

# Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

UPDATE APRIL 26, 2021

## Introduction

One year after the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in Philadelphia, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Highly-effective COVID-19 vaccines have been approved for use and are being shipped in consistent quantities to the city. A growing number of providers are administering those doses to an increasing number of Philadelphians, through various mechanisms and channels. And increasingly-reliable information about vaccine availability suggests that most Philadelphians will have the opportunity to be vaccinated by early summer 2021.

On November 16, 2020, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) published a 130-page “Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Vaccination Plan.” Much of this plan was tentative, because much was unknown at the time about which vaccines would be approved for use, what populations they would be approved for, and how many doses would be received by the City of Philadelphia. Then on January 19, 2021, after more was known about vaccine availability, PDPH published a [“Philadelphia COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan”](#) that offered more specificity on how the vaccine would be distributed in Phase 1a and Phase 1b. On March 3, PDPH issued an update on the earlier Vaccine Distribution Plan to articulate new strategies for increasing vaccination services throughout the city. This document provides a further update on the plan through the end of May, as well as a progress report on vaccinations to date. With federal promises for consistent vaccine shipments and increased confidence in the reliability of information on vaccine availability, and many new providers engaged in vaccine distribution, Philadelphia is in a better position to continue expanding vaccination services for its residents.

On April 11, Philadelphia surpassed one million doses of COVID-19 vaccine administered in 17 weeks. In recent weeks, the number of vaccination sites has continued to increase, including the expansion of operations at retail and independent pharmacies, the opening of the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) community-based vaccination clinics and pop-up clinics, and the addition of the Esperanza Community Vaccination Center, operated with the support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Following the recommendations from the Vaccine Advisory Committee, a subset of groups within Phase 1c became eligible for vaccination on April 5, including sanitation workers, maintenance and janitorial staff, utility workers, and postal and package delivery workers. The remaining groups of essential workers with lower risk of exposure within Phase 1c became eligible one week later on April 12. In concert with President Biden’s direction to open vaccination eligibility to all adults by April 19, Philadelphia entered Phase 2 on April 16.

## Progress to Date

### **PRIORITY GROUPS**

Philadelphia’s Vaccine Advisory Committee set priorities for populations eligible for vaccination in Phases 1a, 1b, and 1c, based on the recommendations of the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The membership of the Vaccine Advisory Committee can be found here: <https://www.phila.gov/programs/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-documents/>. In early February, the COVID-19 Racial Equity group was integrated into the Vaccine Advisory Committee to help address racial equity issues.

## Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

Persons included in Phase 1a are health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities; persons included in Phase 1b are frontline essential workers, persons living and working in congregate settings, persons over age 65, and persons with high-risk medical conditions. Persons in Phase 1c are other essential workers, who are at lower risk of exposure. The full priority group list can be found here: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20210407003349/Philadelphia-COVID-Vaccine-Priority-Eligibility-041221.pdf>.

Vaccinations were offered to persons in Phase 1a from the arrival of the first vaccines in mid-December until the week of January 18, when persons in Phase 1b became eligible. There is some overlap between phases as the intent is not to vaccinate every individual in a phase before moving to the next, but rather to achieve a sufficient saturation level before moving on. Persons in early prioritization groups who choose not to accept vaccine during their corresponding phase will continue to have opportunities for vaccination as the phases progress.

Upon President Biden's announcement that jurisdictions will be directed to make all adults eligible for COVID-19 vaccine no later than April 19, all persons in Phase 1c became eligible on April 12, with certain groups having been granted earlier eligibility on April 5. Philadelphia entered Phase 2 on April 16, allowing all residents 16 years and older be eligible for vaccination.

### **VACCINES AND DOSES AVAILABLE**

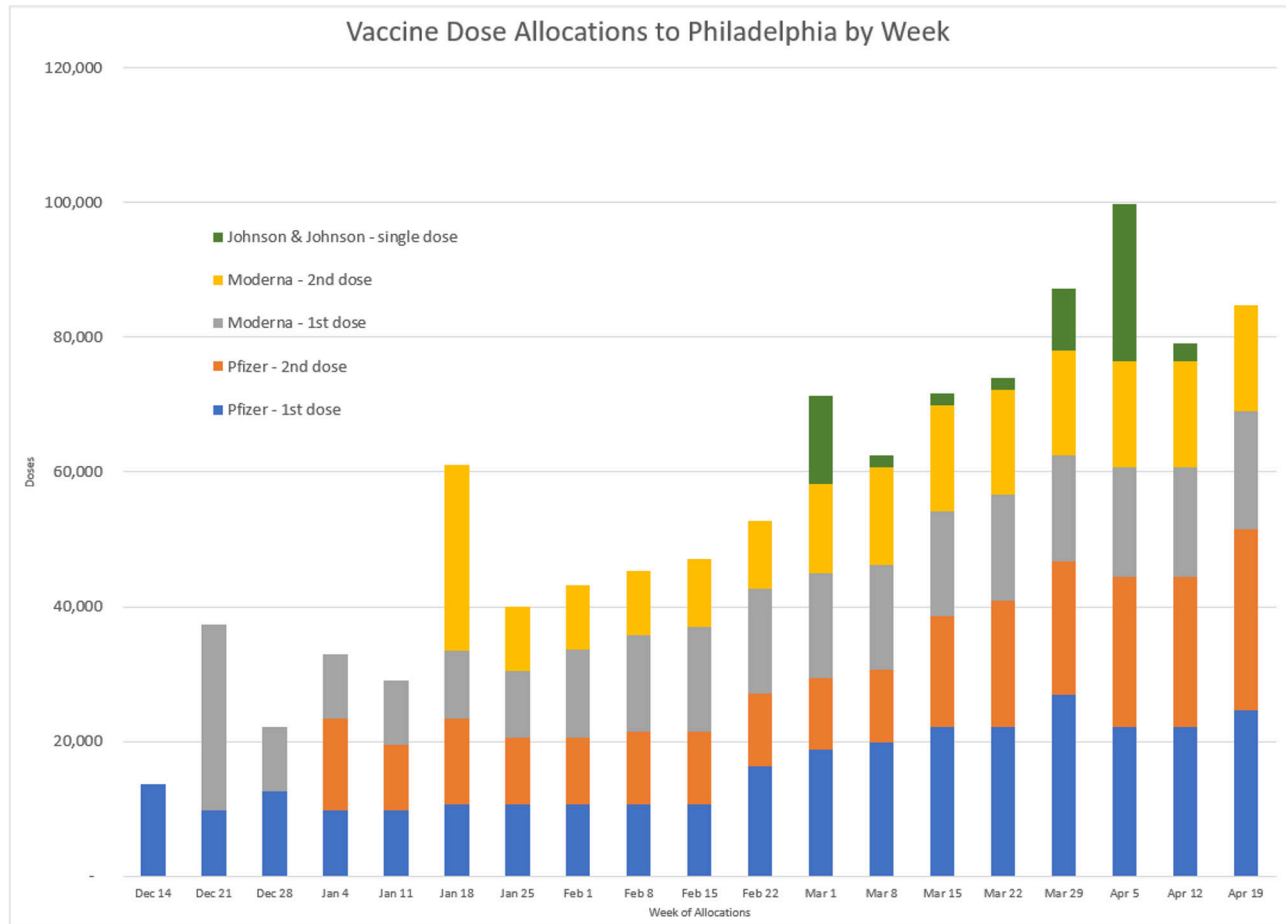
The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved three COVID-19 vaccines for use under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA). They include Pfizer's mRNA vaccine, Moderna's mRNA vaccine, and an adenovirus vector vaccine made by Janssen (a subsidiary of Johnson & Johnson). Many other COVID-19 vaccine candidates are currently in development.

