

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

The following information is provided to help partners communicate accurate and timely information to constituents. This information is subject to change as Virginia continues to refine the vaccination effort. Visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine) for more information.

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## What's New This Week

The [Vaccine Summary Dashboard](#) continues to show Virginia's significant progress in vaccinations, with **more than 1.6 million doses administered**. Although last week's severe winter weather delayed vaccine shipments to Virginia, **more than 9 in 10 of available first doses have been administered**. (It is important to note that the number of doses shown as being "received" by hospitals and local health districts does not account for the doses they then redistribute to other partners such as physicians and pharmacies.)

The **statewide vaccine pre-registration system** at [vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://vaccinate.virginia.gov) has received more than 518,000 pre-registrations since its launch on February 15. Including individuals who pre-registered through local health districts in the past, the new system now includes nearly 1.7 million residents and essential workers. **All individuals who have previously filled out a survey or form or signed up for a waitlist to be vaccinated through their local health district have been automatically imported into the new statewide system and do not need to pre-register again.** As data migration continues, some pre-registrations may not yet appear in the search tool. Anyone who experiences difficulties with the search function should check the spelling of their name and email address carefully and consider whether they may have used a different name, phone number, or email address in the past. Anyone with questions should call 877-VAX-IN-VA rather than their local health district. A [public information toolkit](#) is available to assist local health districts, localities, and community partners with graphics, talking points, frequently asked questions, and other materials.

The new central Vaccinate Virginia phone number, **877-VAX-IN-VA** (877-829-4682), has received more than 115,000 calls so far, and is available seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Service is available immediately in **English and Spanish**, with real-time interpreter services available in any of more than 100 languages as needed.

**Based on our population, Virginia is now receiving approximately 161,000 doses per week from the federal government. There are still simply not enough doses available yet for everyone who is eligible to receive them. Virginia is not likely to meet the demand for Phase 1b until March or April. Unfortunately, it may be weeks or longer before vaccination appointments become available for those who have pre-registered.**

As part of a **federal retail pharmacy program**, 140 pharmacy locations in Virginia are now receiving a total of 52,000 new first doses per week beyond Virginia's normal allocation. Participating locations include CVS, Food City, Giant, Kroger/Harris Teeter,

Safeway, Walgreens, Walmart, and multiple independent community pharmacies. The Commonwealth is working with these pharmacies to ensure that as many appointments as possible are offered first to people age 65 and older who are currently on local health district waitlists, rather than accepting new signups from the general public. Unfortunately, CVS has been unable to find a way to do this within the technical limits of their appointment system. Anyone 65 or older can check [cvs.com](https://www.cvs.com) regularly as appointments become available.

Governor Northam has [amended Executive Order 72](#) to **expand opportunities for outdoor activities** in light of improving COVID-19 case statistics. While **limits on indoor gatherings remain the same** (including a limit of 10 people at indoor social gatherings), the limit on outdoor social gatherings and exercise groups will increase to 25 people and the limit on outdoor racetrack and amusement venues will increase to 1,000 people. The amended order removes the stay-at-home order from midnight to 5 a.m. and extends the cutoff time for alcohol sales in restaurant dining rooms from 10 p.m. to midnight. These amendments, which will be effective March 1, follow the recent amendment in effect as of February 22 to increase the capacity limit for outdoor recreational sporting events to 250 spectators. Summer camps will be able to open as of May 1, using strict mitigation protocols such as small cohorts of campers. Today's [news release](#), detailed [guidelines](#), and [frequently asked questions](#) about Executive Order 72 are also available.

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## Key Overview Points

The doses Virginia receives from the federal government are **allocated by the Virginia Department of Health to local health districts**, primarily in proportion to each district's population. Local health districts are expected to determine the most equitable and efficient use of each allocation, leveraging any combination of their own staff and volunteers, hospitals, pharmacies, and individual providers. Additional doses help support targeted equity initiatives. Other doses reach some residents of Virginia through separate federal allocations for employees of the U.S. Department of Defense and certain other agencies; the Indian Health Service; and a federal contract to vaccinate residents of long-term care facilities.

**All local health districts in Virginia are in [Phase 1b of vaccine eligibility](#).** This means that approximately 50% of Virginia's population is now eligible, including frontline essential workers, people aged 65 years and older, people with high-risk medical conditions identified by the CDC, and people living in correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and migrant labor camps. Other than the healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities in Phase 1a, the Virginians in Phase 1b are at the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 or serious illness if infected.

While local health districts are allowed flexibility in how doses are administered to eligible individuals, **roughly half of the available supply should be used for people aged 65 or older.** The other half should be used for frontline essential workers, people with high-risk medical conditions as [identified by the CDC](#); and people in correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and migrant labor camps. Frontline essential workers should be prioritized in the order listed in the [Phase 1b details](#).

**Anyone who receives the first dose of vaccine will receive the second dose three or four weeks later as appropriate.** Vaccine providers should not hold back their current first dose supply for second doses; they will receive second doses in proportion to the first doses they administer.

[Executive Order 72](#) maintains the 10-person limit on social gatherings, the requirement to wear masks in public places, guidelines for businesses, and other provisions. It is essential to continue these mitigation strategies even by people who are vaccinated.

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## How Localities Can Help

**Support local health departments** by ensuring that pre-registration options through [vaccinate.virginia.gov](https://vaccinate.virginia.gov) and 877-VAX-IN-VA are promoted through local websites and other channels.

Emphasize to the public that because approximately 50% of Virginia residents are now eligible to be vaccinated, the limited supply of vaccine from the federal government means **it will take weeks or longer to complete Phase 1b** unless supply improves.

Closely coordinate with local health districts to **plan smaller vaccination clinics now and larger ones once supply improves**. Pooling venues, staff, volunteers, and other resources now will avoid delays later.

Remind everyone in the community that **it is more important than ever to take the same precautions as always**: staying home when possible, wearing masks when out, maintaining physical distance from others, washing hands frequently, and other best practices.

Remind everyone to **always look for websites that end with “.gov”** to make sure the information is official. When a vaccine appointment becomes available through a local health district, there will be no charge. State and local agencies will never call, email or text to ask someone for a social security number or immigration status in connection with vaccination.

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