

State of Maine COVID-19 Vaccine Efficient and Full Use Policy

February 16, 2021

The State of Maine has issued guidance called “phases” on vaccination distribution to ensure efficiency, equity, and prevent severe illness and death. The details of the State’s phases for COVID-19 vaccination distribution are posted at: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/phases>. The phases are binding for sites receiving COVID-19 vaccine from the Maine Immunization Program (MIP).

At the same time, the State is committed to putting every dose of the COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of residents, even if that means occasional deviations from the State’s phases. This guidance specifies how vaccine sites with approved Maine Immunization Provider Agreements may administer extra doses to individuals at the end of a clinic day or in extraordinary circumstances.

The COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) require careful handling including cold storage and rapid use given short expiration dates prior to opening vials. Vials of COVID-19 vaccine contain multiple doses. Once a vial of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine is opened, doses must be used within 6 hours; after that period of time, doses from that vial may not be used and must be discarded.

Maine’s goal is that no dose goes to waste. As such, approved sites may, without additional approval, use the small fraction of doses available at the end of a clinic to vaccinate, in this order:

- Eligible individuals age 70 and older who may be on a waiting list or scheduled at a future date, including “same day” waiting lists;
- Individuals age 65 to 69; and/or
- Vaccine clinic staff and volunteers, in oldest age order, who have not otherwise been vaccinated, including calling people back if there are extra doses.

Individuals who receive a first dose specific to implementation of this policy must be scheduled for the second dose, as applicable, at the same location. The second dose should not be part of the full use management policy process for the day.

Maine’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will also consider for approval exceptions to the policy or to the phases for unbridged islands, remote locations, and other settings where the provision of vaccines to eligible individuals would be infeasible without broader eligibility. Requests for such exceptions will be rare and must be approved in advance. Requests can be submitted to: Sally.Weiss@Maine.gov.