



Dorchester County Health Department

“Working for Healthier People”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Dorchester County Health Department Begins COVID-19 Vaccinations

Cambridge, MD (December 31, 2020) – The Dorchester County Health Department (DCHD) received its first shipments of Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine to begin vaccinations for Phase 1A priority groups. Due to limited vaccine supply, the initial phase includes health care workers and first responders that are considered high risk because they often come into contact with people who are COVID positive.

DCHD held its first private vaccination clinic on Tuesday for DCHD’s vaccinators and testing staff, which also allowed staff to practice providing clinics. Among the 31 employees vaccinated was Roger L. Harrell, Health Officer, and Dr. Casey Scott, Deputy Health Officer, for Dorchester County. “The vaccine is another tool in our toolbox to control this virus,” said Harrell. “It’s an exciting day to have this science-based, safe vaccine to offer to our community. However, we still need to wear face coverings, social distance, and wash our hands.”

DCHD is working with the identified priority groups to coordinate vaccination efforts and today held its first clinic for 42 health care providers not affiliated with the hospital. Additionally, DCHD collaborated with Walgreens to coordinate vaccine administration for 136 first responders from Emergency Management Services and law enforcement and other health care professionals. Statewide, Walgreens and CVS pharmacies are working with the Maryland Department of Health to vaccinate staff and residents of long-term care facilities and hospital personnel.

“Vaccination is an important step in the process to end this pandemic,” said Dr. Scott, “and we will make every effort to get this vaccine to our citizens promptly and equitably.” DCHD anticipates receiving COVID-19 vaccine shipments regularly. If the allotment is consistent, they plan to vaccinate most people in Phase 1A by the end of January. Once most of the people in Phase 1A are vaccinated, DCHD will begin vaccinating other priority groups, such as people at significantly higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness and additional essential workers, at announced clinics. Details on each phase are still being determined at the state and local level. The timing of vaccination in each phase depends on vaccine availability and other factors.

The vaccine, which will require two doses three to four weeks apart, is not yet available to the general public. People interested in being vaccinated should talk with their health care provider and check the health department’s website at dorchesterhealth.org and Facebook page at facebook.com/dorchesterhealthemergencypreparedness, as well as other local media, for updates

about the vaccination process. People will have to pre-register for scheduled vaccination clinics. Maryland Department of Health's website at covidlink.maryland.gov includes resources and information about safety, efficacy, vaccine ingredients, and more.

“We have received a lot of inquiries about vaccine availability, which we hope is a good sign that people are eager and excited to get vaccinated and are confident in the science and data,” said Angela Grove, Public Information Officer. “There is so much misinformation about vaccines, and understandable hesitancy and concern, and we are doing our best to provide accurate and factual information.”

Dorchester County residents with general questions or concerns about COVID-19 can call the Dorchester County Health Department at 410-228-3223 Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm or 2-1-1 after hours.

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