Pennsylvania COVID-19 Vaccine Plan Fact Sheet

The vaccine plan released by the Pennsylvania Department of Health describes how people will be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine. Pennsylvania’s plan groups people into one of two phases. The first phase, Phase 1, is further subdivided into three groups, Phase 1A, Phase 1B, and Phase 1C.

People eligible for vaccination in Phase 1 are considered most at risk for: either contracting COVID-19 due to exposure to the virus through work or their living conditions; or having a bad outcome should they become infected due to advanced age or a pre-existing condition. Phase 2 includes all individuals over the age of 16 not included in Phase 1.

Please see below for specific information about who is eligible for the vaccine in Phases 1A, 1B, and 1C.

**Phase 1 A:**
- Long-term care facility residents
- People ages 65 and older
- People aged 16-64 with high-risk conditions causing increased risk for severe disease
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - Cancer
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
  - Down Syndrome
  - Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
  - Obesity
  - Pregnancy
  - Sickle cell disease
  - Smoking
  - Type 2 diabetes
  - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood, organ, or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
• Health care personnel including, but not limited to:
  • Emergency medical service personnel
  • Nurses
  • Nursing assistants
  • Physicians
  • Dentists
  • Dental hygienists
  • Chiropractors
  • Therapists
  • Phlebotomists
  • Pharmacists
  • Technicians
  • Pharmacy technicians
  • Health professions students and trainees
  • Direct support professionals (including unpaid caregivers)
  • Clinical personnel in school settings or correctional facilities
  • Contractual HCP not directly employed by the health care facility

Phase 1B:

• People in congregate settings not otherwise specified as LTCF (e.g. group homes, residential treatment facilities, state hospitals etc.)
• People receiving home and community-based services through OLTL or ODP
• First responders
• Correctional officers and others employed in congregate care settings not included in Phase 1A
• Food and agricultural workers
• U.S. Postal Service workers
• Manufacturing workers • Grocery store workers • Education workers
• Clergy and other essential support for houses of worship
• Public transit workers
• Individuals caring for children or adults in early childhood and adult day programs

Phase 1C:

Essential workers in these sectors:
• Transportation and logistics
• Water and wastewater
• Food service
• Housing construction • Finance, including bank tellers
• Information technology
• Communications
• Energy, including nuclear reactors
• Legal services
• Federal, state, county and local government workers, including county election workers, elected officials and members of the judiciary and their staff
• Media
• Public safety
• Public health workers
Scheduling an Appointment to Get Vaccinated:

It is important to recognize that while DOH has opened Phase 1A up to all people ages 65 and over and anyone over age 16 who is at risk of severe disease, there are not enough vaccine doses to meet the corresponding increase in demand. Therefore, while you may be eligible to get vaccinated now, this does not necessarily mean you will be able to get a shot in the near future.

We suggest regularly checking https://www.pa.gov/guides/get-vaccinated/#Step2FindaVaccineProvider to find a vaccine provider in your area, and see whether any of the listed providers are currently offering appointments. To our knowledge, there are not any “walk-in” vaccination clinics; appointments are required at all providers.

Be prepared to wait in a “virtual” line for the opportunity to schedule a vaccination appointment, or, if you are trying to schedule an appointment over the phone, to remain on hold for an extended period of time. You may need to contact multiple vaccine providers before you will be able to schedule an appointment.

The Role of County and Municipal Health Departments in PA’s Vaccination Plan:

In counties or municipalities that have a health department, this department is in charge of developing and implementing its own vaccination plan, in conjunction with DOH.

This means that these jurisdictions may move between the vaccination phases at a different pace than the rest of the state, depending on how things look at the local level.

The following counties and municipalities operate their own health departments:
- Allegheny County
- Bucks County
- Chester County (serves both Chester and Delaware Counties)
- Erie County
- Montgomery County
- Philadelphia (Philadelphia has created its own plan, completely independent of the DOH)
- Allentown
- Bethlehem
- Wilkes-Barre
- York
Residents of these counties and municipalities should refer to their local health department for the most up-to-date vaccination information. Residents of Delaware, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, as well as the city of Bethlehem, who are eligible for vaccination in Phases 1A and B can fill out online “interest surveys” wherein they indicate their desire to get vaccinated.

Once the local health department has available doses, they will contact eligible survey takers with information about where and when they can be vaccinated.

Please note: all information contained on this fact sheet is subject to change. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is regularly updating its vaccination plan based on federal guidance and vaccine availability.

For the most up to date information, visit: https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Vaccine.aspx

Philadelphia is in control of its own vaccination supply, and therefore it has its own plan, which varies slightly from the Commonwealth’s. Residents of Philadelphia can visit https://www.phila.gov/programs/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/vaccines/ for information on the city’s plan.

Contact Information

If you need more information or need help, please contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TTY), or email us at intake@disabilityrightspa.org.

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