

# MASSACHUSETTS INTERIM COVID-19 VACCINATION PLAN

## Executive Summary

October 26, 2020

### Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) leads the planning, distribution, and implementation efforts of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP). The MCVP will build on the Department's experience and strong existing foundation, which currently supports the distribution of over 3 million doses of vaccine annually to more than 1,000 health care provider sites. MDPH launched its internal COVID-19 Vaccine Planning Structure on August 13, 2020, engaged critical partners across MDPH, and identified external partners to guide this effort to ensure all Massachusetts citizens have access to COVID-19 vaccine in a safe and timely manner. On October 7, 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a [COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group](#) to inform MDPH's planning to distribute a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. This work will be conducted with an equity lens to ensure distribution to the critical populations considered most vulnerable. Planning will include coordination with the federally-recognized Tribal Nations.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Sections:

#### Section 3: Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination

Our program is aligned with the three phases of vaccine availability and scenarios, as described in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Playbook. The goal is to maximize vaccine acceptance and public health protection, while minimizing waste and inefficiency. The program will monitor vaccine inventory, distribution, and any repositioning of the vaccine to ensure end-to-end visibility of vaccine doses throughout all phases. The MDPH Immunization Division will actively recruit and enroll additional vaccine provider sites to supplement the nearly 3,000 provider sites already registered and reporting immunization data to the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) in order to fully support all three phases of the COVID-19 vaccination effort. MDPH will ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine throughout all three phases.

#### Section 4: Critical Populations

Using a variety of existing data sets, along with CDC COVID-19 guidance on the three phases of vaccine availability, recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and the final prioritization of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, MDPH will identify and prioritize critical populations for vaccination following federal guidance. In addition, MDPH will refer to emerging evidence of historic and COVID-19-specific vaccine hesitancy and under-immunization risk. Once critical populations are enumerated and mapped, MDPH will determine parameters and data sets to inform the prioritization model including projections, and requisite mapping, for the distribution of the vaccine by phase (and subsets of populations within in each phase), and by priority group and location.

#### Section 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

There are currently close to 3,000 health care provider sites reporting data into the MIIS primarily through real-time data exchange with electronic health records (EHRs). These include all pediatric provider sites, major hospital systems, community health centers, local health departments, and approximately 1,000 pharmacy locations. Ongoing provider enrollment is focused on providers of those at highest risk including long term care facilities and other immunizing providers currently not reporting data to the MIIS. The first available doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be made available to providers who, based on their practice profiles, serve the pre-identified critical populations. MDPH continues to leverage its extensive community partnerships to recruit

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additional COVID-19 vaccination provider sites and expand equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination as vaccine supply increases.

## Section 8: COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

MDPH will require storage and handling training for primary and back-up COVID-19 vaccine coordinators. MDPH will recommend that provider sites have written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and will provide template SOPs that can be adapted for each provider site. MDPH will require that all provider sites use purpose-built/pharmaceutical-grade units for refrigeration. The MDPH Immunization Division Vaccine Unit is currently surveying providers enrolled in the Vaccine Program to evaluate ultra-cold storage capacity given that two of the candidate vaccines in development require ultra-cold storage.

## Section 10: COVID-19 Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders

MIIS has robust reminder/recall functionality available for all registered providers to utilize. MDPH is adding text message reminders by February 2021. The importance of the second dose will also be a main messaging component of MDPH's planned public awareness campaign.

## Section 12: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication

The MDPH statewide communications goal is to provide clear, accurate, consistent, and timely information about the MCVP, with an emphasis on building vaccine confidence broadly among groups anticipated to receive early vaccination and to dispel misinformation to ensure vaccine uptake. MDPH is developing a detailed communications plan with three key components – a statewide public awareness campaign; earned and paid media placements; and active community engagement. The data demonstrate that people of color—specifically African American/black, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian and Alaskan Native—have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 with higher rates of morbidity, mortality, and transmission and these data will inform MDPH's communications strategy and broad-scale and segmented messaging. Massachusetts will leverage the CDC's *Vaccinate with Confidence* framework to support development of MCVP messaging.

## Section 14: COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring

Vaccine Safety Monitoring, including reporting to the federal Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), will be a critical component of the overall training program that at least two individuals at all provider sites will be required to pass before receipt of vaccine. Staff who respond to calls from providers and the public will also receive up-to-date training on the latest COVID-19 vaccine guidance from CDC.

## Section 15: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monitoring

Vaccination program monitoring will be ongoing throughout the three phases. The number of enrolled provider sites and their provider profiles are reviewed at regular meetings. MDPH will monitor the number of doses distributed by municipality to ensure that providers in each region of the Commonwealth receive vaccine commensurate to their relative proportion of the state's population. MDPH will use the MIIS to not only process all COVID-19 vaccine orders but to also monitor vaccine inventories and administration at the individual provider site level. Frequent situational reports from local public health officials and community partners will allow MDPH and its partners to identify gaps in planning and implementation at the local level and address these as necessary.