The federal government allocates first doses of the two-dose vaccines each week and then matches those with second-dose allocations three or four weeks later, according to the dosing interval of the vaccine. Philadelphia was allocated approximately 20,000 first doses combined of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines per week through much of January, but first-dose allocations rose in February to closer to 30,000 per week, with total allocations as of April 19 almost 85,000 doses. The federal government has indicated that the number of doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccine available each week is unlikely to increase further.

Beginning the week of March 1, Philadelphia had started to receive allocations of the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which had fluctuated in quantity over recent weeks. On April 13, administration of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine had been paused following a statement from the FDA regarding rare instances of blood clotting after receiving the J&J vaccine. The City and all partner clinics that formerly offered J&J vaccine had switched to the Pfizer or Moderna products. However, upon the ACIP recommendation on April 23 to resume use of the vaccine product, the City proceeded with J&J distribution and administration.

## Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

Note that doses allocated in a given week are shipped the following week, so they are first available for administration approximately 10 days after the dates shown on the graph below.



### PROVIDERS AND MECHANISMS FOR VACCINE ADMINISTRATION

To achieve sustainable and equitable COVID-19 vaccine access across the city, PDPH is building a broad vaccine administration network, most of which is based on established health care providers. To enroll as COVID-19 vaccination providers, organizations must meet requirements established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for vaccine handling and complete a CDC provider enrollment agreement. As part of this process, providers must meet rigorous vaccine storage and handling requirements, as well as document the ability to electronically report immunization data within 24 hours using systems approved by PDPH.

As of April 19, 281 provider sites were enrolled to receive vaccines.

- **Hospitals/health systems**

All acute care hospitals have vaccinated their own health care workers in their occupational health units. In addition, several hospitals are operating community-located mass vaccination clinics, often in partnership with religious organizations or other community-based organizations. In a unique arrangement, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) provided vaccine to teachers, school support staff, and childcare workers. Thomas Jefferson University Hospital has also held a specially designed clinic for persons with intellectual disabilities, and begun vaccinations for City sanitation workers, as arrangements are still in progress for other city worker vaccination sites.

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- ***Pharmacies***

Rite Aid, the pharmacy chain with the best reach into lower-income Philadelphia neighborhoods, is providing vaccine at its 77 locations. CVS and Walgreens, under a federal contract, have been providing vaccinations to residents and staff of nursing homes, personal care homes and assisted living facilities. CVS has also begun holding vaccination clinics for essential City personnel, including utility, custodial, and maintenance workers. Some independent pharmacies, including Centennial, Tang, Sunray, and Pelham, have been offering vaccinations on site to a variety of facilities with eligible populations. As of April 19, 42 independent pharmacies had completed CDC provider agreements and had received vaccine to offer in their stores.

- ***Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other outpatient clinics***

PDPH is providing vaccine to approximately 56 FQHC sites and other outpatient clinics, initially to vaccinate their own staff and unaffiliated healthcare workers, and now to vaccinate eligible patients. Some clinics are also offering vaccination services to local community members, who may not be patients.

- ***PDPH mobile teams***

PDPH has been deploying mobile teams to vaccinate healthcare staff on-site at large facilities that are not affiliated with a health system, such as inpatient behavioral health facilities. Operations have since expanded to other congregate settings, such as group homes, shelters, and recovery centers.

- ***Organization-based clinics***

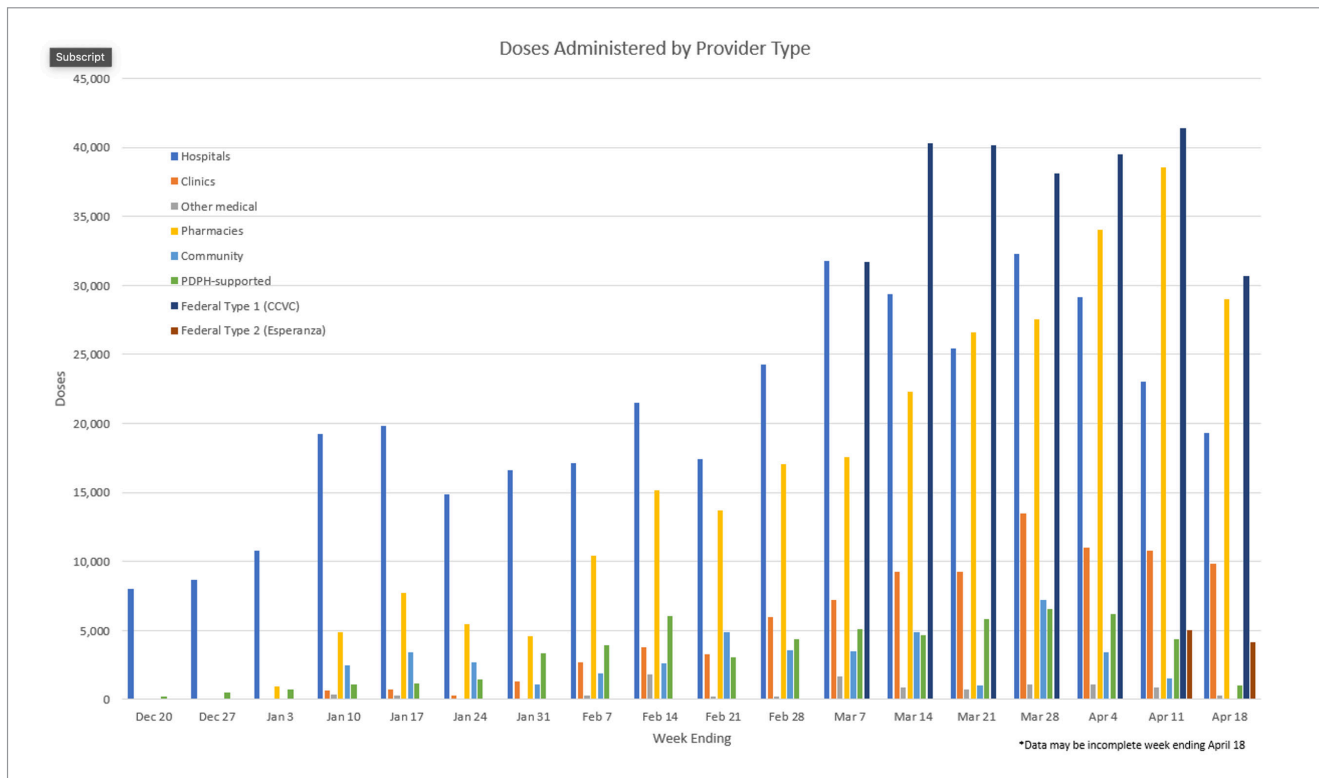
PDPH has provided vaccine to other partners, including the Philadelphia Department of Prisons Health Services and the Philadelphia Fire Department—Emergency Medical Services, to vaccinate their own healthcare staff. Similarly, the Police Department and SEPTA have organized clinics to vaccinate their employees.

