

## **District 6 Virtual Town Hall Questions & Responses**

Thanks to all who joined me and Public Health – Seattle & King County Director Patty Hayes on Tuesday, January 26, 2021 for a virtual town hall to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and other COVID-related issues. I appreciated the thoughtful questions and feedback you provided.

The following in bold represents a summary compilation of the questions received prior to and during the virtual town hall. All bulleted responses were provided either in the meeting or as follow-up in consultation with the staff at Public Health – Seattle King County (Public Health).

### **I am eligible under the current phase but can't get an appointment. How do I get the vaccine?**

- For assistance, contact the COVID-19 assistance hotline at 1-800-525-0127, press #. They are open Monday-Friday 6am-10pm. The system needs more coordination to improve customer experience. Some healthcare providers have waiting lists up to 35,000 people. Public Health has looked at modelling that Microsoft and Starbucks have been doing to use a different approach for customer service so that people can more easily get from appointment to dose 1 to reminder to dose 2. Partnerships are emerging, like between Overlake and Microsoft, that will act as models.

### **How is the city/county/state making access to sign up easier for folks who don't have access to a computer (libraries closed) and/or they are too elderly to figure it out via technology (no computer, no email and/or no cell phone)?**

- King County is starting to work with organizations that have case managers who are working with isolated vulnerable adults to make sure we are in contact with those who are eligible. In addition, Community Living Connections is working with individuals to help them with Find Your Phase and to register for appointments.

### **Are there any plans for drive-through vaccine hubs?**

- One of the two high-volume testing sites that King County is standing up will be drive through. These testing sites will be in South King County.

### **I used the Phase Finder website and it placed me in Group 1B3. But I failed to give it a correct phone number to text me. Do I need to try to catch the Phase Finder website when it's actually working, and enter my date again with the correct number for text messages? I'm not sure what the best approach is to get a first dose, and like everyone else I'm concerned about the second dose. Can you help me determine a good next step to getting myself into a queue?**

- For questions about specific situations, contact the COVID-19 assistance hotline at 1-800-525-0127, press #. They are open Monday-Friday 6am-10pm.

**If you have a first injection scheduled, do we need to constantly log on to try to schedule the second, or will this be done by the facility at the time of the first?**

- Different providers are doing it differently. For example, the University of Washington (UW) is only scheduling after someone gets their first shot. But Seattle Visiting Nurses is scheduling both at the same time.

**Are providers holding back your second dose or putting all doses in arms now, awaiting further shipments for your second dose?**

- King County has accounted for second doses in how doses are being allocated to providers to ensure second doses are available.

**Will King County be tracking and sharing vaccination info by population and geography?**

- You can find a demographic summary of COVID vaccination, including breakdowns by zip code, race, and age, here: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/vaccination.aspx>

**Why doesn't the King County COVID tracker list the number of vaccine doses that have been delivered to King County?**

- You can find how many doses have been allocated to King County here: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/data/vaccination.aspx>. As of January 27, 252,350 doses have been allocated to King County.

**How many of the targeted 1.26 million have been vaccinated at least the first time as of today?**

- As of January 27, 168,005 people have received at least one dose.

**What is being done to ensure that the vaccine is free of the top 10 most common allergens, such as soy? How can we access a detailed ingredient list to ensure that the vaccine is safe for our loved ones who have severe/ life-threatening allergies?**

- The ingredients are listed here: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>

**Please let us know the policy for opting out in cases where we know it would be harmful to us.**

- It will be your choice whether to get the vaccine for COVID-19. Washington state is not currently considering any mandates for the vaccine, but employers could require it. Public Health recommends COVID-19 vaccination as a safe, effective, and important way to prevent COVID-19, decrease illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths due to COVID-19, and help to stop the current pandemic.

