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Northampton Approved As Regional Vaccination Site

City of Northampton and Town of Amherst join forces to distribute up to 5,000 vaccinations per week

NORTHAMPTON - Today, Mayor David J. Narkewicz announced that the Northampton Health Department has been approved as the lead community in a regional collaboration with the Town of Amherst to distribute COVID-19 vaccine to eligible Massachusetts residents. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) will provide about 5,000 coronavirus vaccines a week to the region. Both the Northampton and the Amherst sites will be operating five days per week. The Northampton site will be at the Northampton Senior Center, 67 Conz Street, and Amherst will be operating at the Bangs Community Center, 70 Boltwood Walk. Both sites are open to all Massachusetts residents eligible to receive the vaccine.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts continues to work to provide the COVID-19 vaccine efficiently and equitably. The State's plan - implemented due to limited supply from the Federal government - prioritized vaccine shipments to high-throughput vaccination locations, such as the state-run mass vaccination sites, regional collaboratives, and retail pharmacy sites.

In support of this effort, Northampton and Amherst have been selected as a regional collaborative.

"I'm incredibly proud that Northampton has met the requirements necessary to be selected as a regional collaborative for vaccine distribution. We are proud to have a strong partner in the Town of Amherst to accomplish our mission as fast as possible," shared Mayor David Narkewicz, "It is a testament to our outstanding Health Department, Fire/Rescue Department, and Senior Center for their dedicated teamwork. I want to publicly commend Health Director Merridith O'Leary for her leadership throughout the pandemic on behalf of the people of Northampton."

Northampton Department of Health Director Merridith O'Leary added, *"I'm proud that Northampton has been chosen to fulfill this critical role for the people of Hampshire County. We take our responsibility very seriously as we work to get everyone vaccinated and get all our lives back to normal."*

The Northampton Health Department, with support from the Amherst Health Department, submitted an application to the State summarizing its regional vaccination site plans. Given the receipt of sufficient vaccination supply as planned, the two sites will be operational the week of March 1st.

“We are confident that this joint effort will result in more people getting vaccinated, faster,” said Paul Bockelman, Town Manager of Amherst. “We have a longstanding relationship with Northampton in regional coordination on many fronts that ensures our residents receive excellent services. I credit the leadership of the Northampton and Amherst Health Departments for making a compelling case to the State for designation as a regional site.”

The City of Northampton will be the lead community and will hold clinics five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday, with a minimum number of 840 vaccines distributed per day. The Town of Amherst will serve as a satellite clinic under the auspice of Northampton's Regional Vaccine Site and will also operate 4-5 clinics per week with exact days to be determined, offering 250 vaccines given per day depending on the availability. Together, Northampton and Amherst will be able to distribute a minimum of 5,000 doses, each week, as long as the sites receive the vaccine.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established a phased approach to vaccine distribution. Under this system, Massachusetts is currently open to everyone who qualifies for Phase One and Phase Two; Group 1 and Group 2. The Northampton Health Department will be supporting COVID-19 vaccination efforts through Phase 3. At this time, we have available appointments for:

Phase One:

- Clinical and non-clinical health care workers doing direct and COVID-facing care
- Long term care facilities, rest homes, and assisted living facilities
- First responders
- Congregate care settings
- Home-based health care workers
- Health care workers doing non-COVID-facing care

Phase Two:

- Group 1: Individuals age 75 and older
- Group 2: Individuals age 65+, individuals with 2+ certain medical conditions, and/or residents and staff of low income and affordable senior housing.

At this time, no other groups or phases have been approved by the Commonwealth for vaccinations. The Northampton and Amherst will vaccinate all phases and groups as guided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health vaccine distribution timeline.

Register online here:

- Northampton: www.northamptonma.gov/vaccineclinics
- Amherst: www.amherstcovid19.org/vaccine
- If you do not have access to the internet or need assistance with registration, call 211. There may be delays in response as call volume is substantial.

The Health Departments continue to respectfully ask:

- Please, do not come to the vaccination site unless you have a valid appointment.
- Please only come to the clinic for “waitlist” doses if a Health Department Official has contacted you individually.
- Please only believe or share information about the vaccination process that comes directly from the Northampton or Amherst Health Department.

Privacy laws dictate that the Northampton-Amherst Health Departments, its Directors, and its employees must not discuss specific cases of vaccine distribution with the public. No person should share private details or circumstances about their own or other’s health care experiences with people outside their immediate family unless given express permission to do so in writing.