- ***Mass vaccination events***

As of April 19, the City of Philadelphia is operating nine community-based large clinics on a rotating basis each week, along with the two FEMA-supported clinics. PDPH is operating six clinics, which are open Monday-Saturday. During the week of March 22, the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) launched three additional community-based clinics. Both PDPH and PFD will continue to hold pop-up clinics in coordination with community partners each week. Other organizations have similarly operated community-based large clinics, including hospitals (see above) and the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium.

## Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

As of the week ending April 18, approximately 1,118,668 doses had been administered, with the most doses being administered by hospitals (33%) and pharmacies (25%). The number of doses has been generally increasing over these weeks, with the most notable increase in the last few weeks from pharmacies, as well as the high volume of vaccinations at the Center City Vaccination Center.



### PROGRESS REACHING PRIORITY POPULATIONS

- **Health care workers**

While current data systems do not track the occupation of persons vaccinated, hospitals and clinics report that most of their affiliated health care workers that are interested have been vaccinated by late February. PDPH continues to work with unaffiliated health care workers, particularly home health aides, who remain unvaccinated, to ensure they have access to vaccine appointments and opportunities.

- **Long-term care facilities**

Mobile teams managed by pharmacies have made good progress in vaccinating residents and staff at long-term care facilities. Of 102 nursing homes, personal care homes, and assisted living facilities that they were requested to reach, 97 have been visited by teams at least once, 95 at least twice, and 82 three times as of April 9. The teams administered 15,695 doses to residents and 12,817 doses to staff, from a total of 28,512 doses administered (15,521 first doses, 12,991 second doses). PDPH is tracking progress across these facilities to ensure that anyone who is interested but not yet vaccinated will be provided access, as well as completing dose series for persons when needed. Through the Regional Congregate Care Assistance Team (RCAT) program, the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University health systems have sent teams to vaccinate residents and staff at personal care homes. A total of 999 persons have been vaccinated, with additional vaccination events scheduled for the coming weeks.

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- ***Frontline essential workers***

PDPH began working with both the Philadelphia Police Department and the Philadelphia Fire Department in January to coordinate vaccinations for first responders. As of April 26, 10,478 first and second doses have been administered to police officers, and 1,413 Fire Department personnel have been vaccinated. Vaccinations are being administered to staff from the Department of Prisons on site. There have been several clinics for SEPTA personnel operated by Albert Einstein Medical Center and other providers.

- ***Elderly and medically vulnerable***

Two of the largest groups in Phase 1b are those persons over age 75 (93,000) and persons with high-risk medical conditions (more than 400,000). Vaccination of these persons began in late January and will likely continue throughout the entire vaccination program. These vaccinations have been administered by the entire list of providers above. As of the week ending April 18, over 52,000 persons over age 75 have received at least one dose, approximately 56% of residents in this age group. Over 60,000 persons ages 65-74 have received at least one dose, approximately 47% of residents in this age group, since all became eligible on March 10. Outreach to these groups and opportunities for vaccination are continuing to be of high importance as Philadelphia moves to Phase 2. The vaccination data system cannot distinguish persons based on their medical conditions or employment.

### **RACIAL EQUITY**

In early January it became clear that there were disparities in vaccination rates by race and ethnicity. For example, at the time, Black people represented 8% of those vaccinated, while representing 42% of the population of Philadelphia. At that time, most persons vaccinated were health care workers. While some of this racial disparity may have reflected the racial distribution of health care workers, it was clear that vaccination rates among minority health care workers were far lower than rates among white health care workers. Later, analyses of the zip code of residence showed lower vaccination rates in North Philadelphia, the Kensington area, and other areas where the populations are predominantly Black or Latinx.

Actions that have been taken to reduce these disparities include:

- Including persons with high-risk medical conditions (who are more likely to be in racial and ethnic minority groups) in Phase 1b.
- Working with pharmacy chains to improve the equity of their response by connecting them with community sites in low vaccination areas.
- Providing vaccine to and supporting Federally Qualified Health Centers and other clinics serving low-income, minority populations.
- Providing vaccine to and assisting the Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium, an organization with a strong focus on reaching Black and Brown persons.
- Issuing invitations to vaccination opportunities preferentially to persons living in under-vaccinated zip codes, most of which have predominantly racial minority populations.
- Working with community leaders and trusted messengers (e.g., Black clergy) to endorse and support vaccinations in their respective communities.
- Partnering with community-based organizations and faith leaders to help reach their members with information about how to get vaccinated.

## Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

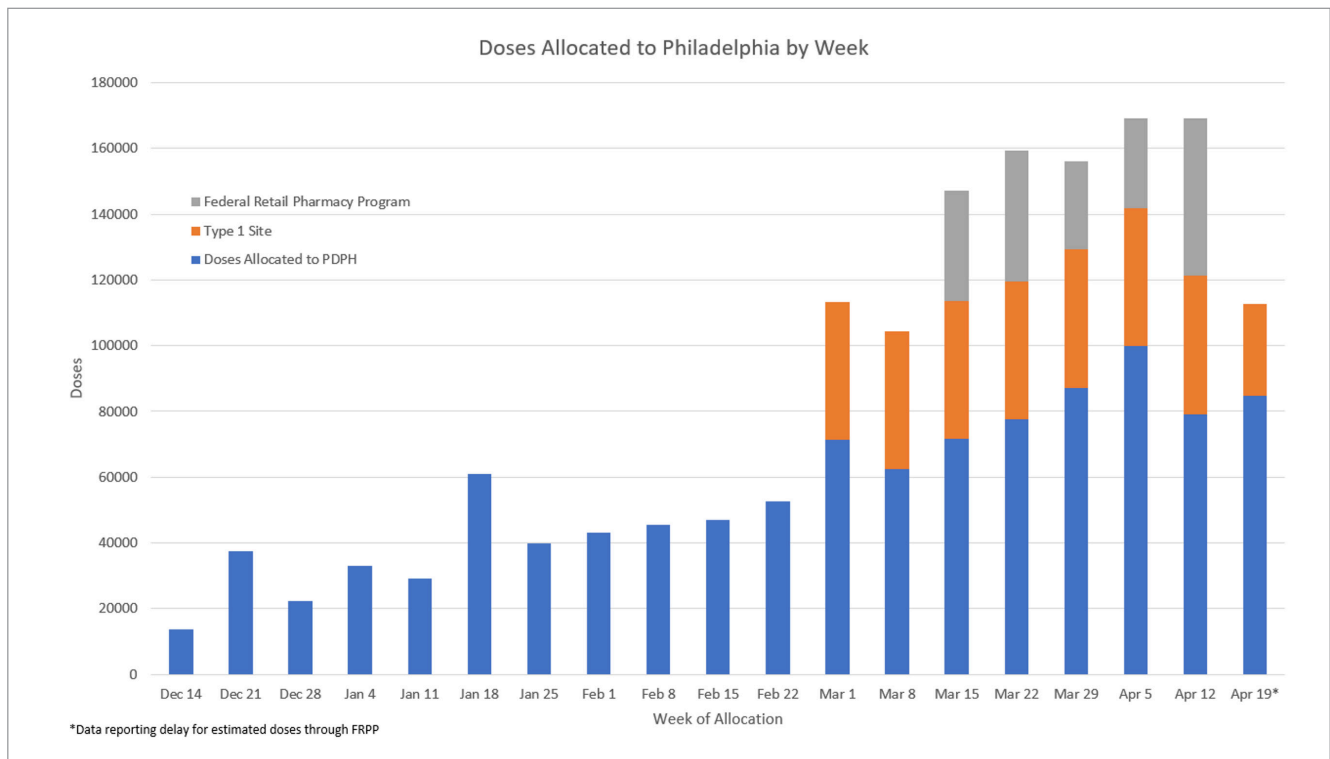
As of April 18, the percent of persons vaccinated who were Black had risen to 24%, a sign of progress but still reflecting a disparity that must be addressed further. To better investigate these differences, vaccination rates are also being examined by census tracts, which allows for specific neighborhoods with low vaccination rates to be identified and appropriate resources to those communities targeted. This is also important for identifying clusters of under-vaccinated areas within highly vaccinated zip codes (i.e., areas that have experienced neighborhood change/gentrification). As of April 11, 124 low vaccination census tracts have been identified, which range from 10%-20% of residents with at least one dose. Vaccination efforts will continue to be evaluated by tracking the percent change in vaccination rates by census tract over time.

