

**Sean Gonsalves, RS**  
**Director of Health**

Hello All,

I know it's been a while since I've sent out an update, so I'll summarize some of the new information and changes.

First and foremost, the vaccine rollout is moving slower than initially anticipated. The driving factor behind all of the delays and the slow rollout is vaccine supply. There simply is not enough vaccine to go around. The Federal Government only has a limited supply to work with (for a variety of reasons, including massive global demand) and so individual states receive a limited supply on a weekly and monthly basis. Down the line, vaccine clinics receive fewer doses than they have the capacity to administer.

This article thoroughly explains the most recent vaccination updates in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-k-12-educators-child-care-workers-and-k-12-school-staff>

A few quick takeaways from the article:

- 1.) Beginning March 11th, all K-12 educators, child care workers and K-12 school staff will be eligible to schedule appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 2.) As more individuals have received a first vaccine dose across the Commonwealth, there is a greater need to book second appointments, so the mass vaccination sites have fewer first dose appointments available on a weekly basis. The number of new appointments (first dose appointments) is less than previous weeks due to the volume of second dose appointments.
- 3.) Massachusetts is receiving only one shipment of 58,000 Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses for the month of March. These doses have been allocated – primarily to hospitals and health systems. Based on information the Commonwealth has received from the federal government, the Administration does not expect to be able to order more J&J doses until the end of March or early April.

Overall, the combination of these three things is good news. A new vaccine option will eventually speed up the overall pace of the vaccine effort. Teachers getting vaccinated means safer schools. Second dose appointments means more Massachusetts residents are fully vaccinated.

The downside of this is that the vaccine rollout will continue to be a bit slower than we would all like. Johnson and Johnson will need time to ramp up manufacturing of the vaccine, now that they have approval. There are 400,000 eligible educators to get vaccinated before the State can move forward with new eligibility groups. Fewer first dose appointments means fewer residents begin the vaccination process.

### **Holyoke Specific Updates**

- As of today, March 5th, 2021, there are 4 vaccine locations in Holyoke. CVS on Whiting Farms Rd, Baystate Health Whitney Avenue, Holyoke Health Center and Holyoke Medical Center. All locations are by appointment only.

- The Holyoke Health Center and the Holyoke Senior Center have been able to arrange some small clinics at the Senior Center. There is a wait list, but eligible seniors can call 413-322-5625 to add their

name to the list. This process may take longer than pursuing an appointment at one of the other sites, but some seniors feel more comfortable being vaccinated in a familiar setting. The Senior Center can also assist in scheduling appointments at any of the other vaccine sites in Massachusetts, as availability permits. I'd like to acknowledge Navae and her team for being such great partners in this process.

- Tuesday, March 9th, there will be a COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic for Veterans of all ages at the Holyoke War Memorial. I'd like to thank Jesus Pereira for bringing this clinic to Holyoke.

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

9:00am- 12:00pm Appointments only

1:00pm-3:30pm Walk—in (while supplies last)

Call: (413) 582-3110\* to schedule your appointment now

\*Please be patient as there may be long wait times

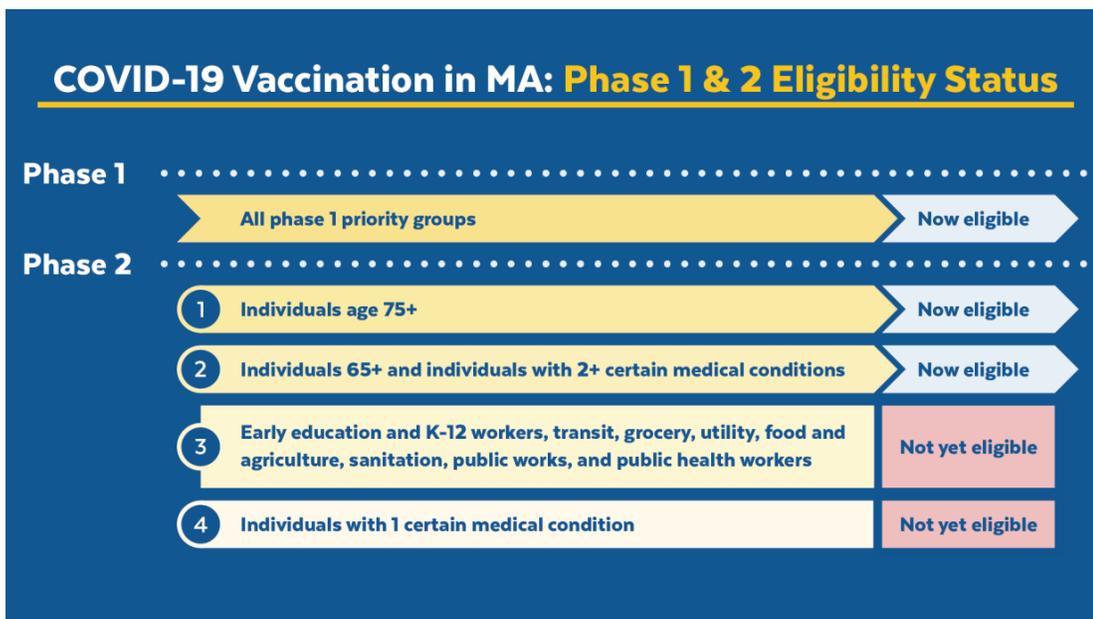
- The Holyoke Board of Health continues to investigate available options to increase vaccine availability and awareness. As you may have seen in the news, there is a potential regional clinic at the Chicopee Castle of Knights that is being discussed. The Board of Health is also working with the MA Department of Public Health to plan information sessions for eligible groups in the near future.

- CVS Pharmacies continues to increase the number of their locations that offer COVID-19 vaccines. There is at least one CVS in each of the following local communities that offers the COVID-19 vaccine: Agawam, Amherst, Chicopee, Granby, Hadley, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Northampton, Palmer, Southwick, Springfield and West Springfield. You can go right to the CVS website to search for appointments.

<https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine?icid=cvs-home-hero1-link2-coronavirus-vaccine>

- The next step in vaccine eligibility will include many City of Holyoke employees. Specifically DPW, HG&E, Water Dept., Suez and the Board of Health, as shown on the graphic below. We are gathering information in hopes of running a clinic for these employees, but ultimately that will be decided by vaccine supply. Eligible employees will always be able to pursue appointments independently.

The remaining City Hall employees, who do not fall into the categories listed in Phase 2, will be eligible in Phase 3. I expect that to be some time in May.



As always, if there are any questions, feel free to contact me directly.

Regards,  
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