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## **Livingston County COVID-19 Vaccination Update**

Livingston County, IL – The Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) continues to make progress administering the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to those eligible Livingston County residents. As of February 5, 2021 the LCHD has received 2,840 doses of the Moderna vaccine and have administered 2,865 doses to those that qualify. (Note: Extra doses are sometimes able to be extracted from a vial.) Since December 23<sup>rd</sup>, the LCHD has coordinated a minimum of 2-3 COVID-19 vaccination clinics per week for those eligible in Phase 1A (e.g. healthcare and LTC residents/staff), as well as those eligible in Phase 1B (age 65+ and essential workers) beginning later in January.

As Livingston County continues to work through Phase 1B, those residents age 65 and older will receive first priority in vaccine distribution to ensure that those most vulnerable to complications of COVID-19 receive first the opportunities for vaccination. For information about appointment registration, please visit our website: <https://lchd.us/site/covid-19-vaccination/>. The LCHD recommends reaching out to friends or loved ones age 65 or older in Livingston County with limited technology or internet access to assist them in registering. Community partners are also being enlisted throughout the county to assist individuals in registering for appointments.

Also within Phase 1B, the LCHD has chosen to prioritize school personnel in an effort to get children back in schools as quickly and safely as possible. The LCHD completed first dose clinics with all Livingston County schools this week.

While the vaccine is not currently available in Livingston County to those essential workers within Phase 1B, the LCHD is hopeful to begin vaccinating this group in the weeks ahead and will be working with local employers to ensure efficient distribution.

Two positive developments in Livingston County's Mass Vaccination Plan happened this week that are making LCHD officials hopeful for quicker distribution: 1) The LCHD received its long-awaited ultracold freezer and will soon be accepting Pfizer vaccine; 2) IDPH has permitted the LCHD to begin ordering additional doses given the efficiency with which the LCHD is distributing vaccine.

“This was the best compliment we could have received from the State during this time,” said Jackie Dever, LCHD Administrator. “Our team has been working really hard to get the vaccine out as quickly as we have been receiving it; so, it is nice that the State recognized those efforts.”

COVID-19 vaccination clinics pose unique, unprecedented challenges to mass vaccination efforts. Conditions such as adhering to social distancing, requiring a 15-30 minute observation period after vaccination, scheduling two doses 21-28 days apart using a State-operated scheduling system, and ensuring use of vaccine within hours of opening a vial, all add challenges to the distribution process. The situation is further compounded by the high demand for a limited supply of vaccine, often arriving with little notice.

“We are constantly thinking of ways to improve the processes of our Mass Vaccination Plan and address these challenges,” said Dever. “We understand the importance and urgency of distributing the vaccine quickly, efficiently, and equitably, and we’re committed to making that happen in Livingston County.”

The COVID vaccine will be administered in Livingston County in accordance with the phases as recommended by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Availability and timing of vaccine administration in Livingston County will depend on vaccine delivery from the State of Illinois. Checking the LCHD website is the best way to receive up-to-date information regarding vaccine distribution at the health department. **It is requested that the public please refrain from contacting the LCHD with questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.** If you have questions or concerns about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, please contact your healthcare provider.

The LCHD will continue to work diligently to meet the everyday needs of county residents while aggressively addressing the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

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