

## Cuomo updates residents on state's vaccination distribution plan

FDA expected to authorize Pfizer vaccine this week; New York could receive initial allocation of 170,000 doses beginning this weekend

*Nursing home residents, nursing home staff and 'high-risk' hospital workers prioritized first*

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Wednesday updated New Yorkers on the state's vaccination distribution plan as the FDA is expected to authorize Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine this week. The state's vaccination distribution effort will focus on battling skepticism, include outreach to Black, brown and poor communities, as well as expedited distribution and administration. New York could receive its initial allocation of 170,000 vaccines as soon as this weekend, and expects further allocations in the following weeks.

"Distributing the vaccine is a massive undertaking. I think, frankly, people have not focused enough on the extent of what this undertaking means. I can't think of a government operation that has been commenced that is more difficult and intricate than what governments will be asked to do here," Cuomo said. "The way the vaccine is going to work is the federal government will be responsible for the procurement and the distribution. The military is doing the transportation with private companies, and they will send it where we ask them to send it. We then set the priorities for not only where it goes, but who gets it. The first allocation is for nursing home residents, nursing home staff and high-risk health care workers. We've identified 90 regional centers that can keep the vaccine at the required temperature and they'll act as distribution centers for that region. Pfizer's vaccine is expected to be approved by the FDA tomorrow. Immediately after that, our New York state panel will convene and review and approve it. They've already been speaking to the FDA about the process."

As outlined in New York's vaccination program, high-risk health care workers, nursing home residents and staff are prioritized first to receive the vaccine, followed by other long-term and congregate care staff and residents, and EMS and other health care workers. Essential workers and the general population, starting with those who are at highest risk, will be vaccinated after these initial priority groups.

New York has opted into the federal government's nursing home vaccination program. Under the federal program, employees of CVS and Walgreens will vaccinate residents and staff in these facilities, much like the do for the flu vaccine. New York will issue guidance for hospitals to select which patient-facing staff should be prioritized as "high-risk" in line with state rules.

If authorized by the FDA, the first delivery of Pfizer vaccines for the federal nursing home vaccination program could begin arriving next week, with the federal program slated to begin Dec. 21. New York is dedicating a portion of its initial allotment of 170,000 doses to this program. Portions of future state allocations will also be used to help complete the program and ensure all residents and staff are vaccinated.

"High-risk" hospital workers eli-

gible to receive a vaccination from the state's initial allotment include emergency room workers, ICU staff and pulmonary department staff. As part of the effort to vaccinate "high-risk" hospital staff, the state has identified 90 locations across the state with requisite cold storage capabilities, and those sites will receive enough doses for approximately 90,000 patient-facing hospital staff (40% of the entire patient-facing hospital workforce). The state expects all "high-risk" hospital staff will receive a vaccine by the end of week two. Staff at every hospital in New York, regardless of storage capabilities, will have access to the first allocation of a vaccine.

The vaccine will be allocated on a regional basis. Regional estimated distributions are as follows:

- ✓ New York City - 72,000
- ✓ Long Island - 26,500
- ✓ Mid-Hudson - 19,200
- ✓ Capital Region - 7,850
- ✓ North Country - 3,700
- ✓ Mohawk Valley - 4,200
- ✓ Central New York - 6,400
- ✓ Southern Tier - 4,500
- ✓ Finger Lakes - 11,150
- ✓ Western New York - 14,500

Following the vaccination of "high-risk" health care workers, the priority will shift to all long-term and congregate care residents and staff, EMS and other health care workers. Essential workers and the general population will follow those groups, and those with the highest risk will be prioritized.

Additionally, the New York National Guard has been selected by the Department of Defense as one of 16 pilot programs across the nation to be part of the limited distribution of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to military personnel. Members of the New York Army and Air National Guard who serve as part of the state's COVID-19 response efforts will be eligible for the vaccine.

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## Cuomo: Regions will shut down again if they can't control hospitalizations



At a press conference Monday morning, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci updated New Yorkers on the coronavirus spread. (Image courtesy of the Office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo)

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said New York restaurants will face harsher restrictions, and regions will go back on "PAUSE," if the coronavirus-related hospitalizations continue to rise.

