

## Completing Phase 1A:

### Expanded Special Vaccine Initiative and Regional Vaccine Sites

3/12/2021

On February 27th, the FDA granted Emergency Use Authorization to the Johnson & Johnson one-dose COVID-19 vaccine. Our first week's allocation of 94,600 doses is currently dedicated to vaccinating teachers and support staff, and we expect to vaccinate the remainder of this priority population with our next shipment later this month. We anticipate receiving a significant increase in allocation of Johnson & Johnson, and these vaccines represent an opportunity to efficiently vaccinate large numbers of Pennsylvanians in a single visit.

Concerns raised with Pennsylvania's current vaccination strategy include the challenges that seniors face in accessing vaccine appointments, the need to further address racial and economic equity, and counties' drive for additional doses and greater control over the allocations delivered to their communities. With that in mind, the Joint Legislative Task Force has approved a plan to:

- 1) Secure appointments for all remaining 1A Pennsylvanians by the end of March and provide predictability for our highest-performing vaccine providers
- 2) Create and support regional vaccine sites with our county partners
- 3) Prioritize certain essential frontline workers

#### Supporting Our Strongest Vaccine Providers

One of the key parts to this announcement is our goal of getting first dose appointments for everyone who wants a vaccine in Phase 1A *scheduled* by March 31.

To help accomplish this goal, DOH has begun to identify providers across the state with a track record of high volume and timely reporting to support with a commitment of more predictable vaccine supply. What these vaccine providers receive as their allocation for the week of March 22 is roughly what they can expect for the next month. This will allow these providers to start scheduling appointments through April – not just for the upcoming week. This will meet both goals of scheduling the appointments and vaccinating 1A as quickly as possible.

The SOH will issue an Order today to require providers to use all reasonable efforts to meet this goal of scheduling all 1A appointments by the end of the month. This includes abiding by prior orders, including the requirement that patients be able to schedule by phone.

#### Regional Vaccine Sites

After completion of the current education special initiative, we will dedicate a portion of our weekly J&J allocation going forward for the creation of Pennsylvania's Regional Vaccination Clinic Program. This program will help Pennsylvania vaccinate its remaining 1A population efficiently and build the infrastructure necessary to successfully vaccinate more citizens as they become eligible.

Under this program, counties will work together regionally on proposals to vaccinate their region's currently eligible individuals. County leaders and emergency management organizations have been working hard to put plans in place for community vaccination – these plans can be leveraged to pursue vaccination strategies that best meet their region's needs. We will be working closely with CCAP to establish plans for these regional vaccine clinics. Upon receipt of proposals, the administration will bring recommendations to the Vaccine Joint Legislative Task Force, which will determine which clinics to support through the weekly J&J doses.

We will make a strong recommendation for counties and provider networks to collaborate to address regional needs, and to address racial, socioeconomic, and geographic equity in their planning and execution. Plans should include strategies to address access barriers such as allowing for scheduling appointments over the phone, transportation, and translation services.

Through these regional vaccination clinics, we will achieve greater access for seniors who have been struggling to find available doses and a more equitable distribution by allowing communities to direct doses to their most vulnerable residents. While counties are looking for more control on how to vaccinate their most vulnerable, this proposal shifts focus to allow efficient and targeted use of the Commonwealth's J&J vaccine for these populations.

### **Expanded Special Vaccine Initiative**

Beginning in early April, the remaining portion of our anticipated Johnson & Johnson allocation will be targeted toward frontline, essential workers who have had no choice but to continue serving our commonwealth amidst this pandemic. Targeted industries include:

- Law enforcement and correctional staff
- Grocery workers
- Firefighters - Paid and volunteer
- Food and agriculture workers

Targeting the remaining J&J allocations to certain frontline industries will allow Pennsylvania to more quickly reopen the economy while protecting those on the frontlines. PEMA will work with our county emergency management partners and the industries associated with these workers to identify and stand up appropriate sites to vaccinate these populations.