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IMPORTANT Information for Individuals and Families Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccines in NYS OPWDD Operated Settings

Limited amounts of the COVID-19 vaccine will be available during the first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program in New York State (NYS). The NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) is developing a prioritization and allocation framework based on guidance from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

Here are the highlights for your reference:

- Vaccination providers will be asked to set aside vaccines to be used for populations served by New York State's Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and the Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS). Providers will be notified about which additional facilities or agencies will be sending staff or residents to be vaccinated.
- OPWDD operated residential facilities and operating agencies will be directed to contact designated vaccination providers to schedule vaccinations for prioritized staff and residents.
- OPWDD will provide OPWDD facilities and agency providers information to the designated vaccine provider. Agencies and facilities will work with vaccination provider partners (hospitals and federally qualified health centers on arranging and scheduling vaccine efforts
- OPWDD, OMH and OASAS facilities may not be able to have their entire Phase 1A staff or residents vaccinated at once and therefore will prioritize those individuals **at greatest risk**. This group will include any staff who work in settings where transmission is likely, or who are at higher risk of transmitting the virus to residents who are at elevated risk of severe morbidity or mortality. Residents will need to be prioritized based on age, number of comorbidities, and severity of existing disease or comorbidities.
- Agency providers will need to evaluate all residential programs and rank all locations/residency types in the Agency setting on a scale of 1 (most at risk) to 5 (least at risk) according to the NYS Department of Health's established criteria. This takes into consideration the volume of COVID-19 residents being cared for or housed, the level of care provided, and the number of residents at risk for the severe COVID-19 disease.

- Agency providers will work with designated hospitals and federally qualified health centers to make appointments for staff and residents to receive the second dose 21 or 28 days (depending on which vaccine is used) later, at the time the first dose is administered.
- All vaccinated staff and residents must be tracked to ensure they get the second matching dose on time. Individuals must receive two doses of the same vaccine (e.g., you must receive two doses of the Pfizer vaccine or two doses of the Moderna vaccine; they are not interchangeable).

Vaccine Safety

Post-vaccination monitoring is an essential part of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is promoting and encouraging all those being vaccinated to participate in V-Safe, a smart-phone based application that will allow those vaccinated to enter their symptoms in the days after vaccination using text messaging. V-Safe also provides reminders for the second dose and telephone follow-up for anyone who reports medically significant adverse events. V-Safe materials can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vsafe> including a V-Safe information sheet. Vaccination providers will provide an information sheet to each person vaccinated.

New York State agency providers should clearly communicate how prioritization will work for staff/residents/their legal guardians or representatives, if applicable. We will continue to update you with information as it develops.

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