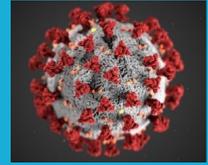


# Commonwealth of Virginia INTERIM DRAFT COVID-19 VACCINATION PLAN



## Executive Summary – INTERIM DRAFT

October 26, 2020

### Introduction

In March 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia established a Unified Command System to manage the state-level response to COVID-19. A Vaccine Unit was formed under the Public Health Surveillance and Guidance Workgroup of the Commonwealth's unified command structure in June 2020 to conduct planning and coordination. Additionally, a COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Workgroup was established in August 2020 to gather key stakeholder input on vaccine plans, priority groups, vaccine equity and other related issues. Virginia's interim draft COVID-19 vaccination plan was developed by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and was recently exercised with partner state agencies. This plan will continue to be updated in collaboration with local health districts, the Virginia Emergency Support Team (VEST) and the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Workgroup as the federal government shares additional details and more information becomes available about the vaccine(s). The most current information, including the full version of Virginia's interim draft COVID-19 vaccination plan, is available at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/covid19vaccine/>.

### Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination

The plan uses a phased approach that delivers vaccine as it becomes available to a series of priority groups. Critical populations represent the top tier of the priority groups followed by the general population. Particular emphasis will be placed on administering the vaccine using a health-equity framework to ensure that underserved and underrepresented individuals are able to receive vaccine.

### Critical Populations

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the National Institutes of Health and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) are working to determine populations of focus for COVID-19 vaccination and ensure equity in access to COVID-19 vaccination availability across the United States. A key policy goal is to determine critical populations for COVID-19 vaccination including those groups identified to receive the first available doses of COVID-19 vaccine when supply is expected to be limited. VDH, in collaboration with partner agencies and organizations, is actively working to identify the critical infrastructure workforce, people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness and people at increased risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19.

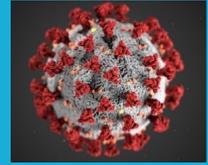
### COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

VDH has developed a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Intent Form for interested providers (including pharmacies) or facilities to indicate intent to administer COVID-19 vaccine to patients and/or staff. Information collected will allow VDH to set up necessary accounts for vaccine ordering and reporting. Information on this effort was provided to healthcare providers in Virginia via a [letter](#) from the State Health Commissioner on October 2, 2020. Additionally, VDH and the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association (VHHA) are hosting weekly webinars with healthcare providers and health systems in Virginia.

### COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

Proper vaccine storage and handling practices are critical to minimize vaccine loss and limit risk of administering COVID-19 vaccine with reduced effectiveness. VDH will provide guidelines and assistance to COVID-19 vaccination providers to ensure appropriate vaccine storage and handling procedures are established and followed. To

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minimize opportunities for breaks in the cold chain, most COVID-19 vaccine will be delivered from CDC's centralized distributor directly to the location where the vaccine will be stored and administered; although, some vaccine may be delivered to secondary depots for redistribution. Certain COVID-19 vaccine products, such as those with ultra-cold temperature requirements, will be shipped directly from the manufacturer to the vaccination provider site. If redistributing vaccine, providers must adhere to all cold chain requirements and should limit transport of frozen or ultra-cold vaccine products. A COVID-19 vaccine redistribution policy and procedure for Virginia is being drafted. All redistributions will need to be reported to the VDH Division of Immunization using this procedure.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders**

Second-dose reminders for vaccine recipients will be critical to ensure compliance with vaccine dosing intervals and to achieve optimal vaccine effectiveness. COVID-19 vaccination providers should make every attempt to schedule a patient's second-dose appointment when they get their first dose. Vaccination providers are required to complete COVID-19 vaccination record cards and give them to each patient who receives vaccine to ensure a basic vaccination record is provided. VDH will assess current practices for patient reminder/recall in existing healthcare provider organizations, and will work with occupational health providers and partners to consider the most appropriate and effective method of issuing second-dose reminders. The Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS) has a reminder/recall functionality, which allows for creation of template letters and/or phone/text reminders.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication**

VDH will coordinate communication efforts at the state level with the Governor's Office, the Joint Information Center and the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Workgroup. Local health districts will coordinate local messaging efforts with their local jurisdictions' public information officers. Coordination of messaging will ensure a unified message and approach, while reaching a broader audience. Public health messages and products will be tailored for each audience and developed with consideration for health equity. Messaging before, during and after COVID-19 vaccine is available will help communities understand the importance of vaccination as well as the benefits and risks. VDH intends to communicate what is currently known, regularly update this information, and continue dialogue with media and other partners throughout the vaccine distribution and administration process to establish and maintain trust and credibility.

## **COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring**

Healthcare providers should report clinically important adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS is a national early warning system to detect possible safety problems with vaccines. VAERS is not designed to detect whether a vaccine caused an adverse event but can identify "signals" that might indicate possible safety problems requiring additional investigation. Vaccine manufacturers are required to report to VAERS all adverse events that come to their attention. VDH will ensure that COVID-19 vaccination providers it enrolls understand the procedures for reporting adverse events to VAERS.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monitoring**

Continuous monitoring for situational awareness throughout the COVID-19 Vaccination Program is crucial for a successful outcome. VDH will establish procedures for monitoring various critical program planning and implementation elements including performance targets, resources, staffing and activities. VDH and local health districts will regularly monitor their resources to avoid unexpected obstacles to the progress of the public health COVID-19 vaccination effort.