## Distribution Plans through Phase 2

### PROJECTED VACCINE AVAILABILITY

Weekly allocations of vaccine to Philadelphia through the week of April 19 are shown below. Because the federally-supported Type 1 mass vaccination site (Center City Vaccination Center) and retail pharmacies are provided vaccine directly from the federal government, they have been added to the supply allocated to Philadelphia. As of mid-April, the federal government provides a maximum of 4,000 doses at the CCVC per day (28,000 per week), a decrease from the original 6,000 doses per day (42,000 per week), while PDPH supplements with the additional 2,000 doses per day. Philadelphia’s retail pharmacies—Acme, CVS, Giant, Rite Aid, Sam’s Club, ShopRite, Walgreens, and Walmart—are enrolled providers in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program (FRPP) and have received a relatively consistent supply of doses per week. FRPP doses indicated below are estimates based on the quantity these pharmacies order each week.

Although the number of doses allocated to PDPH has been increasing overall, the federal government has advised that the same quantity of vaccines is expected to be delivered in upcoming weeks. The decrease in the last two weeks is attributed to the pause in distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Following the ACIP recommendation on April 23 to resume use of the J&J vaccine, the City will continue to allocate doses of the product to providers. However, manufacturing issues delaying its production will likely reduce the quantity shipped to Philadelphia in the near future.



## Vaccination Mechanisms and Plans

While only limited vaccine and vaccination options were available in earlier months, many current vaccination mechanisms will expand while new mechanisms become available during the coming months, including the following:

### **HOSPITALS**

Health care systems will continue to administer vaccines to the health care workers who have not been vaccinated to date and vaccinate eligible patients. In addition, many hospitals have been operating community-based large vaccination clinics for both patients and non-patients. In one special arrangement, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia has run high-volume clinics for teachers, schools support staff and early childcare educators. Other collaborative arrangements include: Temple University Hospital partnering with the Philadelphia Housing Authority to vaccinate their frontline essential workers, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital working with the City to begin vaccinations of sanitation workers, and Jefferson's specially designed clinic for persons with intellectual disabilities. Several hospital systems, including Temple, Einstein, and the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, are partnering with faith-based institutions to operate community-based clinics for residents. Temple and the University of Pennsylvania health systems also continue to vaccinate residents and staff in personal care homes.

### **FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTERS (FQHCs) AND OTHER CLINICS**

FQHCs offer an optimal mechanism for providing vaccine to high-risk residents as they are trusted healthcare providers, are typically located in underserved communities, and are staffed by and provide services to many persons of color. As of April 20, 26 FQHC sites and 8 PDPH-operated District Health Centers are enrolled as COVID-19 vaccine providers and are currently offering vaccination services to patients. Five FQHCs, including Delaware Valley Community Health, Family Practice and Counseling Network, Sayre Health Center, Public Health Management Corporation, and Spectrum, are vaccinating persons who are not currently enrolled patients. Additionally, three PDPH Health Centers are now offering "Walk-up Wednesday's" for residents over the age of 65. Beginning April 7, the following health centers are holding walk up hours between 8am-4pm.

- Health Center 3 Annex (4219 Chester Ave., 19104)
- Health Center 5 Berks Street Annex (2001 W. Berks St., 19121)
- Health Center 10, East Side Courtyard entrance (2230 Cottman Ave., 19149)

Other clinics also have plans to increase volume and expand access to non-patients.

### **PHARMACIES**

Because pharmacies have such an extensive footprint in Philadelphia, they provide a convenient option for many residents. Eight large retail pharmacy chains, including Rite Aid, Walgreens, CVS, Acme, ShopRite, Giant, Sam's Club, and Walmart have enrolled as COVID-19 vaccine providers and are currently offering vaccination services at numerous locations throughout the city. These pharmacies are also all part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program and receive vaccines directly from the federal government. In addition, 42 independent pharmacies, some with multiple locations, have enrolled as vaccine providers, and PDPH is currently working with more than 15 additional pharmacy sites to enroll them as vaccine providers, as of April 19.



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PDPH is working with pharmacy chains to improve the equity of their response by connecting them with community sites in low vaccination areas. In addition to offering vaccination services to eligible individuals at retail locations, several pharmacies, such as Centennial, Rite Aid, Acme, and SunRay Pharmacy, also have the capability to offer onsite vaccination services in congregate or other high-risk settings or for specific 1b or 1c occupational groups. Some pharmacies, including Walmart, are holding pop-up clinics with local faith-based and community organizations. CVS has begun setting up clinics to vaccinate essential city workers, such as custodial, maintenance, and utility workers. PDPH will continue to connect these pharmacy providers with people and organizations seeking vaccination.

### **OTHER MEDICAL PROVIDERS**

PDPH has been working with a variety of other specialized medical providers, including dialysis centers, to vaccinate their high-risk patients. Currently enrolled providers, including Davita and Cancer Treatment Centers of America, will continue to vaccinate their high-risk patients, and PDPH will enroll additional specialty care providers.

PDPH will also continue to conduct outreach to other primary care and private practices to enroll them as COVID-19 vaccine providers.

### **COMMUNITY PROVIDERS**

The Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium (BDCC) is operating regular community-based large vaccination clinics. This trusted and high-volume provider will focus on low-income and minority populations that have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

To expand the number of community-based vaccination providers, the City has partnered with the Philadelphia Mental Health Care Corporation (PMHCC) to offer funding for vaccination services through a [COVID-19 Community Vaccination Program Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#). As of April 23, 27 applications were received from interested organizations, 11 of which have been awarded funding. Applications are still being reviewed on a rolling basis. The awarded providers are as follows:

- Albert Einstein Medical Center
- Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium
- CityLife Health
- Congreso de Latinos Unidos, Inc.
- MyDoc Urgent Care
- Penn Medicine
- Puentes de Salud
- Sunray Drugs
- Temple University, Katz School of Medicine
- Temple College of Public Health
- Thomas Jefferson University Hospital

## GOVERNMENT-RUN MASS VACCINATION CLINICS

Beginning the week of March 22, the City of Philadelphia is operating nine large community-based vaccination clinics, with an average of 3,500 doses administered per week, as well as two FEMA-supported clinics. On April 20, links to self-schedule for clinic appointments went live on the City website, which can be found here: <https://www.phila.gov/2021-04-20-sign-up-for-your-covid-19-vaccine-appointment-here/>.

