



January 18, 2021

Dear Greater Portland Health Community:

The next step in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic is to get vaccinated. Wearing a mask and social distancing are ways to prevent you from spreading the virus to others, but getting the vaccine will provide protection for yourself. Despite the expedited approval process, the vaccines by both Pfizer and Moderna are safe for administration. Both vaccines had to undergo multiple phases of testing by the FDA before being authorized for public use.

Greater Portland Health is following the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Maine Department of Health and Human Services for the order in which groups should receive available vaccine based on risk. **Phase 1a**, includes health care professionals, residents of long-term care facilities, other emergency first responders and public safety personnel (i.e. firefighters, police, other law enforcement officers, corrections officers among others), and critical COVID-19 response personnel.

**Phase 1b** which includes:

- Those who are 70 years old or older.
  - After a significant number of people 70 and older have been vaccinated, or if the supply of vaccines increases, Maine will move to vaccinate those between the ages of 65-69.
- Adults with high-risk medical conditions.
- Frontline essential workers (details to be determined by the State of Maine in the coming weeks).

Maine is currently in **Phase 1a** but the State of Maine has recently recommended offering vaccination to adults over 70 years of age starting January 18<sup>th</sup>. Depending on vaccine supply, the State expects we will move fully into **Phase 1b** in February.

Following the completion of Phase 1b, **Phase 1c** will include other critical workers and **Phase 2** will include people ages 16 to 64 who were not otherwise eligible during a previous phase. It is predicted that Phases 1c and 2 will take place during spring and summer of 2021.

We are working hard to plan vaccine clinics for our patients and will be able to offer appointments once we have received supply to be able to do so. Our ability to schedule your appointment is dependent upon the eligibility requirements as well as availability of vaccine supply. Please consider these phases before calling Greater Portland Health to inquire if you are

eligible for a vaccine so that our phone lines remain available for those needing medical care. Please check our website (<http://www.greaterportlandhealth.org/services/coronavirus-covid-19-information>) and social media pages which we will update with information about the availability of COVID vaccine. We also recommend the [Maine CDC website](#) for more details on the State's vaccine administration process.

Most everyone is medically eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine per the Federal CDC guidelines. The only persons who will NOT be offered a vaccine, are those with a previous allergic reaction to any prior COVID-19 vaccine, or those with active COVID-19 infection.

There will be no out-of-pocket costs for the vaccine as it was purchased with United States taxpayer dollars and is covered by the federal Provider Relief Fund. If you have insurance coverage, there is an administration fee that will be charged.

Please continue to follow all precautionary recommendations such as wearing a mask in public, washing your hands and social distancing so that you mitigate your risk of contracting COVID-19. We are hopeful that there are brighter days ahead given the exciting scientific achievements of the approved vaccines. Please stay well and take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Sincerely,

Renee Fay-LeBlanc, MD  
Chief Medical Officer