

Media Inquiries:

(630) 221-7374
media@dupagehealth.org

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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

February 17, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DuPage County Updates on COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and First Report of Local COVID-19 Case Caused by B.1.1.7 Variant

DuPage County—DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) has learned the number of COVID-19 vaccines allocated to DuPage County in the next three weeks for first doses will be very limited. This week, DCHD expects to receive only 2,450 vaccines for first doses for distribution to vaccine providers in DuPage County which is much lower than the recent average of 14,000 new vaccine doses previously received each week.

This lower allocation of new first doses means DCHD's Community Vaccination Clinic and other local providers will be primarily focused on administering second doses and very limited appointments for new first doses will be available. We fully expect the vaccine supply will catch up over the next few weeks and additional new first dose appointments will become more accessible in early to mid-March.

Until vaccine supply increases, DuPage County will not be expanding to the Phase 1b Part II group announced by the Governor last week that includes individuals ages 16–64 years with co-morbidities and underlying conditions, as well as individuals with disabilities. Per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for transitioning between phases, we will look to move in to the Phase 1b Part II group when supply increases significantly through more doses available of current vaccines or new vaccine authorized, when most persons within current phase are vaccinated (>60-70%) or when demand in the current phase is less than vaccination available.

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Currently, the Health Department and vaccine providers in DuPage County are focused on vaccinating the 270,000 people in DuPage County previously eligible in Phase 1b and assuring that all healthcare workers who meet Phase 1a have also had the opportunity to be vaccinated. All individuals who live and work in DuPage County are welcome to register for vaccine on our website at www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine. It is important to note that appointment notifications will continue to be sent to any remaining Phase 1a and 1b individuals who have registered until more vaccination of these groups has been completed.

Also of concern, DCHD has received confirmation of the first case of the COVID-19 variant B.1.1.7, the same variant discovered in the United Kingdom (U.K.), in a DuPage County resident. Although this is the first case of this new variant reported in DuPage County, there have been 25 cases reported throughout Illinois to date.

This variant spreads more easily and quickly than other variants. In January 2021, experts in the U.K. reported that this variant may be associated with an increased risk of death compared to other variant viruses, but more studies are needed to confirm this finding. It has since been detected in many countries around the world. This variant was first detected in the U.S. at the end of December 2020. More information on COVID-19 variants is available at <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/variants>.

“Given these emerging variants alongside ongoing vaccination efforts, supply remains the single greatest challenge in not being able to swiftly vaccinate more people in DuPage County. We, too, are frustrated with the insufficient and unpredictable supply our County is receiving. Particularly, since we have established a strong network of community partners with the capacity to currently vaccinate at least 50,000 people per week, yet we are receiving 5% of this capacity next week,” said Karen Ayala, Executive Director of DuPage County Health Department. “We are hopeful that more vaccine will be available in the next several weeks, so we will continue to expand our network and be prepared to get the vaccine into people’s arms as quickly as possible once it is available.”

Despite the vaccine supply challenges, DCHD and vaccine administration partners in the county have administered nearly 138,000 doses of vaccine since December 17. Furthermore, DuPage County continues to lead the collar counties with 3.88%, or 36,059 residents now fully vaccinated with two doses. Approximately 33,285 vaccine doses have been administered in the past week. These accomplishments have been a result of the

thousands of vaccines administered through DuPage County partner vaccination sites, including health systems, hospitals, healthcare providers, pharmacies, and the DCHD Community Vaccination Clinic.

DuPage County has 109 registered healthcare partners who are ready to begin administering vaccine once it arrives. This scalable, community-based strategy leverages existing public and private partnerships to deliver the COVID-19 vaccine safely and efficiently. This week, 53 vaccination partners indicated their ability to administer over 53,000 doses of vaccine. When vaccine is available, we are immediately ready to increase the number of doses administered each week.

Persons eligible in Phase 1a or 1b who are interested in receiving vaccine should do the following:

1. Register on DCHD's website at www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine, or call (630) 682-7400 if assistance is needed with registration (i.e., no internet or computer access, language assistance, or have questions).
2. Explore additional opportunities through other vaccine providers in your area. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has compiled available locations at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>.
3. Contact your primary care doctor or local retail pharmacy for appointment availability.
4. Take the first available opportunity to receive vaccine.

To prevent infection from the virus that causes COVID-19 including new variants, residents must follow safety measures to protect themselves, their families, and community. This includes wearing face masks, physical distancing, avoiding in-person gatherings, washing their hands, and isolating or quarantining when necessary. Everyone, including those who have been vaccinated, should continue following these measures to help end this pandemic as we learn more about how COVID-19 vaccines work in real-world conditions.

Additional COVID-19 vaccine information about County efforts, frequently asked questions, vaccination data, and more is available at www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine.

For general questions about COVID-19 and Illinois' response and guidance, call 1-800-889-3931 or email DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV.

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