The City, in partnership with SEPTA, is coordinating several transportation options to help ensure that persons can travel to and from all City and FEMA operated clinics. Dedicated staff with experience in transportation outreach have been contracted by the City to staff all City-operated and FEMA-supported clinics to coordinate and assist with transportation needs. Transportation should not be a barrier to access. Options include:

- Door-to-door transportation service through SEPTA Customized Community Transportation (CCT) for individuals 65 years of age or older, with access and functional needs, or anyone who needs an individual ride accommodation
- Free roundtrip transit passes for both vaccination appointments
- Free express shuttle from the ADA accessible Allegheny station on the Broad Street Line to the Esperanza Community Vaccination Center, running on a continuous loop during clinic hours
- A limited shuttle service for areas without accessible transit, in coordination with community-based organizations.

More information about transportation options can be found here: [phila.gov/media/20210405123000/COVID-Vaccine-Public-Transportation-Options-003.pdf](https://www.phila.gov/media/20210405123000/COVID-Vaccine-Public-Transportation-Options-003.pdf).

The City has also partnered with United Way to provide Lyft rides on a case-by-case basis for anyone needing just-in-time transportation assistance after presenting at a clinic, as well as for individuals in need of transportation assistance to vaccination sites not operated by the City or supported by FEMA.

### *PDPH community vaccination clinics*

As the vaccine supply has increased, PDPH has expanded its mass vaccination program to six community locations that are in operation on a rotating basis Monday-Saturday. The central concept of the program is to make vaccine available to high-risk persons in under-vaccinated neighborhoods with few or no vaccine providers through community-based clinics.

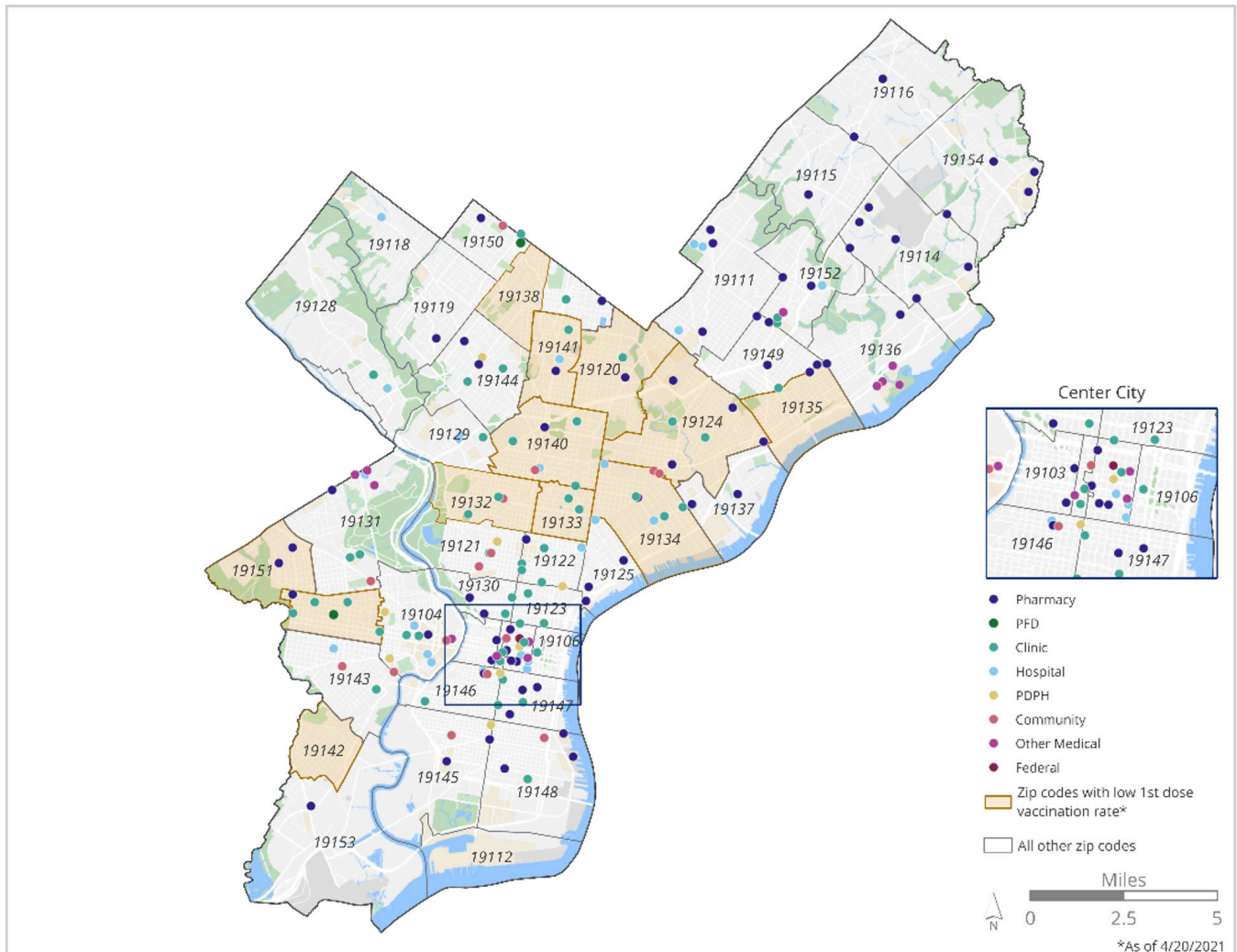
The PDPH community vaccination program is currently operating clinics at the following locations:

- Martin Luther King Older Adult Center in North Philadelphia (19121)
- Community Academy of Philadelphia Charter School in Juniata (19124)
- University of the Sciences and Drexel University in West Philadelphia (19104)
- Simon Gratz High School in Nicetown-Tioga (19140)
- Edward O'Malley Athletic Association (EOM) in South Philadelphia (19148)
- Grand Yesha Ballroom in South Philadelphia (19145)

These locations were selected based on proximity to high priority zip codes (see the map that follows) that are under-vaccinated and have high vulnerability due to population demographics, as well as features of the individual host facilities, such as sufficient square footage and accessibility. Depending on its size, each clinic has a maximum throughput of 300-500 persons per day.

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## High-priority Zip Codes and COVID-19 Provider Locations



Beginning March 15, these clinics began accepting walk-ups when not all vaccine appointment slots were filled for persons who meet eligibility criteria. In collaboration with community-based organizations and faith leaders, hours of operation and site information are being shared with eligible residents in the neighborhoods where clinics are operating. Upon entering Phase 2, residents in Phases 1a-c will continue to be prioritized for invitations and appointments, but clinics will be open to all residents for walk-ups as able. More information about these clinics, including the schedule, is available here: <https://www.phila.gov/2021-03-16-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-citys-vaccine-clinics>.

In partnership with community-based organizations, PDPH has also begun conducting pop-up clinics in under-vaccinated communities with fewer vaccination options, with the goal of holding approximately two per week in the coming months.

