

December 28, 2020

Dear Health Professional Licensee,

The District of Columbia is well underway with the implementation of the District of Columbia's COVID-19 Vaccination Program. The District's comprehensive approach to providing equitable access to vaccines to District residents and workers in partnership with healthcare providers is a continuation of the District's all of community approach to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating its impact in the District of Columbia.

The District has adopted the *National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus's* Framework for equitable allocation of COVID-19 vaccine to inform an ethical phased approach. This framework allows the District to allocate vaccine based on current evidence, recognize its uncertainties and the need for flexibility as evidence emerges and medical realities changes. Further, the allocation criteria assesses risk based on the risk of 1) acquiring infection, 2) severe morbidity and mortality, 3) negative societal impact, and 4) transmitting infection to others.

In addition, the District is implementing its Vaccination Program based on the three phased approach outlined by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The three phased approach to vaccination assumes that during Phase 1, supply is constrained and, as such, the CDC recommends that vaccines should be administered in closed settings best suited for reaching initial critical populations. Phase 2 assumes that there is likely sufficient supply to meet demand thereby permitting an expansion beyond initial populations and the use of a broader provider network. Phase 3 shifts to open access to vaccination when supply is sufficient and vaccine is likely available through private provider sites.

Since the development of the first draft of the District's plan, additional recommendations have been published by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) regarding priority populations to be vaccinated in Phase 1a, 1b, 1c and Phase 2. These recommendations have allowed states and localities to further sub-stratify populations within each phase based on the amount of vaccine that is provided to their jurisdiction each week. The District of Columbia continues to prioritize healthcare workers in Phase 1a based on the risk of 1) acquiring infection, 2) severe morbidity and mortality, 3) negative societal impact, and 4) transmitting infection to others.

Following the recommendations of the National Academies and CDC, the District of Columbia launched its COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monday, December 14, 2020 with the administration of vaccines in closed settings to healthcare workers with the highest risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2. The program subsequently expanded to include healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities, home health aides, urgent care workforce, and healthcare workers in community health centers and pharmacies that serve as vaccination centers for priority populations. Beginning December 28, 2020, the Program will expand to include the remaining healthcare workers covered in Phase 1a.

It is important to note that Phase 1a includes 115,000 healthcare workers and long-term care residents. The District's COVID-19 Vaccination Program estimates are based on the number of individuals in the healthcare setting; they are not based on the health professional license type or state of residence. The District's COVID-19 Vaccination Program does not prioritize licensed health professionals for vaccination over other healthcare workers in the same setting who may have a similar risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (i.e. nurse and environmental services worker assigned to the emergency department). Lastly, the allocation of vaccines received on a weekly basis is not sufficient to vaccinate every healthcare worker in the District in a single week, (averaging less than 9,500 doses every 7-10 days for 1st dose vaccinations) making stratification by risk a necessity.

To learn more about accessing and scheduling COVID-19 vaccines for healthcare workers in the District of Columbia, visit <http://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccinatedc>. At this time, the website is only for workers in healthcare settings that have direct or indirect exposure to infectious materials. Verification will be attested to at registration and subsequently required at the time of appointment. If you receive an error in scheduling, then please try again in 24-48 hours.

For the most up-to-date information regarding the District of Columbia's response to COVID-19, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Thank you for all you do to provide high quality care and services to residents of the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



LaQuandra S. Nesbitt, MD, MPH
Director