

Executive Summary - DRAFT

October 26, 2020

Introduction

The State of Rhode Island is currently planning and preparing for its coming campaign to vaccinate Rhode Islanders against COVID-19. To date, this effort has sought to build on previous successful vaccination campaigns and leverage a robust whole-of-government emergency management infrastructure established in response to COVID-19. Through its COVID-19 vaccination campaign, Rhode Island aims to protect human life, safely speed up the reopening of the State's economy, and equitably distribute vaccines through accessible points of dispensing. Ultimately, the State is focused on successfully mitigating the spread of morbidity and mortality by the SARS-CoV-2 virus through effective and efficient mass vaccination strategies that equitably ensure universal access to vaccine, while strategically prioritizing distribution, in light of anticipated limited supply of the vaccine, toward the most critical and high-risk populations first.

Highlighted COVID-19 Vaccination Plan Sections:

Section 3: Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination

Rhode Island's COVID-19 mass vaccination campaign will be conducted in three main phases:

- **Phase 1**, during which limited vaccine doses are available
 - o Phase 1A will focus on high-risk healthcare workers and first responders
 - o Phase 1B will broaden focus to include people with significant comorbid conditions and older adults in congregate or overcrowded settings
- **Phase 2**, during which large numbers of vaccine doses are available and likely to meet demand
 - o Phase 2 will focus on K-12 teachers, school staff, and childcare providers; critical workers in high-risk settings; people with moderate comorbid conditions; people in homeless shelters or group homes and staff; incarcerated or detained people and facility staff; all older adults
- **Phase 3**, during which there is sufficient supply of vaccine and demand slows
 - o Phase 3 will prioritize young adults; children; workers in industries important to the functioning of society

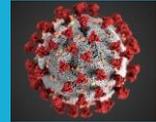
Strategies to administer vaccines during each of these phases will vary based on the populations being prioritized and the type and supply of available vaccine, ranging from the use of Closed Points of Dispensing inside healthcare facilities to those which serve only predefined populations from throughout communities (e.g., first responders, home health employees). The State of Rhode Island will also coordinate with pharmacies contracted by the federal government to vaccinate long-term care and assisted living residents. As vaccine supply increases, Rhode Island will have increased flexibility to expand vaccine availability to targeted populations (and ultimately the general public) through additional strategies, including directly through healthcare providers (e.g., primary care physicians).

Please note: Rhode Island is currently engaging a group of local experts and community members to further refine the critical populations groups anticipated for prioritization by phase. The above groupings are still subject to change and/or refinement (see more below).

Section 4: Critical Populations

The State of Rhode Island is currently working to identify the critical populations that will be prioritized in each of the vaccination phases above. This effort involves a high degree of coordination with a variety of key stakeholders, including healthcare facilities and organizations, community organizations, and others. Further, a subcommittee of Rhode Island's Vaccine Advisory Committee has been established to

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provide guidance to the Rhode Island Department of Health's decision-making process regarding vaccine allocations among critical populations in each of the phases.

Section 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

Because the COVID-19 vaccines are new and some have unique storage, handling, and preparation requirements, and because of increased data-reporting requirements related to the use of a new vaccine, additional work is underway to ensure that vaccine providers have the necessary guidance, training, and infrastructure in place to safely, effectively, and efficiently vaccinate Rhode Islanders.

Section 8: COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

As noted above, some of the current COVID-19 vaccine candidates have unique storage and handling requirements, such as ultra-low temperature storage. In general, ultra-low temperature freezers, which cool to as low as -85 degrees Celsius, are not abundant in most communities in the US; this is also true in Rhode Island. The State of Rhode Island is therefore working to ensure that it was full awareness of what ultra-low temperature storage does exist in the state, as well as to augment that capacity by securing dry-ice supply, additional ultra-low temperature freezers, etc. Rhode Island will ensure that vaccine providers are made appropriately aware of each vaccine's storage and handling requirements.

Section 10: COVID-19 Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders

At least two current COVID-19 vaccine candidates are two-dose series. Further, it is essential that recipients of an initial dose of these vaccines receive that same vaccine for the second dose. The State of Rhode Island is therefore working to ensure that electronic systems that record vaccine dose administration can be leveraged to support other systems that will be used to issue second-dose appointment reminders through a variety of routes, such as phone call, SMS/text, and email.

Section 12: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication

Starting before COVID-19 vaccines are available, clear, effective communication will be critical to maximizing vaccine uptake in Rhode Island. Building vaccine confidence broadly and among groups anticipated to receive early vaccination, as well as dispelling vaccine misinformation, are critical to this effort. Throughout the vaccination campaign, public messaging will rely on established and sound crisis and emergency risk communication strategies, CLAS and cultural competency standards. As vaccines become available, targeted communications strategies will be employed to reach critical populations; these strategies will be continually evaluated and adapted throughout all three phases as critical populations shift in priority and lessons are learned. Throughout the entire campaign, Rhode Island will strive for the utmost transparency, accuracy, and relevancy in its public messaging.

Section 14: COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring

As with all vaccines, the State of Rhode Island will ensure both vaccine providers and vaccine recipients are aware and use the established Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System to report any adverse events resulting from vaccine administration.

Section 15: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monitoring

A variety of mechanisms will be used to monitor and evaluate Rhode Island's COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Specific focus will be made to ensure that critical populations targeted in each of the campaign's phases are effectively reached and vaccinated, and done so in an equitable fashion. As trends, gaps, strengths, and other data are collected and evaluated, Rhode Island will continually adapt its strategies to maximize their effectiveness and efficiency.