### ***Philadelphia Fire Department-managed clinics***

PFD and the Office of Emergency Management have developed a pop-up vaccination clinic model that can be deployed in partnership with community organizations to locations that meet facility criteria. PFD held its first pop-up clinic at Northeast Baptist Church in the Frankford area on March 12, and held subsequent clinics at churches in Powelton Village on March 19 and on April 6 in North Philadelphia. In addition to these pop-up clinics, PFD has begun to operate community-based clinics at the following locations:

- Salvation Army in West Philadelphia (19139)
- Cannstatter Volksfest Verein in Torresdale (19114)
- PFD facility at 7800 Ogontz Ave. in West Oak Lane/Mt. Airy (19150)

These will run several days per week on a rotating basis and may administer up to 500 doses per day. As sites were formerly providing the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, clinic operations had temporarily paused through the week of April 19 to modify logistical needs and have resumed the following week.

### ***Center City Vaccination Center***

The City of Philadelphia is partnering with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), and the Department of Defense (DoD) to operate a Type 1 Community Vaccination Center at the Pennsylvania Convention Center (PCC) with the capacity to vaccinate 6,000 persons per day. This site, the Center City Vaccination Center (CCVC), is in operation seven days per week, 8am-5pm, beginning March 3. Of note, until April 14, all vaccine provided at these clinics did not come from Philadelphia's allocation but were provided separately from the federal government. Currently, the federal government provides a maximum of 4,000 doses at the site per day, while the City supplements with the additional 2,000 doses per day. The Convention Center was selected for this operation due to its large size, centrality, access to many public transit lines, and ability to accommodate the amplification of a successful mass vaccination model previously operated by PDPH at this venue.

As of April 18, 261,849 doses have been administered at the site. The CCVC administered first doses of Pfizer vaccine to persons from March 3-March 22 and operated subsequent second dose clinics from March 23-April 12. Starting April 14, the CCVC resumed administration of first doses and will operate at least through May. Walk-ups of all eligible residents and persons who work in Philadelphia will be accepted. More information about the CCVC can be found here:

<https://www.phila.gov/2021-03-02-getting-vaccinated-at-the-center-city-vaccination-center-what-you-need-to-know/>.

### ***Esperanza Community Vaccination Center***

Also in partnership with FEMA and PEMA, the City of Philadelphia opened a Type 2 Community Vaccination Center at Esperanza, located in the Hunting Park neighborhood at 4261 N. 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19140. The site has the capacity to vaccinate more than 1,000 residents per day. Appointments may be made in collaboration with Esperanza, however appointments are not required. Walk-ups of all eligible residents and persons who work in Philadelphia will be accepted, but residents must arrive an hour prior to closing to be accommodated. Beginning April 8, the site will be in operation five days a week with varying times to account for different schedules. The hours are as follows:

- Monday and Tuesday- 7am to 3pm
- Wednesday- 12pm to 8pm
- Thursday and Friday- closed
- Saturday and Sunday- 9am to 5pm

For more information about the Esperanza Community Vaccination Center, please visit: <https://www.phila.gov/2021-04-08-getting-vaccinated-at-the-esperanza-community-vaccination-center-what-to-expect/>.

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### Mobile teams

On December 24, 2020, PDPH launched its mobile team initiative, which has focused on vaccinating staff in high-risk healthcare settings, such as inpatient behavioral health hospitals. Since then, over 12,000 first and second doses have been administered by the mobile team. PDPH has expanded its focus to additional congregate facilities, including residents in those facilities. To better assess the need and implement a systematic vaccination outreach plan, PDPH has developed a comprehensive list of congregate sites that are tiered by size and risk. Given the large number of congregate facilities in Philadelphia, including personal care homes, assisted living facilities, behavioral health facilities, group homes, and shelters, PDPH plans to augment mobile team capacity by bringing on additional personnel, as well as partnering with the Philadelphia Fire Department to conduct additional onsite vaccination clinics.

## Estimated Throughput

With steady growth in the number of vaccine providers and an overall increase in vaccine availability, Philadelphia has consistently administered 118,000-125,000 doses per week in the last three weeks. However, by mid-April there appears to be lesser public demand for the vaccine, leaving mass vaccination sites, particularly the CCVC, operating under full capacity. While outreach efforts, such as community canvassing in partnership with local organizations and phone banking, have been scaled and eligibility opened to all adult residents, maximum weekly throughput is not expected to be met in upcoming months. Taking into account lower vaccine uptake and a consistent allocation of doses, PDPH estimates that during the week ending May 22, the anticipated last week of CCVC operations, the entire group of providers in Philadelphia will be able to deliver approximately 104,600 doses.

Estimated Weekly Doses of Vaccines Administered, by Provider Type

Provider Type	Est. # Sites by End May 22	Doses Week Ending April 11	Est. Potential Doses Per Week by May 22
Hospitals	19	23,000	22,700
Clinics	57	12,300	14,900
Other medical	20	880	400
Pharmacies	197	38,500	28,100
PDPH-supported	7	4,300	3,000
Federally -supported	2	46,400	35,500
<b>Total administered</b>		<b>125,380</b>	<b>104,600</b>

## Patient Access

### APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING AND THE VACCINE INTEREST DATABASE

The systems for making vaccines available to residents and the scheduling of appointments are managed by the many different organizations providing vaccinations. While appointments will continue to be scheduled at all PDPH community vaccination clinics, if not all vaccination slots are filled, eligible residents may walk-up on a first come, first served basis. These walk-ups will be accommodated as long as there is sufficient vaccine for both registered persons and walk-ups. The Black Doctors COVID-19 Consortium will continue to operate vaccination clinics on a walk-up basis.

To meet the demand for a central system for residents to learn about vaccination opportunities, in January, PDPH launched the [Vaccine Interest Form for Residents](#), an online form on which residents can sign up to indicate their interest in receiving vaccine; residents can register themselves or receive assistance through 311 or PDPH's COVID-19 Call Center. Shortly thereafter, PDPH also launched the [Workforce COVID-19 Vaccine Planning Form \(Phases 1b and 1c\)](#), an online form on which Philadelphia employers with Phase 1b or Phase 1c workers can register their organization.

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As of April 15, over 430,000 persons have signed up on the form for residents. When planning vaccination clinics, PDPH will query the Vaccine Interest database to identify eligible persons and then issue invitations both electronically and by phone (for persons who do not have internet access) to schedule appointments. To ensure equitable access to vaccine and improve vaccination rates in high-risk communities, PDPH has been and will continue to over-sample under-vaccinated zip codes when issuing invitations to schedule appointments. As of April 15, approximately 51% of persons who have signed up in the Vaccine Interest database has either been vaccinated or scheduled for an upcoming clinic. Persons who have not been notified of appointment opportunities previously are prioritized for new invitations.

PDPH is also working with other organizations, such as health plans, to enlist their support so that individualized calls, rather than robocalls, can be made to help registered individuals schedule appointments. Health plans, such as Independence Blue Cross, Health Partners Plans, Humana, United Health Care, and AmeriHealth Caritas, as well as PCA and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), are contacting their 65+ membership as a method to reach high priority groups.

The Workforce COVID-19 Vaccine Planning Form will be used to connect organizations that have employees who are frontline essential workers to vaccine providers.

### **WALK-UP ACCESS**

As of April 19, City and FEMA operated community vaccination clinics have begun accepting walk-ups for persons eligible in Phase 2. As the vaccine supply expands and that supply begins to approach demand, more providers are likely to offer vaccination to people without appointments. Walk-up options may also expand as outdoor venues are incorporated when weather conditions are better.

