



Joanne Belanger  
*Director of Health and Human Services*

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*  
**FROM:** Joanne Belanger, Director of Health and Human Services  
**DATE:** January 26, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** **Motion by C. Chau, and C. Leahy 1/12/21** Req. City Mgr. Provide Update For The City Council Regarding Distribution Of The Vaccination For COVID -19 Throughout The City

Currently there are two COVID 19 vaccines that have received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), one from Pfizer and one from Moderna. The Pfizer vaccine requires ultra-cold storage and is therefore only being distributed to large healthcare facilities. The Moderna product is what is being made available from the State to municipalities and other vaccine sites. The Moderna vaccine is also a temperature fragile vaccine that is transported and stored frozen however not at ultra-cold temperatures. It has specific requirements for storage at freezer temperatures and refrigeration temperatures once thawed. There are also strict requirements for once the vials are at room temperature, for instance at a clinic site, including not being able to re-refrigerate. Each vial holds 10 doses so in order not to waste any vaccine, it is important to closely monitor registration at a clinic.

These particular requirements for the vaccine makes distribution of the vaccine, at any phase, more complex than a regular flu clinic. Another logistical piece is that this vaccine requires a second dose. For any clinic that is planned, there must also be a second clinic planned 28 days later for people to return to receive their second dose.

The Governor and his team have developed how the vaccine will be allocated and distributed in the Commonwealth. There are 3 set Phases and steps within each Phase, based on priorities determined by a Committee of members of the Governors Command center. We are currently in Phase 1 which contains healthcare workers, long term care, congregate care, first responders, home-based health care and other health care workers. Categories or occupations within each step are review twice a week by the committee in the Command Center to determine if other occupations that are not currently included should be included. This means this system is constantly changing depending on the determination of the Committee. On January 21, 2021, the Governor announced a change to Phase 1 in total. Instead of working through the remaining steps, all steps in Phase 1 are now eligible to be vaccinated.

No specific dates have been associated with the Phases as it is all dependent on availability of vaccine and the availability of vaccination sites to be stood up. The vaccine allocated to the State from the Federal government is dependent on manufacturing and the Federal distribution system. The State does not have a cache of vaccine stored somewhere in the Commonwealth.

Locally, once the State approves an allotment to the City, it is shipped directly from the manufacturer. It is a complex system of requisition, allocation approvals, shipping and delivery.

During the week of January 11, 2021, the Health Department offered the Moderna vaccine to those in the first responder step of Phase 1. Plans are in place for the second dose for those first responders for early February. Due the recent change in Phase 1 eligibility, we are in the planning stages to move forward to offer vaccine to others in Phase 1, when our next allocation of vaccine arrives. We do not know when the State will announce moving into Phase 2 or from there into Phase 3. We do not make those decisions locally, it is decided on the State level.

In addition to Health Department led efforts to vaccinate eligible individuals during early phases, the City is actively engaged with local health care entities and other community partners to coordinate large scale vaccination clinics that will be necessary as the eligibility pool expands in upcoming phases.

In order to help the general public navigate through all the information around the vaccines and getting vaccinated, we are working on a public information campaign. There is information posted on the City website and more will be available in the coming weeks. We are investigating a dedicated email and phone line for questions. We will use the website and other media outlets to let residents and businesses know when and where vaccine will be available and who is eligible to receive the vaccine as we move through the Phases. The State website <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/when-can-i-get-the-covid-19-vaccine> lists all the Phases and those eligible in each step in the Phase. There is also an interactive map <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-locations-for-individuals-currently-eligible-to-be-vaccinated> that future clinics will be listed on and those eligible at that time will be able to register for an appointment.

The roll out of COVID 19 vaccine is a complex process from the Federal Government level down to the local government level. Each state was given the opportunity to develop a plan according to what they see as priority for their individual state. We are relying on the State of Massachusetts to provide guidance as we move forward through the priority Phases. However, the guidance has been changing as we move through the roll out as vaccine availability changes and more is known about vaccine distribution. Nevertheless, we remain committed to pivot as things change in order to best serve the City.