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COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Executive Summary

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has engaged a multi-agency planning group to align federal guidance to the existing state and local infrastructure to ensure safe, equitable, and efficient vaccination against COVID-19. Under this plan, and dependent on vaccine supply availability, MDH will assure that COVID-19 vaccine will be available for all Maryland residents who wish to be vaccinated. Brief descriptions of the major sections of the plan are described below.

Phased Approach for Vaccination/Critical Populations: MDH will focus this plan on two major phases of vaccine availability and distribution. Phase 1 (CDC Phase 1-Potentially Limited Doses Available) will be when there is limited vaccine availability and will focus on those at highest risk of developing complications from COVID-19 and those in critical workforce/infrastructure industries. MDH will work with other state/local agencies, and previously identified partners to develop estimates for groups identified by the state (core planning group and technical advisory group) and CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) as priority for vaccination during this phase. Phase 2 (CDC Phase 2-Large Number of Doses Available & Phase 3-Continued Vaccination, Shift to Routine Strategy) will be a wide scale distribution vaccine strategy associated with broad availability to the general population.

Provider Recruitment and Enrollment: MDH will continue to actively recruit potential vaccinators from external partners currently engaged in COVID planning. MDH is currently recruiting and enrolling healthcare providers (HCPs), local health departments (LHDs), employee occupational health and pharmacists in MDH's Immunization Information System (ImmuNet) to ensure that there will be sufficient vaccinators throughout the state. Providers will be required to be connected with ImmuNet for reporting COVID-19 vaccine doses administered and complete registration in ImmuNet, including signing the CDC COVID Vaccine Provider Agreement.

Vaccine Allocation, Ordering, Distribution, and Inventory Management: During Phase 1, allocation of vaccine will be determined by the number of vaccine candidates registered at vaccination sites. MDH will require pre-registration of Phase 1 vaccine sites and registration of priority vaccine candidates at each site using PrepMod as the main vaccine management system. PrepMod is an online clinic management & appointment scheduling system developed in Maryland and used by Maryland local health departments to conduct mass vaccination/school-located clinics. During Phase 2 when the vaccine becomes widely available, the need for allocations no longer exists. Vaccine orders will be placed in ImmuNet, which will then be uploaded to the CDC Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS) vaccine ordering system for shipping directly to the hospital/LHD/provider/work site location. MDH will track provider vaccine inventory and administration via ImmuNet.

Vaccine Storage and Handling: COVID-19 vaccine products are temperature sensitive and will need to be stored and handled correctly to ensure vaccine viability prior to administration to a patient. CDC is currently developing storage and handling guidelines for COVID-19 vaccines and will release them as an addendum to the current *Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit*.

MDH, along with the CDC, will provide educational materials to COVID-19 vaccination providers to ensure appropriate vaccine storage and handling procedures are established and followed. Vaccination providers are responsible for maintaining vaccine quality from the time a shipment of vaccine arrives at the provider site to the time it is administered.

Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders: For most COVID-19 vaccines, two doses of vaccine will be required separated by >21 or >28 days. Second dose reminders will be provided to patients in several ways. Marylanders may choose to register in PrepMod, a free online service that connects patients and vaccine providers. Reminders may be sent via PrepMod to registered patients. Alternatively, patients may be scheduled for second doses from provider-based systems. Maryland also has a consumer vaccination portal, Maryland MyIR, which allows registered users to obtain their current vaccination records from ImmuNet. MyIR can also be used to issue reminder/recall messages if two doses of COVID-19 are required.

Vaccination Communication: Communications about COVID-19 vaccines must begin prior to vaccine availability and should continue throughout the vaccination campaign. This communication will need to be clear and effective to ensure success of the COVID-19 vaccination program. Communications regarding COVID-19 vaccine will focus on three main areas: 1) Safety and efficacy of vaccine, 2) vaccination of priority groups, and 3) vaccination of the general population. MDH will coordinate with trusted community partners, priority group representatives, and representatives of vulnerable populations, along with a marketing vendor, to develop and disseminate messaging.

Vaccine Safety Monitoring: With the rapid development and licensing of the COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine safety monitoring is a high priority to establish and maintain confidence in the vaccine. CDC and the FDA continuously monitor the safety of vaccines. Three main systems are used to monitor the safety of vaccines: MDH participates in the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), Vaccine Safety Datalink (VSD), and Clinical Immunization Safety Assessment Project.

Vaccination Program Monitoring: Monitoring of the COVID-19 vaccination program will be critical to the program's success. *The Weekly Flu Vaccination Dashboard* and *the COVID-19 Vaccination Response Dashboard* will use data related to flu and COVID vaccination that are collected from various sources. MDH will also have Maryland specific dashboards based on information collected in ImmuNet. MDH will have a flu and Covid-19 dashboard, which will include both cases and vaccine status.

The [Maryland Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#) (Version 1.0), incorporates the assumptions, guidance, and requirements in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations*, issued on September 16, 2020. As additional information and guidance are available, including through stakeholder engagement, the plan will evolve and be updated to meet the needs of all Maryland residents.