## Access for Vulnerable Populations

Achieving equitable vaccine distribution requires intentional strategies to reach subpopulations in the city who face a higher risk of serious disease and death from COVID-19 and who are likely to face significant barriers to vaccination. This includes people living in congregate facilities, homebound seniors, people living with disabilities, immigrants/those with limited English proficiency, and Black and Brown people, who have experienced historic discrimination.

### **CONGREGATE FACILITIES**

Congregate living facilities, such as prisons, shelters, and residential psychiatric and rehab facilities, pose a particularly high risk because they place a large number of people, often including many with risk factors for severe illness, together with staff members who come and go from the facility, potentially bringing asymptomatic COVID-19 infection. These sites are being prioritized based on the type of facility, size of the population, risk of exposure and/or severe disease for staff and/or residents, and its location (i.e., in a high, medium, or low-risk zip code). Eligible residents of settings that do not meet the Health Department's definition of a congregate setting (e.g., independent senior living facilities and apartment buildings), are referred to various partner agencies using geographic prioritization criteria. Onsite vaccinations at these facilities are underway or planned, as summarized below.



## Philadelphia Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

Site category	Vaccination Provider(s)	Status
<b>Long-term care and assisted living facilities enrolled in the CDC Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program</b>	CVS and Walgreens	Ongoing; all sites have been visited 1-3 times. Some ongoing need will continue due to turnover.
<b>Inpatient behavioral health</b>	PDPH mobile team; pharmacy providers	All sites have received at least one vaccine clinic for staff. Ongoing need will continue for residents due to turnover.
<b>Personal Care Homes and Assisted Living Facilities not enrolled in the CDC Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program</b>	PDPH mobile team; Rite Aid, Centennial and other pharmacy providers; Regional Congregate Care Assistance Teams (RCAT)	All sites have received at least one vaccine clinic or contacted to schedule a vaccine clinic.
<b>Group Homes</b>	Rite Aid and other pharmacy providers; PDPH mobile team	Ongoing; PDPH mobile team and Rite Aid have conducted or scheduled clinics with identified partner agencies serving individuals living in group homes.
<b>Senior Housing</b>	Multiple pharmacies; Regional Congregate Care Assistance Teams (RCAT)	Referring senior housing sites to RCAT teams and pharmacy providers based on geographic location and HUD affiliation.
<b>Shelters</b>	PDPH mobile team, other medical and pharmacy providers	Ongoing; Shelters were surveyed to determine populations served and vaccine need. Some ongoing need will continue due to turnover.
<b>Prisons</b>	Prison Health Services	Vaccinations of staff and incarcerated persons are ongoing. Some ongoing need will continue due to turnover.
<b>Other congregate settings</b>	Pharmacies, PDPH mobile team	Prioritization depends on size and medical risk of residents.

### **HOMEBOUND PERSONS**

Most people in this group have significant medical risk for severe COVID-19 infection and many have home healthcare workers and others who come and go in their homes, bringing risk of infection. Since April, PFD has begun conducting in-home vaccinations for persons who are homebound or otherwise unable to travel to a vaccination site. PFD uses a two-person EMS team model for conducting these in-home vaccinations, using an initial list of homebound persons from the Philadelphia Corporation for Aging.

PDPH is also working with interested home healthcare agencies to assist them in enrolling as vaccine providers to improve capacity to reach this population. In addition, managed care plans are working to refer additional home healthcare providers to PDPH in order to initiate the vaccine provider enrollment process. In the coming weeks, PDPH will be working with partners to identify a list of providers able to vaccinate homebound persons and to identify homebound persons who have not been vaccinated.

### **PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES**

Individuals with disabilities or other access and functional needs may need accommodations or modifications to afford them access to City vaccination sites. In support of ensuring that vaccination services are accessible to all, the City has taken the following steps:

- All City-run and FEMA-supported vaccination sites have been assessed for their accessibility. At locations where barriers have been identified, the City has worked to either remove the barrier or has implemented modifications to ensure access for all individuals.
  - The City is updating its website to include information about the accessible services available at each site.
- Mobility assistance devices like wheelchairs are made available for individuals to borrow while at any City or FEMA site.
- Individuals may bring one companion with them to the clinic for assistance. This person will also be offered vaccination at the same time.

- OEM convened a working group on ADA accessibility to develop standards and policies to be implemented at vaccine clinics.
- The City has identified individuals with intellectual disabilities living in small group homes as a priority to be vaccinated. PDPH, in partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services (DBHIDS) and The Alliance of Community Service Providers, has identified facilities to host vaccine clinics for this population (clients and paid staff). PDPH's mobile vaccine team has begun to visit these sites and have plans for all between the mobile team and pharmacy partners.
  - PDPH has submitted a request to add intellectual disability to the list of medical conditions on the Vaccine Interest Form.
  - Individuals with intellectual disabilities who live at home but can be brought to these organizations will also be included in these vaccination opportunities.
- For individuals who use sign language, video relay interpretation (VRI) services are available via tablet and mobile applications at all PDPH vaccination sites and for 311 calls.
- The City has deployed sensory toolkits to its vaccination clinics in partnerships with Temple TechOWL. These kits include noise-cancelling headphones, weighted lap pads, fidgets, and a wobble seat.
- Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing may use Telecommunication Relay Services (TRS) through 311. To be connected with TRS, individuals may dial 7-1-1 and an assistant will place the call on behalf of the text telephone device (TTY or TDD). 7-1-1 can be used to access all telecommunication relay services in Pennsylvania. For more information, visit [techowlpa.org](http://techowlpa.org) or call 800-204-7428 (voice), 866-268-0579 (TTY).

## **IMMIGRANTS AND PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY**

Adjusted for age, Latinos have suffered the highest rates of hospitalization and death during the pandemic. Data for many other immigrant groups is limited. Language barriers and concerns about possible immigration enforcement may keep many immigrants and those who do not speak or read English fluently from obtaining vaccines. To try to meet the needs of immigrant groups:

- PDPH will continue to supply COVID-19 vaccine to FQHCs. These sites are trusted healthcare institutions that provide care for many immigrants in Philadelphia.
- Community-based organizations serving these groups will share information about the PDPH Vaccine Interest Form and assist community members to register.
- 311 and the PDPH call center have access to bilingual staff (Spanish) and an interpreter telephone line to enroll people in the Vaccine Interest Form. They are recruiting staff who speak additional languages.
- PDPH vaccination sites will not require photo ID, to avoid creating a barrier for undocumented people, although they will require people to provide a valid Philadelphia address. Neither a social security number nor insurance is required for vaccination. PDPH is working with sites to ensure this information is disseminated and followed.
- Interpretation is provided at all PDPH vaccination sites. PDPH provides in-person interpreters for the most common languages, where possible, and offers telephone line interpretation for those languages for which we do not have an in-person interpreter. For those who use sign language, video relay interpretation (VRI) services are available via tablet and mobile application. Furthermore, given their locations, the Esperanza Community Vaccination Center



and Center City Vaccination Center both have dedicated in-person Spanish interpreters, while the CCVC also has Mandarin Chinese interpreters on site.

- Plain language, multi-lingual educational materials about the vaccine are available on the PDPH website.
- PDPH is working with partner organizations to call people from the Vaccine Interest database who lack an email address to offer them vaccine appointments.
- The Request for Proposals for vaccination providers encourages applications from providers who can reach new immigrants and other marginalized populations for vaccinations.

