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GOVERNOR PHIL SCOTT AND HEALTH COMMISSIONER MARK LEVINE, MD, LAYOUT VERMONT'S INITIAL VACCINE DISTRIBUTION FRAMEWORK

Preparedness framework submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Montpelier, Vt. – Governor Phil Scott and Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, today detailed the State's framework for distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine, once one is produced and distributed to the state.

The State has submitted responses to a series of questions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), laying out the framework for vaccine distribution and Vermont's preparedness. The federal government, which is responsible for nationwide distribution of vaccines, still needs to provide details on many logistics surrounding a potential vaccine, and this interim COVID-19 vaccination plan will evolve as new information comes forward.

"With so many unknowns, this is difficult work," said Governor Scott. "But we have a strong infrastructure in place, and we have been working with a talented team of world class experts for months to learn from past experiences and to further strengthen our systems. The bottom line is: We will be ready."

A COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Team was convened in July to begin this process and is responsible for fully developing the vaccination plan. This team includes experts from the Department of Health, Vermont Emergency Management, the University of Vermont Medical Center (Vaccine Testing Center and Pediatrics) and the Agency of Digital Services.

"Having a safe and effective vaccine is an essential tool to stop the virus from spreading. We see every day what it means to have a highly infectious disease spread without a vaccine available to keep it in check. I encourage everyone to get vaccinated when it's available to them," said Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD. "We are all ready for this next step toward ending the pandemic. But

let me be clear – safety comes first. Any vaccine must meet all FDA safety standards and be recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, free from politics.”

While the state will be prepared for any amount of vaccine, it is expected the initial supply of COVID-19 vaccine will likely be limited. Accordingly, vaccination efforts will need to prioritize groups that are most critical to the response, those who provide direct care and those who are essential to maintaining a functioning society, as well as those at highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19.

Assuming initial supply is limited, the State’s interim plan lays out a phased approach, subject to change, as follows:

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<p>Phase 1a “Jumpstart Phase”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-risk health workers • First responders <p>Phase 1b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of all ages with comorbid and underlying conditions that put them at <i>significantly</i> higher risk • Older adults living in congregate or overcrowded settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 teachers and school staff and childcare workers • Critical workers in high risk settings – workers who are essential to the functioning of society and at substantially higher risk of exposure • People of all ages with comorbid and underlying conditions that put them at <i>moderately</i> higher risk • People in homeless shelters or group homes for individuals with disabilities, including serious mental illness, developmental and intellectual disabilities, and physical disabilities or in recovery, and staff who work in such settings • Staff, workers and occupants in prisons, jails, detention centers, and similar facilities • All older adults not included in Phase 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults • Children • Workers in industries and occupations important to the functioning of society and at increased risk of exposure not included in Phase 1 or 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone residing in the United States who did not have access to the vaccine in previous phases

Statewide coordination and implementation of the plan is managed jointly by the State Emergency Operations Center and the Vermont Department of Health's Health Operation Center, which includes the newly formed Vaccination Branch and its four sections: immunization program operations; technical response; points of distribution (POD) mass vaccination; and data management. This effort will also include a range of partners, such as pharmacies, hospitals, primary care providers, community service organizations, privately run clinics, long-term care facilities and correctional facilities.

"This is an enormous undertaking with a number of crucial considerations," said Dr. Levine. "But one thing is clear, in Vermont, we'll be ready for the vaccine before the vaccine is ready for us."

To view the full proposal submitted to the CDC, visit healthvermont.gov/covid19-vaccine.

For more information on:

- COVID-19 health information, guidance and case data, visit healthvermont.gov/covid19.
- The Governor's actions, visit governor.vermont.gov/covid19response.
- The state's modeling, visit dfr.vermont.gov/about-us/covid-19/modeling.

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