

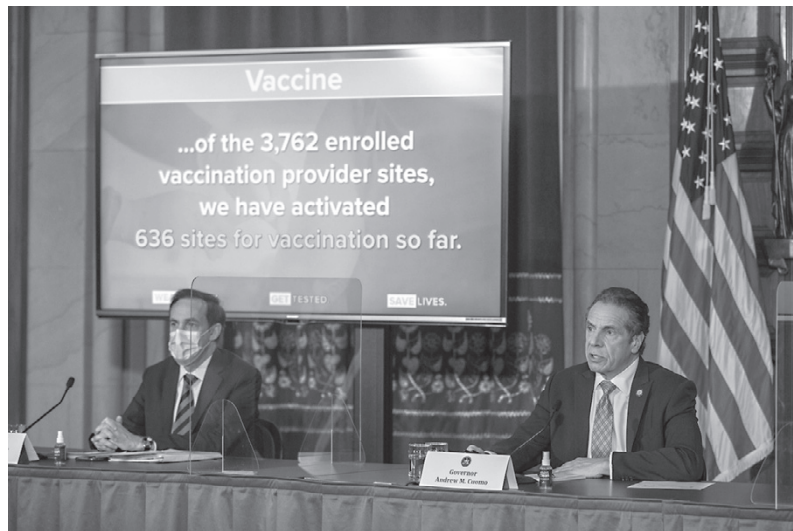
# Cuomo provides update on vaccinations

911,000 vaccines will be distributed to providers by end of week

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Tuesday updated New Yorkers on the state's COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts. By the end of this week, the state will have distributed approximately 911,000 first doses of the vaccine to providers for administration to eligible New Yorkers. Additionally, the governor announced that, to date, 3,762 providers have applied and been approved by the state to serve as vaccination sites. Currently, 636 locations are now activated and are able to begin vaccinating eligible New Yorkers.

To prepare for the next phase of eligibility, Cuomo is encouraging essential worker groups such as police departments, fire departments, educators and public transit organizations to begin developing plans to vaccinate their workforce. Plans would ease the burden on hospitals and other vaccination locations when the general public becomes eligible to receive a vaccine.

In addition, the governor renewed his call on the federal government to test all travelers from outside the U.S. His press release stated, "Despite the fact that the highly transmissible U.K. strain has been identified in 33 countries, as well as here in the state of New York, the federal government has yet to learn from mistakes made in the spring and mandate testing for international travelers entering the country."



Gov. Andrew Cuomo provides a coronavirus update from the Red Room at the State Capitol. To his right is New York Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. (Photo by Mike Groll/Office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo)

"The vaccine is the weapon that will win this war and we must move quickly and efficiently to get New Yorkers vaccinated as soon they become eligible," Cuomo said. "All health care workers can now receive the vaccine and the state is working around the clock to ensure resources are in place as more and more members of the general public become eligible to receive it. While these efforts are underway, the U.K. strain of the virus remains highly problematic – it is here and it could complicate matters further, as it is much more transmissible. Despite all of this,

the federal government continues its refusal to test all international travelers entering the country. Government is supposed to be competent, government leaders are supposed to be competent. We already saw this situation play out in the spring – have we learned nothing?"

New York is working to distribute vaccines to eligible groups "as fairly and expeditiously as possible." Work is also under way to prepare for widespread vaccination of the general public once allowable under state guidelines. As part of this work, New York has worked

with the public and private sectors across the state to develop a "retail network" of vaccination provider sites. Similar to operations for the annual distribution of the influenza vaccine and ongoing COVID-19 testing, these sites will help ensure access to the vaccine through multiple locations in each of the state's 10 regions. The network includes pharmacies, federally qualified health centers, local health departments, private urgent care clinics, private doctor networks, and other sites capable of vaccinations.

More sites continue to be added to the network every day.

In an effort to take preemptive steps to ensure this network of sites does not become immediately overwhelmed once the vaccine is available to the general public, the governor is encouraging essential worker groups such as police departments, fire departments, educators and public transit organizations to begin developing plans for their workforce, if possible. The press release noted, "The more groups of essential workers able to receive vaccines through internal distribution plans, the more availability there will be for those New Yorkers seeking the vaccine through the 'retail network.'"

To further bolster these plans, New York is continuing to move forward on a number of special efforts to ensure resources are in

place to facilitate widespread vaccination, especially in underserved communities. Pop-up vaccination centers will be established to facilitate public vaccinations. The state is also identifying public facilities and convention centers to also be used as vaccination centers. This includes the Javits Center, as well as SUNY and CUNY facilities. The state is also actively recruiting retired nurses, doctors and pharmacists to support vaccine administrations.