## Racial Equity

Black and Brown people in Philadelphia have suffered the highest rates of severe infection and death from COVID-19. PDPH will work with all vaccine providers in Philadelphia to improve access to communities of color. In addition to continuing current actions described above to reach minority populations, PDPH will:

- Support more vaccinations through FQHCs, many of which are located in low-income neighborhoods and are staffed and utilized by persons of color.
- Expand placement of vaccination clinics in zip codes with low vaccination rates and high social vulnerability, with a key focus on closing the gap on vaccine access in Black, Brown, and immigrant communities.
- Support qualified vaccination providers that apply under the Request for Proposals for funding to reach Black and Brown communities.
- Deploy mobile units to low-income senior housing and similar facilities.
- Continue to review the data on vaccinations by race and geographic area, and direct efforts to under-vaccinated populations, particularly populations of color.
- Collect and publicize data to assess racial and ethnic disparities in vaccination rates. This includes requiring all provider sites and RFP-sites to collect and report race and ethnicity data, as well as working to reduce missing race/ethnicity data by matching data with other data sources.
- Emphasize vaccination of frontline essential workers, who are disproportionately people of color. This includes directed efforts to reach first responders, food service workers, teachers, childcare workers, other city workers, and SEPTA employees.

## Communications and Education

The City is committed to consistently and transparently communicating with the public about vaccine distribution in a variety of formats. In addition to a weekly press conference on Tuesdays, the Health Department added a second weekly press conference on Friday afternoons. City leadership is providing weekly briefings for City Council leadership and weekly Intergovernmental Convenings where all City, State, and Federal elected officials are welcome to participate to receive updates and ask questions about vaccine distribution plans.

Since the spring of 2020, the City's website on the COVID-19 pandemic response at [www.phila.gov/covid](http://www.phila.gov/covid) has included information on the coronavirus, how it is spreading in Philadelphia, the latest data on the pandemic, and the City's response, including Health Department activities like testing and contact tracing but also other City efforts like Access Centers and food distribution programs. The COVID-19 website has transitioned into a vaccine-first information hub. Currently, the Health Department's vaccine information includes a [dashboard on vaccine distribution](#) that is updated every weekday, [frequently asked questions](#) to be used to combat rumors and misinformation, and information about [where to sign up for a COVID vaccine](#). In addition to the COVID-19 website, the City is publishing a [blog post every week](#) with the latest information on the breakdown of who is being vaccinated, where vaccines have been made available, and the latest updates on the distribution effort. The City's OpenDataPhilly platform is now serving vaccine distribution information in a variety of formats for analysis and review.

Recognizing that not everyone in Philadelphia has access to the internet or feels comfortable using the internet, the Health Department has integrated vaccine expertise into their already-existing COVID-19 Call Center (215-685-5488). Our dedicated call-takers can answer questions in English and Spanish about a variety of COVID-19 vaccine topics. Recently, the City has bolstered the capacity of the Call Center through a partnership with 311. Individuals can now call 311 to register their interest in receiving a vaccine. PDPH has provided training to other call centers, like PCA and the CARIE Line, so that callers to their centers can receive assistance in signing up on the Vaccine Interest Form. Finally, PDPH is also working with other diverse partners, such as Esperanza, the Philadelphia AIDS Consortium, and St. Thomas Aquinas, to enlist their support so that door-to-door outreach and individualized calls, rather than robocalls, can be made to individuals who have signed up for vaccines.

The City is now running a paid media campaign promoting vaccination called [Vax Up, Philly](#). This campaign is intended to provide facts on COVID-19 vaccine, allow regular Philadelphians to ask questions and have experts and trusted messengers reply, and make emotional calls for folks to get their vaccine.

## Community Engagement

The most effective messengers are those that people already trust - people that have told them the truth in the past and people who look and sound like them. PDPH has partnered with Philly Counts and the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement to identify trusted messengers and support them in providing information on the vaccine and the City's effort to make vaccines available to their communities.

Originally established to support the 2020 Census, the Philly Counts community engagement model has focused on leveraging community networks to further key administration priorities and to increase overall civic engagement in communities to support a more equitable democracy in Philadelphia. In partnership with PDPH and other public and private partners, Philly Counts will leverage its existing network of staff and volunteers to provide COVID-19 outreach, education, organizing, and canvassing efforts to ensure that every Philadelphia resident understands why they should consider being vaccinated and will help residents make plans to get vaccinated. Among other things, this will include a COVID-19 Vaccine Information Champion training program, phone banking outreach, pop-up vaccine clinic coordination, and direct canvassing efforts.

Philly Counts has also partnered with Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia to launch a community-led effort to invest in neighborhood-based solutions to urgent needs related to COVID-19. The fund will support community-based organizations that are deeply trusted in neighborhoods, and will seek to increase vaccination rates throughout communities most disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

In addition to Philly Counts, the Health Department has been and will continue to participate in virtual town halls with trusted messengers and community leaders to provide them with opportunities to learn about the vaccine and distribution effort, ask questions, and hear directly from Health Department experts. These sessions end with a call-to-action to set up future town halls and one-on-one conversations to further the conversations in their communities. The Health Department is also actively holding and planning information sessions with community organizations and labor unions.

## Program Monitoring

### **VACCINE UPTAKE AND ACCEPTABILITY**

PDPH will monitor citywide vaccination rates through daily data reporting by providers into the City's PhilaVax database. Vaccination rates are publicly available on the [Philadelphia COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#).

### **EQUITABLE ACCESS TO VACCINE**

PDPH will continue to show data on disparities in vaccine uptake on its online dashboard and adjust distribution methods to ensure vaccine access among communities of color.

### **VACCINE SAFETY**

Several mechanisms are in place to monitor vaccine safety. Adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination can be reported to CDC's Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS may be contacted directly, or adverse event reports can be called in to PDPH staff, who will assist with filing the VAERS report. In addition, all persons who receive COVID-19 vaccine are being encouraged to enroll in CDC's V-safe program, a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after vaccination. [Early data](#) compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through these reporting mechanisms demonstrate the safety of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

### **COMPLAINT PROCESS**

PDPH, in partnership with 311, Philadelphia Commission on Human Rights (PCHR), the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD), and OEM, has developed a multi-tier customer service and complaint process that promotes the identification and resolution of individuals needing assistance, but recognizes the need to capture complaints and use them to improve vaccine clinic operations. Individuals are encouraged to seek out staff for assistance and, if necessary, file a complaint. Complaints may be presented in-person to the Vaccine Clinic Manager or communicated via telephone to 311. PDPH receives and tracks complaints from 311. Individuals that believe they have experienced discrimination should contact PCHR. Individuals with disabilities that believe they have been discriminated against may file a complaint with MOPD.

## Conclusions

Although COVID-19 vaccines have been available in Philadelphia since mid-December, the vaccination initiative is still in its early stages. There remains much uncertainty about the vaccines that will be approved for use, the number of doses that will be made available to the city, and the timing of receipt of those doses. Nonetheless, current best estimates are that enough vaccines will be available to offer vaccination to every Philadelphia adult by early summer 2021. The City's mechanisms to deliver those vaccines will continue to change to meet the changing situation. With this plan, there is reason to be optimistic that by late summer, enough Philadelphia residents will be vaccinated to prevent much of the transmission of COVID-19, and to do so in a way that protects the city's most vulnerable residents and achieves racial equity in vaccination.