

**To:** Vermont Health Care Providers and Health Care Facilities

**From:** Vermont Department of Health

**Date:** December 24, 2020

**Re:** Phase 1A – Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccine

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Based on recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and Vermont’s Vaccine Implementation Advisory Committee, we recognize that all health care personnel in Vermont who have direct patient contact are at an increased risk of COVID-19 exposure. This includes those based in and outside of Vermont hospitals. Health care personnel are employed by a variety of organizations. To ensure equitable vaccine access for eligible health care personnel, vaccine distribution should be balanced between hospital-based and non-hospital-based personnel. If hospital-based personnel have been the primary recipients of vaccine to date, any newly scheduled clinics shall focus on vaccinating non-hospital-based personnel over the next few weeks, with a goal of distributing the vaccine equitably across settings going forward. Please note that those personnel who are exclusively seeing patients virtually do not meet the “direct patient contact” requirement to be eligible to receive vaccine in Phase 1A.

ACIP states that “health care personnel” is comprised of “clinical staff members, including nursing or medical assistants and support staff (e.g., those who work in food, environmental, and administrative services).”

The Vermont Vaccine Implementation Advisory Committee further specified that, in Vermont, “health care personnel” includes:

- Long-term care staff who have direct patient contact.
- Health care providers and staff (all classes including students and support personnel), primarily but not exclusively located in the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Units, providing care to patients with COVID-19.
- Emergency Medical Services personnel with direct patient contact.
- Home health care clinical staff and caregivers who have contact with multiple patients or who are high-risk for serious illness from COVID-19.
- Any other health care providers and staff who have patient contact.

The definition of staff includes all health care providers who enter the facility, regardless of who employs them, as well as ancillary staff. Family caregivers are not included in this definition.

All 14 Vermont hospitals are working diligently to provide COVID-19 vaccine to health care workers in their hospital-service area. The timeline for those efforts has shifted slightly, and the [December 18 Health Advisory](#) was updated today to direct non-hospital-based health care personnel to contact their local hospital directly if they do not hear from the hospital by **January 11, 2021**.