

Transylvania County COVID-19 Vaccination Update: 2/22/21

Supplies of the COVID-19 vaccine are limited, so it must be offered in phases. This vaccination campaign will take months, not weeks, but everyone will eventually have access to a tested, safe, and effective vaccine. Variables that will impact our vaccination plan include vaccine supply, ongoing demands with COVID-19 case surges, and the availability of personnel and resources to administer vaccines. In addition to vaccinating those in approved priority groups, public health staff are also busy responding to new COVID-19 cases, providing technical assistance and testing for ongoing outbreaks, and providing other public health duties as required by general statutes. We ask for patience as we navigate this process.



COVID-19 vaccine shipments across the nation were delayed by winter weather. Transylvania Public Health received the vaccines allocated for February 15 and 22 earlier than expected and will be able to offer additional vaccination appointments this week.

NCDHHS now allows providers to limit vaccine to people who reside, work, or spend significant time in North Carolina, but providers should not restrict vaccinations based on county of residence. Transylvania Public Health will begin screening appointments for a connection to North Carolina as well as age or work as a healthcare provider.

The 3 Ws have proven to be incredibly effective at protecting people. Be sure to keep practicing protection methods like mask-wearing, handwashing, social distancing, and avoiding groups until everyone has a chance to get the vaccine.

CURRENT PHASE – GROUP 1: Health Care Workers and Long-Term Care Staff and Residents & Group 2: Adults 65 years or older

Group 1 includes healthcare workers with direct patient contact and residents and staff of long-term care facilities. NCDHHS guidance clarifies that Group 1 includes home caregivers providing *regular medical care* to medically fragile children and adults. Group 2 includes anyone 65 years or older.

Transylvania Public Health will continue offering vaccines to people eligible in Groups 1 and 2 for now. It will take several more weeks to offer vaccine to everyone in this group.

FEBRUARY 24 – Group 3: Education and Childcare MARCH 10 – Group 3: Frontline Essential Workers

Group 3 includes frontline essential workers. Education workers include people of any age working as teachers, administrators, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other support staff in childcare and PreK-12 education settings. Other frontline essential workers include people of any age who must work in person and are employed in one of the following 8 sectors: education and childcare, critical manufacturing, essential goods, food and agriculture, government and community services, public health and social workers, public safety, and transportation.

NCDHHS will allow vaccine providers to begin offering vaccines to education and childcare workers on 2/24 and other frontline essential workers on 3/10, but **Transylvania Public Health will delay offering vaccines to this group for now.** A timeline for completing Group 3 will depend on vaccine supplies and the number of people who want a vaccine.

LATER – Group 4: Adults at High Risk for Exposure and Increased Risk of Severe Illness

Group 4 includes adults under age 64 with chronic health conditions increase the risk of severe illness from COVID-19, people in group living situations, and essential workers.

By the time we get to this group, we anticipate that vaccine supply will be more plentiful and options for vaccinations will be available in places like grocery stores and pharmacies.

VACCINE ENROLLMENT STEPS

Transylvania Public Health has been allocated 700 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine for the week of February 22. This includes 300 baseline doses plus an additional 400 doses based on our county's population 65 or older. This shipment has arrived ahead of schedule, so we will offer these vaccines this week.

New appointments will be offered on Thursday, February 25 and Friday, February 26 in Brevard. Vaccines will also be given on February 25 to people who were originally had appointments on February 19.

Appointments for these vaccines will be opened on Tuesday, February 23 at 11 am.

People who are eligible to receive the vaccine in Group 1 or Group 2 can make an appointment by phone (call 828-884-4007) or online at transylvaniahealth.org.

We will open more appointments on March 1, as more vaccine supplies are received.

Additional appointments will be scheduled week to week as more vaccine supplies are received. An appointment-based system will be necessary to avoid long lines and delays with limited vaccine supply. Vaccines will not be given without an appointment.



For more information and the latest vaccine updates, visit transylvaniahealth.org