

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Central Shenandoah Health District COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Status Currently in Phase 1a; Planning for Phase 1b

(Staunton, Virginia) -- Central Shenandoah Health District (CSHD) is working to ensure the vaccination of the prioritized groups as defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and adopted by Virginia Disaster Medical Advisory Committee and the Vaccine Advisory Workgroup.

In December 2020, CSHD began offering closed “point of dispensing” COVID-19 vaccination clinics specifically for “Phase 1a” priority groups. Phase 1a is the first group eligible to receive the vaccine, and includes health system personnel with direct contact or a high risk of contact with COVID-positive patients. Phase 1a also includes long-term care residents and staff that are being vaccinated through a [federal partnership](#) with CVS and Walgreens.

As availability of the vaccine increases, Virginia will move to the other phases. An exact timeline is not yet known, but [some health districts](#) have entered [Phase 1b](#), which includes frontline essential workers, people age 75 and older, and people living in correctional facilities, homeless shelters and migrant labor camps. [Phase 1c](#) will include other essential workers, people age 65 and older, people 16 and older with underlying medical conditions. The complete definitions of Phase 1b and Phase 1c are available on the VDH Vaccine Page at www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/.

“Our goal is to get as many people in the phased priority groups vaccinated as quickly as possible” says Dr. Laura Kornegay, Health Director for CSHD. In addition, Kornegay points out that CSHD is a large and diverse district, spanning more than 2,000 square miles across the Shenandoah Valley. “Because of the differences in populations in the five counties and five cities that make up the district, when the district enters Phase 1b vaccines may reach some areas more quickly than others. We should also expect overlap in the phases as we work through the vaccination process.”

CSHD is currently in Phase 1a, but is actively planning for Phase 1b. Information and progress will be posted on the district website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/central-shenandoah/. Please note that unless you have been registered for a vaccine with the Central Shenandoah Health District, we currently are not accepting walk-ins for the COVID-19 vaccine. For general questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and to subscribe to the CSHD COVID-19 Vaccine Newsletter, email cshdinfo@vdh.virginia.gov. If you are an employer who is listed in Phase 1a or Phase 1b and have not already contacted the health district, email cshd_esf8@vdh.virginia.gov.

Virginians who do not fall into priority categories will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine when it is more widely available. Once the vaccine is rolled out to the general public, distribution will be similar to the flu vaccine. People will be able to get the vaccine from a local pharmacy, primary care physician, Federally Qualified

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Health Center/free clinic, local health department or other clinic that is participating as a COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider.

The public will be able to see which groups are eligible and what phase Virginia is in at any given time at www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/. Keeping an eye on our website and visiting VDH's FAQs (www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-faq/) is the best way to stay up to date on this information.

In the meantime, it is important to remain vigilant in COVID-19 prevention practices. Continue taking steps to protect yourself and others, such as covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, staying at least six feet away from others, and avoiding social gatherings. It is crucial that we all continue to take these steps even after getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

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