A main focus of these efforts is ensuring vaccine access in underserved communities and health care deserts. The state has already begun building community vaccination kits and working with public housing officials, churches and community centers to support these efforts and deploy kits to the appropriate locations. Each kit includes step-by-step instructions for how to set up a site, and critical supplies and equipment such as:

- ✓ Office supplies
- ✓ Workstation equipment
- ✓ Communications equipment
- ✓ Cleaning supplies
- ✓ Lighting equipment
- ✓ PPE
- ✓ Crowd/traffic control equipment
- ✓ Vials
- ✓ Syringes
- ✓ Room dividers
- ✓ Privacy curtains

## 6,700 to watch Bills play Colts

Continued from Page 1

nation to require these measures and, if successfully implemented, it could serve as a model for re-opening entertainment venues across New York."

"Bills fans have waited decades in order to attend a home play-off game and we have worked to build an innovative pilot program to make that happen safely," Cuomo said. "All season long, the Bills' stellar play has captured a certain energy and charisma that is undoubtedly infectious, but we all need to be smart. We're in control of our destiny and how we act is going to determine what comes next. So while this is a time for

excitement and celebration, it's critical that everyone follow the guidelines and practice the safe behaviors we know work. If everyone does their part, I believe this pilot will be successful."

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "Throughout this pandemic, Gov. Cuomo and the Department of Health have repeatedly researched and instituted metrics to help us manage the spread of this dangerous disease. The public health analysis from this pilot project will help us safely plan for future large gatherings and serve as a model for other states. Regardless of whether you attend in

person or not, we urge you to be safe and be smart."

Buffalo Bills' owners Kim and Terry Pegula said, "We know that fans have been waiting 25 years to be able to attend a home play-off game. We thank the governor and his entire team, and BioReference for working diligently with the Bills organization. We all know what needs to be done and we all need to do our part, so do the fans – please remember to be compliant, wear your mask and socially distance."

"Go Bills!" Under the plan, team staff will control all exit and entry points to the stadium and only fans with a documented negative COVID-19 test will be allowed inside. Testing will be conducted in partner-

ship with BioReference. Once inside the stadium, fans will be required to wear a mask at all times and adhere to strict social distancing protocols. Fans who refuse to comply with these protocols will be removed from the stadium. Ushers will also be present throughout the stadium to ensure all fans are in compliance.

As part of the state's review, personnel from the Department of Health traveled to other stadiums outside of New York where similar protocols are in place to confirm their effectiveness.

Tailgating remains banned under this plan and New Yorkers are being reminded to avoid gatherings and parties before, during and after the game as these events are "prime for viral spread."

With Democrats now poised to take control of the U.S. Senate, Cuomo said he would have to rewrite his State of the State address, which he will present Monday. As such, the governor – a Bills fan – said he couldn't attend the 1:05 p.m. game, which will be televised on CBS (WIVB-TV Channel 4).

"I'm going to give my Bills ticket to a nurse from Erie County Medical Center, ECMC, as a way of saying thank you and honoring all health care heroes, and I will be doing that; so I'll be here working on the State of the State, which will be a labor of love actually, because it's going to be better news, and we deserve better news," Cuomo said.

COVID-19 in the previous 10 days, and are 65 years of age or older or have other chronic medical conditions that could lead to hospitalization. The treatment is given intravenously by medical infusion.

"Monoclonal antibiotic therapy has been shown to prevent escalation of the disease in high-risk COVID-19 positive patients," said Thomas Cumbo, M.D., chief medical officer of Mount St. Mary's

Hospital. "Preventing hospitalization and disease progression in this patient population is so important, and this treatment is effective on both fronts."

The clinic has expanded treatment capacity, which is credited to the comprehensive efforts made to ensure all safety and quality protocols were exceeded prior to opening. Cumbo, who is also an infectious disease specialist, said he sees the clinic as an opportunity to enhance care in Niagara County and outside the region, and is confident the efforts will prove even more beneficial beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This clinic is just the beginning," he said. "As we continue to assess the health care needs of our community, our plan is to offer other infusion services that will improve public health while serving the residents of Niagara County close to home."

Patients with COVID-19 should contact their primary physician to discuss a referral to the clinic as an option in their treatment.

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### Mt. St. Mary's monoclonal antibody therapy clinic

Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston is opening Catholic Health's first monoclonal antibiotic therapy clinic for the treatment of COVID-19 this week. The outpatient clinic is designed for individuals who have tested positive for

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