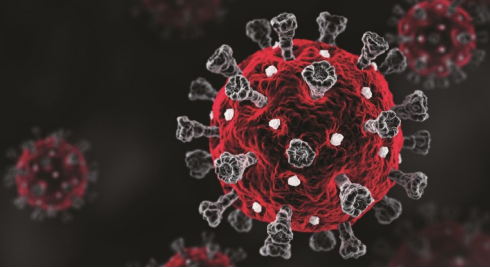


# Vax Matters



March 5, 2021



## News

### Virtual Events With Elected Officials Encourage Vaccination

To encourage vaccination among African Americans during Black History Month, New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Commissioner Judith Persichilli joined State Sen. Troy Singleton, Dr. Margaret Fisher, and Virtua CEO Dennis Pullin in a recent [virtual roundtable discussion](#).

The Commissioner and Amanda Medina-Forrester, NJDOH's Director of Minority and Multicultural Health, also joined Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman in a [virtual town hall](#) and shared information on the Department's work to encourage residents to get the vaccine; especially providing accurate information to vulnerable populations.

### Call Center Open to Healthcare Providers

The New Jersey Vaccine Call Center (855-568-0545) is now available for COVID-19 healthcare providers.

The system, available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week, uses an interactive voice response feature to help providers with information and resources. Agents also are available to provide technical assistance on vaccine storage and handling, use of the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS)—the statewide registry, and COVID-19 vaccine information.

### Emotional Health Resources for Those Affected By COVID-19

RWJBarnabas Health Institute for Prevention and Recovery's Hope and Healing Program is offering virtual emotional support services, education and community-based resources for individuals and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For information, call: 833-795-HOPE (833-795-4673) or visit [rwjbh.org/hopeandhealing](http://rwjbh.org/hopeandhealing).

## Targeted Vaccinations for 75+ Get Underway as J&J Vaccine Rolls Out

Johnson & Johnson Chairman and CEO Alex Gorsky joined Governor Murphy, NJDOH Commissioner Persichilli and Union City seniors age 75 and over Friday to mark the start of the J&J vaccination program in New Jersey.

"We're on a journey. We will beat this. This virus will go underground because it will have no place to go," said Commissioner Persichilli.

The single-dose J&J vaccine began arriving in the state this week. Initial doses were distributed to select Acmes, Stop & Shops, Weis Markets, Wegmans and ShopRites; independent pharmacies in the most vulnerable communities; hospitals in underserved communities; and counties and local health departments to address the needs of vulnerable populations in specific communities.

"Get your shot, wear your mask. We are so close to getting through this thing. Let's stay diligent, vigilant right through the very end," said J&J's Gorsky.

### Outreach to Seniors Age 75 and Older

NJDOH has begun a two-week targeted effort to reach out and vaccinate individuals age 75 and older. New Jersey's vaccine call center is making outbound calls to schedule appointments for individuals in this age group who were identified through registration with the New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS). Appointments will be made at select Walmarts with additional sites for seniors to be announced shortly.

### Building on Vaccinations

As of Friday, 2,333,723 total vaccine doses have been administered; 442,537 doses have been administered at the state's six mega-sites and 9,746 doses at the state's community-based vaccination partnership sites.

This week, a site at Calvary Baptist Church opened in Paterson as vaccinations wrapped up in Elizabeth and Trenton. Next week, Paterson vaccinations will move to the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, and two new sites will open this weekend at the BB&T Pavilion in Camden and Collier Community Center in Jersey City. Overall, the 10 sites – which include Somerset, Vineland, Orange, Newark and Pleasantville – will vaccinate over 34,000 residents during two weeks in each city. The sites operate as closed points of distribution for members of the immediate community and by appointment only.



Governor Murphy and Commissioner Persichilli watch as seniors in Union City receive the J&J vaccine.

### Vaccination Progress

- ◆ 2.3M+ total vaccine doses administered
- ◆ 1.5M+ first doses administered
- ◆ 788,000+ people fully vaccinated



## Eligibility Expanding For Additional Groups in New Jersey's COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine is expanding for more frontline essential workers and high-risk groups, the Murphy Administration announced this week.

“As vaccine supply increases, this phased expansion of new eligibility groups keeps New Jersey moving forward toward our goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the eligible adult population,” said Commissioner Persichilli.

Pre-K-12 educators and child-care workers in licensed and registered settings are now eligible.

On March 15, eligibility will again expand to include public and local transportation workers, including NJ Transit workers, bus, taxi, rideshare and airport employees, and

Motor Vehicle Commission staff; individuals experiencing homelessness and those living in shelters, among others.

### Community Outreach To Seniors

Englewood Health, working with the Englewood Health Department and through local churches, community groups and Englewood Senior Housing, offered vaccinations to Black and Latinx seniors, vaccinating 600 individuals. *Watch the video:* <https://youtu.be/g6TuMkplj9U>

On March 29, additional frontline essential workers will be added, including: food production, agriculture, and food distribution; eldercare and support; warehousing and logistics; social services support staff; hospitality, postal and shipping services, among others.

Additionally, the eligibility list will indicate that all individuals ages 16-64 with certain medical conditions, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), that increase the risk or might increase the risk of severe illness from the virus, are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination.

For more information, visit [covid19.nj.gov/vaccine](https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine).



## More people will soon be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination:



Beginning Monday, March 15, the following categories are eligible for vaccination:

- **Public and local transportation workers** including bus, taxi, rideshare, and airport employees; NJ TRANSIT workers; and Motor Vehicle Commission staff
- **Public safety workers who are not sworn law enforcement or fire professionals**, including employees of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families responding to instances of child abuse/neglect, and probation officers
- **Migrant farm workers**
- **Members of tribal communities**
- **Individuals experiencing homelessness and those living in shelters**, including domestic violence shelters
- **Individuals age 16-64 with additional high risk medical conditions**

Additionally, beginning on Monday, March 29, frontline essential workers in the following categories are also eligible for vaccination:

- Food production, agriculture, and food distribution
- Eldercare and support
- Warehousing and logistics
- Social services support staff
- Elections personnel
- Hospitality
- Medical supply chain
- Postal and shipping services
- Clergy
- Judicial system

### Commissioner, Dr. Fauci Work to Dispel Myths in Communities of Color

Commissioner Persichilli joined Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Monday night in a virtual presentation co-sponsored by the New Jersey Council of Churches, representing 16 denominations in the state and over 1,000 local churches, and the Coalition of Religious Leaders.

The Commissioner cited the history of the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis

in African American men over 40 years, which is but one example of how medical abuses led to distrust in the government and vaccine programs.

“To build public confidence in the vaccine, we must respect the questions and concerns of those in our communities,” Commissioner Persichilli said. “But it is critical that we respond to those questions and concerns with credible, science-based facts from trusted sources.”

### Resources

NJ Vaccine Call Center:  
1-855-568-0545

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

[Community-Based Vaccination Sites](#)

[NJDOH COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#)

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