



COVID-19 Vinalhaven Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

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COVID-19 Update 1-20-21

VACCINATION Q&A

In response to the many questions the Public Health Team and ICMS are receiving regarding the administration of vaccines to those in Phase 1b, primarily those aged 70 and older, we felt an update today would be helpful.

When will ICMS begin vaccinating residents aged 70 and older as indicated under Phase 1b of the State's Vaccination Plan?

Yesterday the Maine CDC announced that some healthcare providers that have the infrastructure to administer vaccines for both Phase 1a and 1b simultaneously, have begun to vaccinate Phase 1b individuals. Because Maine only receives a certain number of doses each week, ICMS has not received firm delivery dates for the allocation they requested for Phase 1b. ICMS is reaching out to state partners on a daily basis to get vaccine delivery updates. Based on vaccine delivery sites information reported at www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines, only large healthcare systems in Maine are receiving doses of the vaccine this week.

Please keep in mind that although some providers are operating Phase 1a and 1b simultaneously, Phase 1b is expected to begin officially in February and will start on Vinalhaven based on when ICMS receives additional vaccine doses beyond what is required to fulfill Phase 1a. Once all those who qualify under Phase 1a are vaccinated, ICMS will begin calling patients in the 70 and over age group to schedule their vaccine until all those age 70 and over who wish to be vaccinated on-island have received their initial dose. Individuals will have their second doses scheduled at the appropriate interval, which, for the Moderna vaccine, is generally 28 days from the date the first dose was administered.

We have a large elderly population. Why can't ICMS get more vaccines so we can get older people vaccinated sooner rather than having to wait?

Maine has adopted three principles to guide

its approach to COVID-19 vaccination: Equity, Accessibility, and Flexibility. This means that Vinalhaven does not receive preferential treatment, however, it also means that Maine CDC has the flexibility to work with ICMS (and vice-versa) to meet the needs of our island community and ensure all residents have access to the vaccine without incurring the burden and risk of travelling to the mainland. Maine CDC Director Dr. Nirav Shah has been informed that it would be very challenging for our patients ages 70 and over to travel to the mainland to get their vaccine. ICMS will continue to work closely with Maine CDC to ensure islanders can be vaccinated in as timely a manner as possible in accordance with the Phases of the State's Vaccination Plan and as distributions allow.

Just as Governor Mills, Maine CDC Director Shah, and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Lambrew are urging vigilance and patience, *SO ARE WE*. Rest assured, ICMS will be able to vaccinate folks on-island, but as we've known from the start of the vaccination rollout, it's going to take some time. In our December updates, we stated that Director Shah suspected that it could take well into the summer and fall before everyone in Maine had been fully vaccinated. We also know that things are changing rapidly so being adaptable on a daily basis is essential. Please remember we are all doing our best and will continue to do what we can to ensure we keep our island safe. Please continue being vigilant—follow CDC and local safety guidelines. Thank you for your patience and for doing your part.

—Vinalhaven Public Health Team

Resources for More Information:

Maine's Vaccination website, including vaccination FAQs and a description of Maine's Vaccination Plan Phases – www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines

Tuesday, January 19, 2021 CDC Press Conference with Maine CDC Director Shah and DHHS Commissioner Lambrew – youtu.be/sBNabAUPjas