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Gov. Wolf: Pennsylvania has Reached a Milestone in Its Plan to Vaccinate Seniors in Care

Harrisburg, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today marked a milestone in the implementation of the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan with the announcement that more than 600 skilled nursing facilities have received first and second doses of the vaccine, and in total more than 315,000 doses of vaccine administered among all long-term care facilities being vaccinated by CVS and Walgreens.

"This is an important milestone for Pennsylvania, and it marks key progress in ensuring that our most vulnerable residents have access to a vaccine," Gov. Wolf said. "Skilled nursing, personal care, and assisted living facilities have been hit hard by the pandemic, which is why this milestone is such an important one for us to recognize – because it shows how far we have come in protecting our most vulnerable residents."

Pennsylvania's most vulnerable are among those prioritized in Phase 1A of the state's COVID-19 vaccine plan and the state has made a commitment to ensuring its skilled nursing and other long-term care facilities receive adequate vaccine supply to protect residents and staff.

The vaccination milestone is part of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership program in which CVS and Walgreens are Pennsylvania's partners. CVS Health district leader Andreas Chandra joined the governor today, along with Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam and Senior Advisor for the state's COVID response, Lindsey Mauldin.

"Alongside many of my colleagues at CVS Health, I have had the responsibility – and privilege – of providing vaccinations in long-term care facilities in the Commonwealth to our most vulnerable populations. I am proud of our role in helping to vaccinate seniors against COVID-19, bringing peace of mind to patients, loved ones and the larger community," said Chandra.

Acting Sec. Beam expanded on the plans for continued protection of seniors in care.

"We are not finished with the long-term care vaccination mission," Beam said "In fact, each facility will have at least three vaccination clinics so we can ensure that as many residents and staff who want to get vaccinated have the opportunity. This way, if someone declined the vaccine in the first or second opportunity, they'll have another chance."

Beam explained that this is just the first part of the long-term care vaccination mission and, going forward, the state seeks to maintain vaccination levels at all facilities by ensuring that new residents and staff can get vaccinated right away.

Regarding the shortage of second doses and the latest delivery delays caused by weather, Beam reassured Pennsylvanians that second doses will be available and providers are receiving daily updates on the status of deliveries and guidance from the department.

Senior Advisor Mauldin provided the latest vaccine numbers and the number of Pennsylvanians using the Your Turn tool introduced on Feb. 9.

“So far more than 180,000 people have registered by providing their contact information in the Your Turn tool,” Mauldin said. “In addition to finding out when it is your turn to get a vaccine, the Your Turn tool allows people to register to receive updates about vaccine distribution and allows the department to let you know when it is your turn to get vaccinated. We are also looking to add more functionality to this important resource soon.”

Senior Advisor Mauldin also provided an update on the Pennsylvania Vaccination Program.

Through February 22, local vaccine providers have administered 2,034,123 doses of vaccine. Eighty percent of first doses have been administered (1,474,479 administered of 1,836,065 allocated) and 42 percent of second doses have been administered (559,644 administered of 1,336,835 allocated). 1,474,479 million Pennsylvanians have received their first dose, and 559,644 people have received both doses and are now fully vaccinated.

This week, Pennsylvania has been allocated 225,890 first doses of vaccine. That is the highest single-week allotment of first doses Pennsylvania has received so far. It is an increase of more than 42,000 doses. Pennsylvania has been allocated 180,610 second doses of vaccine which is an increase of nearly 40,000 second doses.

“I know that the wait for more vaccine to be made available is long and hard for many Pennsylvanians, but we are making good progress vaccinating the most vulnerable among us, and the sooner we can reach these milestones, the sooner we can make vaccine available to Pennsylvanians who fall into the next phase of vaccine distribution,” Gov. Wolf said.

“The progress we are making with the vaccine gives us all hope for a brighter future. We will continue to evaluate our vaccine distribution process to make it work better for Pennsylvanians and we will keep working toward important vaccination milestones, like this one. Together, we will see that hope for a brighter future come to pass.”

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