



Governor Northam's New Steps for COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

By: Nicole Lawter

01.11.2021

Disclaimer: The information below is intended solely to be an update on Governor Northam's recent announcement regarding COVID-19 vaccination planning. The vaccination planning process is complex and constantly evolving - this information is subject to change. Please continue to follow all current guidance to protect yourself against COVID-19.

Virginia has announced the phased approach that the Commonwealth will take to ensure critical populations will receive a COVID-19 vaccine, following guidance developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), with input from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. This phased approach was developed to facilitate a decrease in COVID-19 deaths and considers current local spread/prevalence of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccine production and availability.

Virginia, like many other states, has established Phase 1a, Phase 1b and Phase 1c priority groups. Detailed information on the three phases and Virginia's COVID-19 plan can be found [here](#).

Phase 1a

Currently, Virginia is in Phase 1a of vaccine distribution. Phase 1a focuses on the vaccination of healthcare personnel and residents of long-term care facilities.

Healthcare Personnel include:

- Behavioral health providers
- Community health workers
- Dental assistants, hygienists, dentists
- EMT/first responders serving as EMT extenders
- Environmental services staff

- Healthcare trainees
- Home health workers
- Human service providers
- Infection control and quality assurance personnel
- Laboratorians
- Mortuary service providers (e.g. morticians/funeral home staff)
- Nurses, nursing assistants
- Optometrists
- Personal care aides
- Pharmacists, pharmacy techs and staff
- Physicians, physician assistants
- Public-facing public health workers
- Radiological techs (and other diagnostic/therapeutic techs)
- Respiratory, physical, speech and occupational techs
- Social workers

Healthcare systems and local health departments are working collaboratively to vaccinate healthcare personnel. Healthcare systems are vaccinating their staff. Local health departments, in partnership with healthcare systems, are identifying and vaccinating providers who are not affiliated with a hospital or health system.

Residents and Staff in long-term care settings are also included in Phase 1a. In Virginia, most long-term care residents and staff will be vaccinated by CVS and Walgreens through the Federal Long-term Care Pharmacy Partnership program.

Phase 1b

In Phase 1b, frontline essential workers, people 75 years of age or older and those living in correctional facilities, homeless shelters and migrant labor camps will be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Frontline Essential Workers includes:

- Police, Fire and Hazmat
- Corrections and homeless shelter workers
- Childcare/K-12 Teachers/Staff
- Food and Agriculture
- Manufacturing

- Grocery store workers
- Public transit workers
- Mail carriers (USPS and private)

Because there likely will be an insufficient supply to vaccinate everyone in Phase 1b at the same time, local health districts will reach out to engage the Frontline Essential Worker groups in vaccination planning in the following order:

1. Police, Fire and Hazmat
2. Corrections and homeless shelter workers
3. Childcare/K-12 Teachers/Staff
4. Food and Agriculture
5. Manufacturing
6. Grocery store workers
7. Public transit workers
8. Mail carriers (USPS and private)

Local health departments, pharmacies, healthcare systems and employer-based occupational health units are working collaboratively to vaccinate frontline essential workers. Frontline essential workers likely will receive the vaccine through employer-based vaccination clinics. Local health departments, pharmacies and healthcare providers will also be providing the vaccine to this group. Information will be forthcoming from local health departments, employers and healthcare providers about how and when frontline workers can receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

The risk of severe COVID-19 increases with age. During Phase 1b, those 75 years and older likely will receive the vaccine through the local health department.

Phase 1c

In Phase 1c additional essential workers, people aged 65 through 74 years and people with a high-risk medical condition or disability that increases the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 will be vaccinated.

Individuals deemed essential workers in this phase include those in these sectors:

- Energy
- Water and Wastewater
- Housing Construction
- Food Service

- Transportation and Logistics
- Institutions of Higher Education Faculty/Staff
- Finance
- Information Technology & Communication
- Media
- Legal Services
- Public Safety (Engineers)
- Other Public Health Workers
- Officials needed to maintain continuity of government

Because there likely will be an insufficient supply to vaccinate everyone in Phase 1c at the same time, local health districts will vaccinate the essential workers in this category in the following order:

1. Energy
2. Water and Wastewater
3. Housing Construction
4. Food Service
5. Transportation and Logistics
6. Institutions of Higher Education Faculty/Staff
7. Finance
8. Information Technology & Communication
9. Media
10. Legal Services
11. Public Safety (Engineers)
12. Other Public Health Workers
13. Officials needed to maintain continuity of government

Other essential workers in this phase likely will be vaccinated at local health departments, pharmacies, healthcare systems and employer-based vaccination clinics.

People aged 64 through 75 years and those with underlying health conditions (age 16 through 64) likely will be vaccinated through their healthcare provider, local health department, healthcare systems and pharmacies.

The list of medical conditions is updated routinely as new data become available, see [here](#).

As Virginia moves through this Phase 1 of its Vaccination Plan, questions have arisen regarding whether companies may mandate that their employees obtain these vaccinations when available. For further information and guidance on such vaccine mandates, please see the recent article issued by our Labor, Employment & Immigration and Health Care attorneys, [The COVID-19 Vaccine Is Here - Can Employers Mandate Immunization](#)

?

Related People

- Nicole Lawter ? 703.760.5241 ? nlawter@williamsmullen.com

Related Services

- Government Relations