"We are looking at hospitalization capacity. And if we don't get the rate under control, then you are going to overwhelm your hospitals. We will have to go back to shutdown," he said during a press conference Monday morning. "There are certain absolutes. What is the absolute here: You cannot overwhelm your hospitals. We can't be Italy. You can't overwhelm your hospitals. If you are at a rate that is going to overwhelm your hospitals, you must shut down - not just indoor dining shut down. Only essential businesses (will remain open).

"'Oh, we don't want to do that again.' Then change your behavior. But if we don't change our behavior, that is the absolute reality of the situation.

"'How can you talk about close down again? That was terrible.' Because it's the truth. ... You cannot overwhelm the hospitals.

"No state is better than we are at managing the hospital system. ... We will manage the hospital system as well as it can be managed. But, if you're going to overwhelm the hospital system, then we have no choice but to go to close down."

### What It All Means

Cuomo directed the New York State Department of Health to begin implementing the state's "surge and flex" protocol and mandate all hospitals begin expanding their bed capacity by 25% to further prepare hospitals for a future COVID-19 surge. Hospitals had previously been preparing plans for this action as part of New York's winter coronavirus plan. Additionally, the governor issued a call to all retired doctors and nurses urging them to return to service if they are able to do so.

"We are aware of staff resources. The staff comes into this stressed, right. They had - you want to talk about a long year - nurses, doctors, hospital workers, 1199 - they had the longest year of anyone. So they come

into this stressed," Cuomo said. "We're going to ask retired doctors and nurses to sign up and we will automatically reregister them in the state without cost. We believe we can get about another 20,000 nurses and doctors from this mechanism."

Registration will be renewed at no cost for an individual who completes the questionnaire through the volunteer portal, set up by the New York State Department of Health.

Cuomo also announced regions that reach critical hospital capacity will be designated as a "red zone" under New York's micro-cluster strategy. Specifically, following

*SEE FAUCI, continued on Page 5*

**2021 VACANCIES**  
**TOWN OF WHEATFIELD**  
As of January 1, 2021 vacancies will exist for the following positions:

- Town Historian
- Grant Writer
- Assessment Board of Review
- Town Prosecutor
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Town Attorney
- Planning Board
- Town Engineer
- Bingo Inspector
- Senior Citizen's Leader

**Please submit a letter of interest addressed to:**  
Kathleen Harrington-McDonell, Town Clerk  
Wheatfield Town Hall  
2800 Church Road  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120  
**Postmarked by December 21, 2020.**

*Sister & Brother Children's Apparel*  
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Regrettably, after 66 years, this business is permanently closed due to an Oil Spill that ruined the entire inventory. All display racks, counters and fixtures are for sale. The business name is also for sale. Please call **284-0264** for details. If you have an unused Due Bill or Gift Certificate please send a copy with your mailing address to:  
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Thank you for many years of support and friendship.

Sincerely,  
*Joanne Shaghoian*

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**Hidden causes of ill health**

Since World War II and the 1950's campaign "Better Living through Chemistry", the bodies of the ensuing generations have been bombarded with thousands of toxic chemicals and processed food resulting in an overall decline of health in our country.

One way we can decrease the toxic load is to avoid chemicals in the food we eat such as artificial colors/ flavors, preservatives, pesticides and artificial sweeteners. Another way is to use natural cleaners that do not have toxic petroleum products or chlorine in them.

Artificial fragrances in your home, body products, cleaning and laundry products have been linked to respiratory, hormonal, skin and nervous system conditions, just to name a few. Of the 5,000 different chemicals used in fragrance products, less than 20% have been tested and reported as toxic. Many of those chemicals that have been tested are regulated by the federal government as hazardous materials. The remaining chemicals have not been toxicity tested, so the health effects and regulatory potential are unknown.

A Rule of Thumb is "Never put anything on our body that you couldn't eat or drink safely." There are many safe, non-toxic cleaning and body products available now. Check your grocery or health food store or online. *Keep this in mind when gift giving this holiday season.*

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