

Mecklenburg County COVID Vaccine Distribution Prioritization Framework for Health Care Workers in Phase 1A and Phase 1B:

Last updated 01/01/20; Guidance may change

Overview:

- Mecklenburg County Public Health (MCPH) is working with Atrium Health, Novant Health, Medic, Emergency Management, and community providers are collaborating to develop a coordinated approach to COVID-19 vaccine communication, outreach and delivery in Mecklenburg County through
 - Consistent messaging re: vaccine safety, prioritization, and delivery
 - Equitable vaccine delivery to prioritized individuals and populations.
 - Data sharing re: vaccine administration and recipients (including demographic data)
- The Mecklenburg County COVID Vaccine Planning Group will use the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) to develop a prioritization framework for COVID-19 vaccine distribution.
- As per current guidance, the initial two populations who are prioritized are **health care workers and long-term care facility (LTCF) residents and staff.**
 - LTCF residents and staff will largely receive COVID vaccine through the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program.
 - MCPH will support LTCFs to identify and address gaps in vaccination coverage and provide vaccine-related guidance
- The Mecklenburg County COVID Vaccine Planning Group will initially focus on developing a framework re: an equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine to health care workers in the County.
 - Due to initial limited supply of vaccine, further sub-prioritization must occur to ensure those HCPs at highest priority receive the vaccine first.
- The draft sub prioritization matrix below is based on the following three principles:
 - Risk of exposure—HCPs with the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to their job duties will be among those prioritized first.
 - Ensure healthcare capacity—HCPs who are vital to prevent interruptions in service delivery that would adversely impact the health of the community
 - Mitigate health inequities—HCPs include a broad range of occupations, including those who are members of historically marginalized populations (HMPs)
- Additional prioritization frameworks for COVID vaccine distribution in Mecklenburg County will be available in the near future.

Key definitions and considerations

- Health care personnel (HCP) are defined as paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials (ACIP, 12/2/2020).
 - Per ACIP, “Health care personnel comprise clinical staff members, including nursing or medical assistants and support staff members (e.g., those who work in food, environmental, and administrative services).” (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e1.htm>)
- Per the NC DHHS prioritization framework as of 12/23/20,
 - **“Phase 1a - Health care workers critical to caring for patients with COVID-19 at high risk for COVID-19 exposure based on work duties or who are vital to the initial COVID-19 vaccine response**

Health care workers at high risk for exposure to COVID-19 are defined as those:

- *Caring for patients with COVID-19*
- *Working directly in areas where patients with COVID-19 are cared for, including staff responsible for cleaning, providing food service, and maintenance in those areas.*
- *Performing procedures at high risk of aerosolization on patients with COVID-19 (e.g., intubation, bronchoscopy, suctioning, invasive dental procedures, invasive specimen collection, CPR)*
- *Handling decedents with COVID-19*

Outpatient providers who have an increased risk of exposure beyond that of a typical general outpatient setting should be included in the first phase (1a). This could include outpatient providers who are focused on COVID-19 patient evaluation, respiratory care (e.g., respiratory diagnostic testing centers), members of a dedicated respiratory care team, or those frequently involved in COVID-19 testing sites. Outpatient dentists or dental hygienists are included in Phase 1a if they meet the above criteria for outpatient providers.”

- **Revised NC Phase 1b Vaccine Prioritization, effective December 30, 2020:**
 - *Group 1: Anyone 75 years and older*
 - *Group 2: Patient facing direct health care workers (not vaccinated in Phase 1a) and frontline essential workers 50 years of age or older*
 - *Group 3: All other patient facing health care workers (not vaccinated in Phase 1a) and frontline essential workers of any age*
- Initial vaccine distribution will be to hospitals (Atrium and Novant) followed closely by MCPH
 - Timeframe in which additional community providers and pharmacies receive vaccine unknown at this time (To Be Determined by NC DHHS)

MCPH PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK FOR PHASE 1A:

| HCP Category | Includes |
|---|---|
| Hospital workers at highest risk for exposure due to caring for COVID+ patients or potentially having contact with infectious secretions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical staff providing services to COVID+ patients in hospital setting • Support staff (including cleaning/environmental health staff) working in these clinical areas with potential for exposure |
| State-Certified EMTs/Paramedics who currently perform direct patient care duties (i.e. daily job duty involves emergency response to medical incidents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMTs/Paramedics who have increased risk of exposure due to level of clinical interaction with potential COVID+ individuals |
| Healthcare and Public Health staff working at COVID-19 vaccination sites for high-risk healthcare workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical staff with direct patient contact administering vaccines or involved in post-vaccination response • Support staff working in these sites in specific roles with potential for exposure |
| Long-term care facility staff and residents at facilities not enrolled in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term care facility staff (and residents) at facilities not enrolled in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care who meet the criteria for prioritization |
| Healthcare workers working at ambulatory COVID-19 testing sites or clinics performing >25 tests/week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical staff performing specimen collection for COVID-+ patients • Support staff working in these sites or clinical areas with potential for exposure |

| HCP Category | Includes |
|--|--|
| Healthcare workers in urgent care setting, ambulatory, or other settings providing care for patients with known/suspected COVID-19. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical staff providing direct patient care (<6 feet) for patients with known/suspected COVID (i.e. <i>providing direct care for patients seeking care due to COVID symptoms or performing procedures at high risk of aerosolization on patients with COVID-19</i>) • Laboratory staff handling COVID-19 specimens • Support staff working in the clinical areas with potential for exposure |
| Home health workers providing direct clinical care for patients with known/suspected COVID | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home health workers who provide clinical care with direct patient contact in homes for individuals who are known/suspected COVID+. |
| Individuals handling decedents with COVID | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical examiners • Morticians with direct exposure to potentially infectious materials |

MCPH PRIORITIZATION FRAMEWORK FOR PHASE 1B

| HCP Category | Includes |
|--|---|
| Patient facing healthcare workers (including dental workers) in ambulatory care or other setting providing direct patient care or working in patient care areas who don't fall into an above category | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clinical staff providing direct patient care (<6 feet)• Support staff working in the clinical areas with potential for exposure |

PATIENT FACING DIRECT HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN THE ABOVE CATEGORY WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE COVID VACCINE IN PHASE 1B AS PER THE BELOW:

Revised NC Phase 1b Vaccine Prioritization, effective December 30, 2020:

- *Group 1:* Anyone 75 years and older
- *Group 2:* **Patient facing direct health care workers (not vaccinated in Phase 1a)** and frontline essential workers **50 years of age or older**
- *Group 3:* **All other patient facing health care workers (not vaccinated in Phase 1a)** and frontline essential workers **of any age**

Patient facing direct health care workers includes any paid or unpaid health care workers with direct patient contact including, but not limited to: behavioral health providers, community health workers, dental hygienists, dentists, EMT/paramedics, environmental services staff, food services staff, health care trainees (e.g., medical students, pharmacy students, nursing students), home health workers, laboratory and phlebotomy staff, nurses, nursing aides and assistants, nursing techs, front desk administrative staff, personal care aides, pharmacists, pharmacy techs, physicians, public health and emergency preparedness workers, public health nurses, respiratory techs

Please see <https://www.mecknc.gov/covid-19/pages/vaccine.aspx> for more information regarding Phase 1b.