

Vaccine Update- Week of 1/24/21

Dr. Cynthia Morrow, Health Director, Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts

As of January 24th, 2021, Virginia is projected to receive approximately 110,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine each week for the next several weeks. The Central Office of the Virginia Department of Health estimates that approximately 50% of Virginia's population is currently eligible to receive vaccine based on the recently expanded criteria for Phase 1b. Like every health district in the state, the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) are tasked with the impossible challenge of having to distribute a very limited supply vaccine with a very high demand by the public.

The Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) allocation of vaccine will be approximately 3,000 doses per week. It will be months for all who are currently eligible under Phase 1b guidelines to be able to receive vaccine. Even though Phase 1b was expanded by the Governor to include many over the age of 65 and those aged sixteen and up with serious medical conditions, we share your disappointment that the vaccine supply is simply not sufficient to get to all who are eligible quickly. Vaccine is extremely limited now, but we are working to deliver vaccine to all who want to be protected by it.

While we continue to face many challenges with respect to vaccine distribution, there is much to celebrate. For the past four weeks of this 10-month pandemic, RCAHD staff have been working long hours to pull together vaccine opportunities for our community. Here's a peek at what we've been up to between January 18-24. RCAHD has:

- Hired a COVID Immunization Nurse to help our nursing and clinical team plan vaccine clinics,
- Welcomed and trained five National Guard members to help support our clinic response,
- Hosted seven full vaccination clinics in Roanoke, Salem, and Covington, vaccinating over 8,000 in our community. On January 21, we partnered with school systems in our district, as well as Carilion Clinic, to vaccinate 2,000 public and private K-12 teachers and staff at a daylong clinic visited by Governor Ralph Northam. On January 22 and 23, Carilion Clinic led the joint effort to reach over 4,000 of our 65+ population.
- Continued to reach the most vulnerable of our frontline essential Phase 1a and 1b including healthcare workers, first responders and staff of correctional facilities, schools, and childcare centers.

Collectively, these efforts have demonstrated to our community that we have the capacity to safely and efficiently vaccinate large numbers of individuals when the vaccine supply increases. The demand far exceeds our current supply, but we will continue to work hard to provide as many doses to as many people as soon as possible. As we move through the first tiers of Phase 1b in the coming weeks, we will work towards reaching the rest of Phase 1b, including our 16-64 year olds with medical vulnerabilities and additional essential frontline employees as outlined by the Governor as soon as vaccine supply increases. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke/covid-vaccine/>