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March 11, 2021

**TO:** Vaccine Coordinators for Points of Dispensing participating in COVID-19 Vaccination   
**FROM:** Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A. Commissioner  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Vaccination Eligibility Expansion to Phase 1B Education and Childcare Sectors

This memo serves to alert you to an expansion in the phased rollout of New Jersey’s COVID-19 Vaccination Program. The State continues to expand the eligible populations in Phase 1B.

**Effective March 2, 2021, pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 education sector workers and childcare sector workers are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination.** This aligns with the Biden Administration’s directive dated March 2 on prioritization for certain education and child care workers.

**Effective March 15, 2021, all individuals ages 16-64 with certain medical conditions that increase the risk or that might increase the risk of severe illness from the virus,** as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination.

Phase	Sub-Population	Start Date
1A	<a href="#">Healthcare Personnel</a>	December 15, 2020
1A	<a href="#">Long-term and Congregate Care Residents and Staff</a>	December 15, 2020
1B	<a href="#">Frontline First Responders, including sworn law enforcement and fire professionals</a>	January 7, 2021
1B	<a href="#">Persons aged 65 and older</a>	January 14, 2021
1B	<a href="#">Persons aged 16 to 64 years old who have at least one medical condition, as defined by the CDC, that increases the risk or might increase the risk for severe COVID-19</a>	January 14, 2021 (Revised effective March 15, 2021)
1B	Childcare workers in licensed and registered settings Pre-K to grade 12 education sector	March 2, 2021
1B	Persons experiencing homelessness, persons living in shelters, and migrant workers	March 15, 2021
1B	Members of tribal communities	March 15, 2021
1B	Frontline essential worker sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public and local transportation</li> <li>▪ Public safety</li> </ul>	March 15, 2021
1B	Frontline essential worker sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clergy</li> </ul>	March 29, 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elder care and support</li> <li>▪ Elections personnel</li> <li>▪ Food production, agriculture, and distribution</li> <li>▪ Hospitality</li> <li>▪ Judicial system</li> <li>▪ Medical supply chain</li> <li>▪ Social services support staff</li> <li>▪ Postal and shipping services</li> <li>▪ Warehousing and logistics</li> </ul>	
1C	1C Sub-Populations	<i>To be announced pending vaccine supply. Additional sub-groups may be defined.</i>
2	General Population	

The priorities are set in order 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 and those previously announced in Phase 1B remain eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination. The expansion through Phase 1B and Phase 1C will be staggered. Further guidance about the definition of Phase 1C is forthcoming.

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

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](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](mailto:Vax.Operations@doh.nj.gov) with any further questions.

**Who are eligible for vaccination starting March 2, 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 and workers of long-term care and high-risk congregate settings** are adults who work or reside in facilities that provide a range of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently. These facilities include nursing homes, assisted living residences, group homes, HUD 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program residences, continuing care retirement communities, personal care homes, and institutional settings like psychiatric hospitals, correctional institutions, county jails, and juvenile detention facilities. 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 and older**

**5. Persons 16 to 64 years of age with one or more medical condition that increases or might increase the risk for severe COVID-19.** For the purposes of COVID-19 vaccination, medical conditions that may place persons at high-risk for severe COVID-19 include:

- Asthma (moderate to severe)\*
- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular Disease\*
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Cystic Fibrosis\*
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions (e.g. heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies)
- Hypertension or High Blood Pressure\*
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system)
- Liver Disease\*
- Neurologic conditions (e.g. dementia)\*
- Obesity (e.g. body mass index of 30kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher)
- Severe Obesity (e.g. body mass index of 40kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher)
- Overweight (e.g. body mass index of 25kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher)\*
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary Fibrosis (damaged or scarred lung tissues)\*
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking/nicotine addiction
- Thalassemia (type of blood disorder)\*
- Type 1\* and Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Individuals who are pregnant and those in an immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) should follow CDC guidance and first discuss vaccination with their medical provider before receiving the vaccine.

This definition is adopted from the CDC's list of [People with Certain Medical Conditions](#). New Jersey is monitoring whether to expand to other sub-populations based on national and state epidemiological data.

A person must have at least one of the above conditions to be considered high-risk. A sites must not require an individual to provide documentation nor a doctor's note to prove eligibility.

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

Note: The expanded list of eligible conditions (noted with \* above) was announced by Governor Murphy on March 1, 2021. Points of dispensing must update their scheduling systems accordingly by March 15.

6. **Education sector workers** are paid and unpaid persons working in pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools (e.g. pre-Kindergarten to grade 12). The sector extends to teachers, staff, classroom aides, bus drivers, janitors, counselors, administration staff, cafeteria workers, substitute teachers, and any other paid or unpaid persons working in schools serving those pre-K to grade 12. Eligibility also extends to those working in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
7. **Childcare sector workers** are paid and unpaid persons working in licensed or registered childcare settings. These include center-based and family childcare providers. Childcare workers (e.g. nannies) employed by private households are not eligible, in accordance with the Biden Administration directive. Childcare is licensed and registered through the New Jersey Department of Children and Families.

### **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. On March 1, 2021, Governor Murphy announced Phase 1B groups that will be phased in throughout the month of March.

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?**

Consumers can pre-register for the vaccine on the New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) and be notified when an appointment is available. Consumers can also make an appointment directly with one of the many designated vaccination sites across the state that do not participate in NJVSS. Individuals can get more information, register for the vaccine, and schedule an appointment by visiting <https://covid.nj.gov/vaccine>.

In March 2021 through a [federal program](#), select locations of CVS, Rite Aid, and Walgreens pharmacies will prioritize appointment access for members of the education and childcare sectors. Appointments can be scheduled directly with those pharmacy chains.

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?**

The New Jersey Immunization Information System (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.

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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](#)

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

- [Fact Sheet for Janssen Vaccine Recipients and Caregivers](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#)