

Pennsylvania Accelerating Vaccine Strategy

03/31/2021

Harrisburg, PA - The Department of Health (DOH) in conjunction with the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force today announced the start of the special initiative to vaccinate targeted industry workers and to accelerate the vaccination timetable for those in Phases 1B, 1C and 2. All Pennsylvanians will be eligible to schedule vaccination appointments beginning April 19.

“The vaccine landscape continues to evolve as the federal government is increasing allocations to more retail pharmacy chains across the country,” Acting Health Secretary Alison Beam said. “To ensure that vaccine continues to get to people efficiently and equitably, Pennsylvania is adapting its plan to allow workers in targeted industries to access any of the three vaccines available at providers throughout the state, and to accelerate our eligibility for remaining phases of the state’s vaccination plan.

“Pennsylvania’s vaccine providers have dramatically stepped up the pace of vaccinations to an average of 83,000 per day, moving the keystone state higher and higher in the rankings with other states. As we complete Phase 1A vaccinations, it’s time to open eligibility to more Pennsylvanians so providers can continue to fill appointments and efficiently, effectively and equitably vaccinate more people every day.”

Pennsylvania will begin the following accelerated phased rollout:

- **March 31** workers in the four targeted industries that Gov. Wolf and the Task Force announced on March 12:
 - **Law enforcement**, which includes police, sheriffs and deputies, constables, corrections officers and staff, as well as probation and parole staff.
 - **Firefighters**, including career and volunteer firefighters.
 - **Grocery Store workers**, including all workers in supermarkets and grocery stores.
 - **Food and Agriculture workers**, including all food processing company employees, including meat, poultry, and dairy processing, fresh fruit and vegetable packing operations, food manufacturing, all farmworkers, farm operators, and farm managers, including at urban agriculture operations.
- **April 5** all residents in Phase 1B will be eligible to start scheduling vaccination appointments.
- **April 12** all residents in Phase 1C will be eligible to start scheduling vaccination appointments.
- **April 19**, all residents will be eligible to start scheduling vaccination appointments.

“It is important to remember that eligibility does not guarantee an immediate vaccination appointment,” Beam said. “Vaccine providers are ready and eager to get a shot in the arm of every person who wants one while we continue to aggressively advocate for more vaccine.”

COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force members discussed the benefits of the accelerated plan.

“President Biden has asked us to make every adult eligible for vaccination with the vaccine he is providing,” said Sen. Art Haywood. “We can do it, we can make the change. We can get more vaccine to Southeast PA and across the commonwealth and target vaccine, so no one is left out.”

“Due to the successful implementation of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force’s revised strategic plan, along with an increasing supply of vaccine doses from the federal government and the tremendous work of our provider network, Pennsylvania is now in a position to pursue an aggressive timeline to ensure any Pennsylvanians who wants to be vaccinated is eligible to do so by April 19,” said Sen. Ryan Aument. “As we expand eligibility, we must not forget about our seniors and our commitment to prioritize them and others in Phase 1A, as well as our frontline workers such as law enforcement and first responders in Phase 1B.”

“We can meet President Biden ‘s request with the amount of vaccines he is providing,” Rep. Bridget Malloy Kosierowski said. “Pennsylvania has done the work to make this a reality. I have said time and time again that this will get better, and it is. Our dedicated providers, who are on the ground every day, Governor Wolf’s administration, and our task force have collaboratively worked together in prioritizing the health and safety of all Pennsylvanians.”

“Today is a day of hope and optimism,” said Rep. Tim O’Neal. “Earlier this month, we announced plans to prioritize our essential workers and first responders by offering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to them in the coming weeks. We have now done that today. In addition, we have set a timeline so that anyone who wants the vaccine will get able to begin scheduling their appointment at the latest by April 19. The light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter and brighter every day.”

Residents should continue to use the Department of Health’s [Vaccine Provider Map](#) to find a vaccine provider nearest them. The department will continue to update the map as the federal government increases the number of pharmacy chains receiving vaccine through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership.

People without internet access can contact the Health Hotline by calling 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).