably,” the Commissioner said.

The sites will be allocated 1,000 doses each week; the number of doses administered each week will increase as more vaccine becomes available.

The mega sites are a collaborative partnership with the NJDOH, N.J. All-Hazards Incident Management Team, N.J. Office of Emergency Management, healthcare providers, and local and county officials, health departments and emergency management offices.