

THE TRUSTEE

February 2021

VACCINATIONS—Hurry Up and Wait

As we await approval of the Johnson & Johnson one shot vaccine to join the Pfizer and Moderna two shots, the access to a timely vaccination will test your patience. The ability to receive and to fulfill an appointment depends on the vaccine supply. As expected, demands for vaccines have exceeded supply during the first months of the new year. In Ulster County, there are 72,000 residents eligible for inclusion in the 1b phase of frontline workers, including teachers, and now including persons aged 75+. With the addition of eligibility in phase 1c of persons aged 65-75 and those 16-64 with medical conditions and comorbidities, the numbers swell to over 120,000. In February, among the 72,000 Ulster County residents in group 1b, there were 36,000 applications for reservations. Despite the efforts of KRTF President Linda Monfette to set up priority vaccinations, beginning with retirees in age declining groups, and KTF President Lauri Naccarato to secure group vaccinations, the process was too conflicted and became an exercise in futility. When presented with these and other similar issues, the county executive, Pat Ryan, addressed the situation.

As of February 15, Ulster County has developed a plan to establish a pre-registration and prioritization list for all eligible residents. Over two-thirds of county residents are eligible for the vaccines, but the vaccine supply being allocated to the county has been between only 1500-1900 per week, so don't set your expectations too high. Here are the color coded realistic expectations for high risk priority group vaccinations for eligible Ulster County residents:

<u>RISK GROUP</u>	<u>ELIGIBILITY</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COMPLETION</u>
<u>RED</u>	75+ with a qualifying health condition.	
	1b essential workers with an underlying condition	<u>April</u>
<u>ORANGE</u>	65-74 with an underlying health condition and	
	essential workers without an underlying condition.	<u>June</u>
<u>YELLOW</u>	Adults with an underlying health condition and	
	65+ w/o qualifying health conditions.	<u>October</u>
<u>GREEN</u>	Any other priority group as directed by the NYSDOH	<u>TBD</u>

Adults over the age of 65 without a qualifying health condition should receive their vaccines at participating pharmacies or by making an appointment at a state operated vaccination site. A list of those pharmacies can be found at: <https://covid19.ulstercountyny.gov/get-vaccinated/>.

Residents looking to join the pre-registration list should sign up at: www.VaccinateUlstercounty.com

Residents who have already signed up will be provided information on their vaccination group and follow-up instructions within the coming days.

Members who reside in other localities other than Ulster County are directed to access the website of their local government health jurisdiction and/or contact local pharmacy chains in their localities.

In all cases, members should be checking on assisting other members who may be experiencing difficulties in navigating the system. Create your own KTF "Buddy List" with at least one member of a priority group. In Massachusetts, they extend shots to care givers who accompany a priority group member to their vaccination. Could your state follow suit?

According to the NYTimes, data shows about 10% of the NYS population, about two million people, have received the first dose. Nationwide, as of Valentine's Day, the CDC reports 50 million doses of vaccines have been administered. President Biden set a goal of 100 million doses administered in the first 100 days of his administration, so they are well ahead with the halfway point having been reached in the first 26 days.

The wild cards on the horizon are the virus variants. Scientists are discovering characteristics, such as how easily they are spread, whether they cause more severe illness, and whether existing vaccines will protect people. Some variants emerge and disappear, while others may persist. The UK variant (B.1.1.7) appears to spread more rapidly. There are 981 cases occurring in 37 states, including New York. The South African strain (B.1.351) is a mutation of the UK virus and 13 cases have been reported in five states (CA, NC, SC, VA, MD). The Brazilian variant (P.1) has been found among three residents of two states, Minnesota and Oklahoma. It contains a set of additional mutations that may affect its ability to be recognized by antibodies. In the meantime, continue to wear a mask, social distance, avoid large crowds, and wash your hands.

IN MEMORIAM: Lorraine Dart | Bill Yosh | Mae Rosalind Stark