



COVID-19 Update

Alabama Department of Public Health

February 22, 2021

Getting COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of Alabamians as quickly as possible is our goal.

ADPH is conducting clinics daily, including drive-through clinics in some counties. Limited vaccine remains the greatest challenge in Alabama and other states.

COVID-19 Cases—487,520

COVID-19 Deaths—9,592

COVID-19 Hospitalizations (as of February 21)—45,020

Beginning February 8, vaccine eligibility expanded to include phase 1b and people 65 years and older. The Alabama COVID-19 Vaccination Allocation Plan outlines the various phases, and is available here: www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19vaccine/assets/adph-covid19-vaccination-allocation-plan.pdf

Average 1st Doses of Vaccine Shipped to Alabama Per Week—90,000

Vaccine Doses Administered—768,331

Vaccine Doses Delivered to Alabama—1,035,475

Alabama Healthcare Providers Enrolled—1,094

B.1.1.7 Variant Update

As the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) continues to partner with private and commercial laboratories for sequencing to detect the B.1.1.7 strain (initially identified in the UK) of SARS-CoV-2, ADPH expects more cases of this highly transmissible variant to be identified within our state. ADPH now reports 22 total cases of B.1.1.7 throughout the state. Cases have been found in Autauga, Montgomery, Jefferson, Madison, Mobile, Elmore, and Crenshaw counties. At this time, many infectious disease experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have indicated that the current vaccines should be effective against the strain B.1.1.7. However, this is still being studied. Currently, the B.1.1.7 variant has not been definitively linked to worse outcomes of the disease. As this variant is recent to the United States, it is important to follow the outcome of persons infected with this variant. If a patient presents with recent taste or smell disorder, or clearly presents with COVID-19 illness, and tests negative for SARS-CoV-2, providers are asked to collect a specimen as soon as possible for submission to the ADPH Bureau of Clinical Laboratories or a laboratory that performs sequencing. ADPH advises the public to continue practicing the usual mitigation standards with emphasis on correct and consistent use of face masks of washable, breathable fabric such as cotton, practice social distancing, and wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

CDC Quarantine Guidance for Vaccinated Persons

The CDC recently made additional changes to quarantine guidance addressing whether persons fully vaccinated must continue to quarantine if exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. A health alert with updated ADPH COVID-19 non-healthcare isolation and quarantine guidance is available here: www.alabamapublichealth.gov/bcd/assets/adph_han_covid-19.non-healthcare.isolation.quarantine.guidance.updated_21.02.19.pdf

Federally Qualified Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program

The Federally Qualified Health Center program, a partnership between Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and CDC was launched to provide more vaccines for Community Health Centers that are reaching communities that are underserved and more vulnerable. Cahaba Medical Care

Foundation in Centreville, and Quality of Life Health Services, Inc. in Gadsden have been identified to start receiving federal allocations in Alabama.

Inclement Weather Vaccine Delays

Shipments of approximately 10,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses were delayed throughout the state last week. The shipment delays were due to inclement weather conditions, and have been a national issue, not just here in Alabama. There were no spoiled or lost doses, and vaccine is being reshipped by McKesson as weather permits. Even with weather delays, many county health department locations continued to operate over the weekend, and will have extended hours this week to provide second doses. ADPH expects shipments to pick back up this week so vaccine clinics are fully operational. All county health departments throughout the state are back open and operational today. The CDC states that if a delay occurs in the normal schedule for receiving a second dose of COVID-19 vaccine, the second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines may be administered up to 6 weeks (42 days) after the first dose.

Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has scheduled an advisory committee meeting for February 26 to discuss the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) application Johnson & Johnson submitted for its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine. We anticipate the Johnson & Johnson vaccine being approved soon after the meeting, joining the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine options. ADPH encourages the public not to vaccine shop, as all approved COVID-19 vaccines are excellent options.

Vaccine Distribution is a Difficult Balance

Public Health prioritizes some groups of people for COVID-19 vaccine based on the jobs they do and because we currently must ration this scarce resource. This is a difficult balance, and it is not necessarily the most equitable vaccine distribution. For example, healthy young people working in grocery stores might not experience severe coronavirus disease, but they might expose hundreds of others they encounter each day to infection. A person with underlying health conditions who is able to stay at home might be at higher risk of severe illness, but would not infect others. About one-third of the people in Alabama have chronic health conditions that put them at high risk for COVID-19. Once more vaccine is available, we hope to offer vaccine to everyone who wishes to have it. We know there are concerns, and appreciate everyone's understanding and cooperation.