

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kristin Prelipp, Communications Manager and Public Information Officer
kprelipp@orangecountync.gov or 919-245-2462

[LINK TO MEDIA RELEASE](#)

Orange County Health Department Prepares to Move into Phase 1B of COVID Vaccine Effort

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. January 7, 2021 —North Carolina has moved into Phase 1b Group 1 of COVID vaccine distribution, meaning individuals 75 and older are now eligible to receive the COVID vaccine. There is no requirement to have certain qualifying chronic conditions.

If you are 75 or older, please follow the three-step process:

1. **Complete the Vaccine Interest Form (VIF)** at <https://redcap.link/OCHDvax>
Call 919-913-8088 if you don't have access to a computer or would like help filling out the form. Foreign language interpreters will be available. We are anticipating very high call volume. Please be patient for a return call if you decide to leave a voicemail.
2. **Register for the vaccine.** You will receive an email with a link to an online registration form to enter your data into the COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS). It will take several minutes to complete. It is only available in English, but county staff are available to help register in other languages besides English by calling 919-913-8088.
3. **Schedule your vaccine appointment.** When an individual is eligible to receive a vaccine, you will receive another email from the Orange County Health Department to schedule an appointment.

“Due to limited availability of vaccine, Orange County may not be able to schedule appointments for everyone who is eligible right away,” said Orange County Health Director Quintana Stewart. “Please be patient as we work through this process.”

To reduce the number of phone calls, residents in subsequent phases will be asked to register later. Eventually, the CVMS system will allow residents to register themselves. The complete list of the vaccination plan's phases may be found on [the NCDHHS website](#).

Orange County Vaccinates First Responders, Long-Term Care Facility Residents and Staff

Orange County Health Department, with assistance from several other departments, has already administered the COVID-19 vaccine to more than 1,000 eligible Phase 1A personnel through drive-through clinics in Hillsborough and Chapel Hill.

The effort was led jointly by the Orange County Health Department and Emergency Services with support from the Orange County Sheriff's Office, Asset Management Services and Information Technology as well as several fire and EMS providers from local departments. More than fifty personnel participated in the effort.

Orange County is following guidance from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services for vaccine distribution. No dose is wasted. In Phase 1a, healthcare workers and staff caring for and working directly with COVID-19 patients, healthcare workers who administer the vaccine, dental professionals, and long-term care staff and residents are eligible to receive the vaccine.

NCDHHS has recently updated its guidance and revised Phase 1b into three groups.

- **Group 1:** Persons 75 years and older: All people age 75 and older will be eligible to be vaccinated first in this group. There is no requirement to have certain qualifying chronic conditions.
- **Group 2:** Any patient facing direct health care workers not vaccinated in Phase 1a and essential frontline workers age 50 and older: Patient facing direct health care workers are those directly caring for or working directly in areas where in-person patient care occurs. Essential frontline workers are defined by the CDC as workers who are in sectors essential to the functioning of society and who are substantially higher risk for exposure to COVID-19. There is no requirement to have certain qualifying chronic conditions.
- **Group 3:** All other patient facing direct health care workers not vaccinated in Phase 1a and frontline essential workers of any age. There is no requirement to have certain qualifying chronic conditions.

The CDC defines frontline essential workers as first responders (e.g., firefighters and police officers), corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers and support staff members) as well as child care workers.

Guiding Principles of the Vaccination Plan

North Carolina's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan builds on the foundation of the state's overall goals and pillars of response to the pandemic: prevention, testing, tracing, isolation and quarantine. North Carolina took early and aggressive action to slow the spread of the virus, built statewide capacity for testing, PPE supplies and contract tracing, developed hospital surge plans, and promoted aggressive prevention strategies. The guiding principles of the vaccination plan include:

- All North Carolinians have equitable access to vaccines

- Vaccine planning and distribution is inclusive; actively engages state and local government, public and private partners; and draws upon the experience and expertise of leaders from historically marginalized populations.
- Transparent, accurate, and frequent public communications is essential to building trust.
- Data is used to promote equity, track progress, and guide decision-making.
- Appropriate stewardship of resources and continuous evaluation and improvement drive successful implementation.
- No dose is wasted

Reliable Information

- NCDHHS COVID-19 Vaccine Information: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>
- Orange County Health Department COVID-19 Vaccine Information: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/2617/Vaccine>
- Centers for Disease Control Frequently Asked Questions about Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>.
- Receive text alerts by texting 888-777 with OCNCEALTH for English speakers and OCNCSALUD for Spanish speakers.
- Sign up for a weekly e-newsletter about the COVID-19 response via the [county website](#).
- Follow the Orange County Health Department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Questions may be directed to 919-913-8088 or to covid19vaccine@orangecountync.gov.

Graphic announcing the move to Phase 1b Group 1 is available at:

https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14326/VACCINE-english-1382X961w_link

###