



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FINANCIAL SERVICES
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SERVING THE PUBLIC AND DELIVERING ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO STATE GOVERNMENT

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

KIRSTEN LC FIGUEROA
COMMISSIONER

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Dear State Employee,

Many State employees have reached out with questions about the COVID-19 vaccine. I am sharing our response with all, as we very much appreciate your interest in pursuing vaccination for yourselves and your families.

A [recent Federal study shows that Mainers say they'll get COVID-19 vaccine at one of the highest rates in the US](#). This is welcome news for public health – but also means that many of us are chomping at the bit to get our doses as soon as possible.

Maine's targeted vaccine effort will have to continue for the coming months as we work with a limited supply to vaccinate people. Like every state, we started our vaccination effort with health care personnel who are patient facing or needed to preserve critical health care services and public-facing public safety personnel so they can continue their critical response to COVID-19. The first phase, 1a, also included staff and residents in long-term care settings that have been hit particularly hard during the pandemic.

Governor Mills, following the recommendation from the former and current Administration in Washington, is now focused in phase 1b on saving lives: vaccinating those at greatest risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19, including older people age 70 and up.

Just recently, Commissioner Lambrew at the Department of Health & Human Services shared statistics for January: 203 people died from COVID-19 in Maine, one-third of the total number of deaths to date – a sign that this disease continues its deadly progression. Of those deaths in January, 83 percent were people ages 70 and older. The death rate for this age range is 10 percent of those who contract the virus compared to 1 percent for people in their 60s and less than one percent for all other ages. Further, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate in Maine for people age 70 and older is 17 percent, which is markedly higher than the six percent for people ages 60-69; the three percent for people ages 40 to 59; and the less than one percent for younger people.

This is why, right now, Maine is vaccinating people ages 70 and older. With the projections we have received from the Biden Administration, we should be able to get through two-thirds of this age group by the first week in March. This is expected to allow us to start vaccinating people ages 65 to 69 in April. There are about 92,000 people in Maine ages 65 to 69. For context, we expect to receive around 27,000 first doses of the vaccine next week. It will take time.

If you or yours meet this age criteria of being 70 years or older, please contact your primary care physician to register for a vaccine appointment, or you may hear directly from your health care provider. You could also contact a vaccine site for an appointment. (All vaccine sites are listed [here](#).) There is no charge for the COVID-19 vaccine, but you should be prepared to provide any insurance information and proof of eligibility at the vaccination site.

Vaccination does require an appointment and, because Maine's supply of vaccine is limited, appointments may not be immediately available and will be scheduled on a rolling basis. Vaccination information for other Phase 1b groups, including Maine people aged 65-69, will be posted once available. Additional vaccination sites will be added in the coming weeks.

We appreciate that many of you have asked when you will get vaccinated. Some of you work in the field and in public-facing offices. Others have medical conditions that elevate the risk of serious consequences of COVID-19. As the Governor has repeatedly said, you are all essential. We share your emotions and will provide guidance to staff as vaccine supply increases and we are able to move into additional phases of the vaccine plan. But that is not now or the near term as we race to prevent additional hospitalizations and deaths in Maine.

As we approach the point when we have enough vaccine to begin to expand beyond older Mainers, Governor Mills will clearly communicate the next phase. The website, <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines>, is the authoritative source for this information. We continue to set up additional vaccine sites and systems so Maine residents can easily and quickly get their shots.

In the meantime, thank you for your continued mindfulness of The Four Ws: **W**ait (remember to stay home if sick), **W**ash hands with hot and soapy water, **W**ear a face covering, and **W**atch your distance.

The [DAFS' COVID-19 page for State employees](#) offers links to the latest case counts and a myriad of other pandemic resources for State employees.

Be well,



Kirsten LC Figueroa
Commissioner