**As a caregiver in a Mexican American multi-generational household, I can say that information on vaccine availability is not necessarily getting out to our Latino households. More partnerships with community organizations in various languages is needed. What is the plan to educate and inform our Latino communities who have been hard-hit?**

- The Public Health's [Pandemic Advisory Committee](#) represents BIPOC communities and there is also a set of navigators for the Latino community. Public Health is producing materials in 23 languages and has also been doing radio interviews to get information out.

**The major medical systems don't seem to have of an actual comms plan. Our family is in Overlake, Swedish, UW, & Evergreen systems; with eligible folks in all 4. So far, only Evergreen has had a concrete plan of how they'll let their patient list know about the vax. Right now, it's a free for all, and providers have no idea how their patients will be getting information — I don't mean the vax itself, but info on the process. Do you have access to their comms plans that you can share?**

- Providers are sharing information with each other and talking with Public Health to improve communication with patients, but there is still a lot of work to do to improve the customer experience.

**How are priorities set?**

- A committee at the federal level that deals with vaccines made a set of recommendations to the CDC for priorities based on criteria such as who is the most vulnerable and how best to protect the healthcare system, both by vaccinating those who would end up in the healthcare system if they get COVID and healthcare workers themselves. The recommendations came to the state, who set the priorities.

**Correctional facilities are Petri dishes breeding cases that employees take out into the community. Will they receive priority?**

- Public Health provides healthcare services for county-run jail facilities so they are frontline health workers who would be in phase 1a. The county is also aggressively testing in county-run correctional facilities and have some of the lowest outbreak rates in the country. For correctional facilities under Department of Corrections, the state should be allocating doses directly to them.

**When will people experiencing homelessness be able to get vaccinated? What about people living on the street and in vehicles?**

- King County has set up five mobile teams who will vaccinate people experiencing homelessness. They are eligible in phase 1b – tier 4, or 1B4.

**There has been some controversy about teachers in the Bellevue School District being ordered back to work without being vaccinated. Do you know when most teachers may be able to get vaccines?**

- Teachers are currently in phase 1b - tier 2, or 1B2. That is the next tier that will open up as we get more doses.

**What if a family member in my household is eligible under a phase but I am not? Will I be vaccinated at the same time?**

- With the small allotment of vaccine we are currently receiving, it is unlikely the state will widen the phases to include family members who aren't in the same category.

**Why are there no walk-in clinics for seniors? Those over 80 likely cannot navigate online booking.**

- Public Health is working with community partners and navigators to close the digital divide. The Washington State Department of Health is staffing up their hotline to help people book appointments over the phone at 1-800-525-0127

**It took until December 15th to get a high-capacity testing facility on the Eastside. Will you prioritize East King County for services/vaccine locations in a timely way in the future?**

- Public Health is working with the private sector and community partners to stand up a vaccination site on the Eastside. Look for announcements in the coming weeks. In addition, Bellevue Fire Department is currently doing mobile visits to adult family homes to provide vaccinations.

**All the advertising about 1-B "Multigenerational families" should be clarified. I am 85 and my son, who has Parkinson's disease, but is still self-sufficient, lives with me. We were hoping he would get the vaccine since I am so vulnerable (and he is, too, as he also has COPD). Why is it only for someone over 50 who is caring for children other than their own?**

- These phases are set by the state, rather than by Public Health. You can provide feedback to the Washington State Department of Health at <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/opinio/s?s=DOHFeedback>

**Why the disparity between King County allocation of 25% of doses when we have 30% of state population?**

- Allocations to each county are set by the state. Public Health continues to ask for more doses.

**Is there a way to know when a particular hospital will receive shipments? My hospital has not been taking new reservations for the past several days.**

- Doses are allocated on a weekly basis, so please communicate with your provider about when they will be taking new appointments.

**What are the long-term side effects of the vaccine?**

- The vaccine is new, so we don't know long-term side effects, but the vaccine has gone through the rigorous required safety testing. You can find more information about vaccine safety here: <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19/vaccine/FAQ.aspx>