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North Country Responds: Regional COVID19 Update 1/22/21

What happened last week:

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC), the North Country's Regional Public Health Network, is committed to providing the community with regular updates.

The State of New Hampshire opened COVID-19 vaccination eligibility to residents who qualify under Phase 1B, beginning Tuesday, January 26th. In this next phase of the vaccine roll out, 1B includes individuals age 65 and older and those who are medically vulnerable.

If you're 65 or older, you are automatically included in 1B and don't need a referral. If you think you medically qualify for this phase, contact your primary care provider (PCP) to assess your medical conditions and get a referral. Caregivers to someone who is UNDER 16 AND medically vulnerable are also eligible. Don't have a PCP but need a referral? Call 2-1-1. They will have a list of contracted providers in your area who can work with you to certify your medical vulnerabilities. Also, only New Hampshire residents will be vaccinated in NH. According to NH Division of Public Health, "Non-New Hampshire residents are NOT able to be vaccinated in New Hampshire vaccination clinics unless that person is an employee of a business or organization in New Hampshire that is prioritized for vaccination (i.e. healthcare worker, first responder, correctional facility staff, or working in a residential facility for persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities). Non-New Hampshire residents should seek vaccination through their own respective state processes."

While Phase 1B has started, the work to vaccinate individuals eligible for vaccines in Phase 1A continues. In the North Country, regional sites operated by Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital & 45th Parallel EMS, Woodsville EMS, Gorham Fire & EMS, and Ammonoosuc Community Health Services were held this week to provide vaccines to the high-risk health workers and first responders of this initial Phase.

What you need to know:

If you fall under Phase 1B, you can register for a vaccine appointment by going online to vaccines.nh.gov starting Friday, January 22. Those without internet access can call 2-1-1 to register. At the time of registration, you will be prompted to select a location, date, and time for your first vaccine dose. You will be able to use the same process to schedule your final appointment for your second dose after you have gotten the first. Where can you schedule your vaccine appointment? There is a fixed clinic run by the State and staffed by the National Guard at the National Guard Armory in Littleton, which will be available for appointments on select days. Alternately, partners across the region in Berlin, Colebrook, Lancaster, Littleton, and Woodsville have agreed to partner with the State for this effort. A confirmed list of vaccination sites is still being developed. Having participation from North Country partners ensures access to the COVID vaccine throughout New Hampshire's largest public health region, which covers over 3000 square miles of the state.

How do you determine if you qualify for vaccination under Phase 1B? Visit the Vaccine Phase Check available at vaccines.nh.gov - this online tool will walk you through several screening questions to identify your eligibility for phase 1B. If you don't meet that criteria, it will provide information about the correct phase for your situation.

In addition to residents who are 65 and older, 1B includes people with two or more of the following underlying medical conditions: Cancer, Chronic Kidney Disease, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), Down Syndrome, Heart Conditions,



Immunocompromised states, Obesity, Pregnancy, Sickle cell disease, Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus. Additionally, family caregivers for medically vulnerable individuals under age 16, people with developmental disabilities that receive services in a congregate residential setting and staff members for these settings, and corrections officers and staff are eligible in 1B.

What else? Patience is the key. Although vaccination for 1B is open now, please be patient in the coming weeks if you qualify and are looking to get vaccinated in this phase. Local clinic sites are still working to get their processes up and running under State guidance. From week to week, clinics may also be operating with limited available vaccines as supply moves from the national level into the state. This means your appointment may be several weeks out from the time you registered. However, know that anyone in Phase 1B who wants the vaccine will get one. As more information becomes available, North Country Public Health Network partners will be working closely to get the word out. Check the North Country Health Consortium's website and Facebook page for local vaccine updates, in addition to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and NH.gov for the latest information on COVID-19 and the COVID vaccination plans.

Shoutout to partners:

NCHC would like to recognize Caption Chad Miller of the Littleton Fire Department who serves as the Logistics Planning Chief on the North Country COVID Response Incident Command. Each week, he Coordinates with NCHC to receive vaccine allocations for the North Country Public Health Network. Maintaining cold chain management of vaccines, Miller is responsible for delivering doses requested by each North Country clinic to ensure that they have what they need to vaccinate Phase 1A individuals.

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) is a non-profit public health organization based in Littleton that collaborates with health and human services providers serving

northern New Hampshire. Please direct any questions regarding the regional response to COVID-19 to COVID19@NCHCNH.org.

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Captain Chad Miller of the Littleton Fire Department has been a key player in the North Country's COVID-19 Response. Serving as the Logistics Planning Chief on the North Country's Unified Command, Miller has been responsible for delivering vaccine doses across the region to ensure clinics have what they need to vaccinate 1A individuals. As a Fire Fighter EMT-Paramedic, Captain Miller is pictured at a COVID vaccine clinic held at his Fire Station where he also assumed a vaccinator role.