



COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ

Presented by

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1. Has the county completed the administration of vaccines to all of the frontline health care workers who are employees of Buncombe County, or for whom Buncombe County is responsible for providing vaccines, who are in the 1A Group?

- Phase 1a included health care workers critical to care of COVID-19 positive individuals
- Reached all that were eligible based on our provider lists
- About 50% have received vaccination prior to entering Phase 1b
- Frontline essential workers are included in Phase 1b Group 2&3



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2. For Buncombe County employees (or those for whom the county is responsible for administering vaccines) who work in a health care role, please describe what types of positions are in the 1A category compared to the 1B Group categories 2 and 3?

- Phase 1a includes:
 - Health care workers caring for and working directly with patients with COVID-19, including staff responsible for cleaning and maintenance in those areas, decedent care etc
 - Health care workers administering vaccine
 - Long-term care staff and residents—people in skilled nursing facilities and in adult, family and group homes
- Phase 1b Group 2 includes:
 - Health care workers and frontline essential workers 50 years or older*
 - * The CDC defines frontline essential workers as first responders (e.g., firefighters and police officers), corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers and support staff members) as well as child care workers
- Phase 1b Group 3 includes:
 - Health care workers and frontline essential workers of any age
- The NC DHHS Vaccine Prioritization Plan can be found at <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/NCDHHS-Vaccine-Infographic.pdf>



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3. Is it correct that that healthcare workers in 1B Group categories 2 and 3 will not be eligible to start receiving vaccines until most of the residents in 1B Group 1 (residents 75+ years of age) have received a vaccine?

- NC DHHS determines when new phases are opened
- There is not definitive date when we will move into additional phases



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4. Please list the organizations that will play a role in administering vaccines to residents in Buncombe County, such as Buncombe County, Mission Hospital, private pharmacies (is this limited to CVS and Walgreens or will there be others?), and private doctor's offices.

- NC DHHS initially rolled out vaccine provider enrollment to Hospitals and Local Health Departments only
- CVS and Walgreens are vaccine providers through the LTCF federal program – this is not a state program
- NC DHHS plans to enroll other provider types. This is in process and a few FQHCs in the state have been launched as providers BUT are not yet directly receiving vaccine.
- It is likely that in the coming weeks, more providers like FQHCs, urgent cares, primary care providers, etc will be enrolled.
- NC DHHS CVMS launched provider self-enrollment process with latest update



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5. Currently, the only agencies in the community that have received vaccines to administer are HCA (for the hospital staff), CVS (but only to fulfill contracts to vaccinate staff and residents of nursing homes), and Buncombe County (for our eligible health workers and now for residents 75+). Is that correct?

- Yes, currently in Buncombe County, HCA and the health department have received vaccine.
- CVS and Walgreens that are providing vaccine to the LTCF enrolled in the federal program have received vaccine. We have limited information about their rollout.



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6. Do the various organizations and businesses involved in administering vaccines each have a unique niche or demographic group they are focused on and, if so, please describe it.

Currently only HCA and the health department are receiving vaccine in Buncombe County.

Vaccinating providers follow the NC DHHS vaccine prioritization plan. Currently, vaccinating providers are administering to Phase 1a and Phase 1b Group 1 populations.

NC DHHS is actively enrolling other providers like FQHCs, urgent care, and primary providers. This may allow for vaccination in the medical home once providers receive vaccine.



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7. Do we have any information on when other organizations and businesses may also begin receiving shipments and will begin administering vaccines?

- NC DHHS prioritized hospital and local health departments as the first vaccine providers.
- NC DHHS is actively enrolling other providers like FQHCs, urgent care, and primary providers.
- There are a few FQHCs in the state that have been launched as vaccine providers but to our knowledge are not directly receiving vaccine at this time.
- A hospital or LHD may transfer vaccine to another enrolled provider if that provider is not receiving vaccine directly.



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8. The county population is 261,000. If the goal is to administer vaccines to approximately 90% of the residents of the county, a total of 234,000 people need to be vaccinated. Each person will need to receive two vaccines, for a total of 468,000 vaccines to be administered. Do we have an understanding of what percentage of those vaccinations Buncombe County government needs to plan to administer relative to the other organizations and businesses involved in this work, in order to ensure all vaccines delivered to our community are promptly and efficiently administered?

- Public Health Goal for 2021 is 70% vaccine uptake
 - Hesitancy rate hovers around 50% depending on population surveyed
- We can determine our rate of dispensing, but there are too many unknown variables to accurately determine at this time what percentage can be covered by other organizations:
 - At what rate Federal supply to state will expand?
 - State schedule for advancing through phases?
 - How many community providers will enroll and receive vaccine and in what quantities?
 - To what degree can HCA System support the community?



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9. There are, I believe, seven CVS stores and six Walgreens stores in Buncombe County. Do we expect all of those stores to receive vaccines and to be administering them at each of those locations? Or just some of them?

- We do not know this at a local level.
- Vaccine providers are enrolled into CVMS and approved by NC DHHS.
- If a provider is interested in enrolling, the latest CVMS update allows for self-enrollment.



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10. Will people be able to receive the vaccines free of charge at all locations for the various organizations administering them regardless of whether they have health insurance?

- The actual vaccine is free to everyone
- Providers can bill insurance for the administration fee but not the actual vaccine
- All insurances including Medicaid/Medicare cover the cost of the administration fee
- For the uninsured, HRSA will pay the administration fee



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11. Currently, by far the biggest limiting factor in how many vaccines can be administered in Buncombe County is the small number that have been physically shipped to the community. Assuming the volume of vaccines being shipped significantly increases in the weeks ahead, is the county confident it has the capacity to quickly and efficiently administer all the vaccines that we receive? Either directly by the county or in conjunction with the other organizations that will also be administering vaccines?

| VAX THROUGHPUT CALCULATOR | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Time per Vaccine (minutes) | 9 |
| Number of Vax Stations per POD | 6 |
| Length of POD (hours) | 8.5 |
| Number of PODS per Week | 5 |
| VAXs per hour per Vax Station | 7 |
| Total VAX per Hour | 40 |
| Number of VAX per POD | 340 |
| Number of VAX per Week | 1700 |
| VAX per month | 6800 |

| VAX THROUGHPUT CALCULATOR | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Time per Vaccine (minutes) | 8 |
| Number of Vax Stations per POD | 12 |
| Length of POD (hours) | 8.5 |
| Number of PODS per Week | 5 |
| VAXs per hour per Vax Station | 8 |
| Total VAX per Hour | 90 |
| Number of VAX per POD | 765 |
| Number of VAX per Week | 3825 |
| VAX per month | 15300 |



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12. What is the maximum capacity Buncombe County government is preparing to be able to administer vaccines for on a daily and weekly basis?

| VAX THROUGHPUT CALCULATOR | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Time per Vaccine (minutes) | 8 |
| Number of Vax Stations per POD | 12 |
| Length of POD (hours) | 8.5 |
| Number of PODS per Week | 5 |
| | |
| VAXs per hour per Vax Station | 8 |
| Total VAX per Hour | 90 |
| Number of VAX per POD | 765 |
| Number of VAX per Week | 3825 |
| VAX per month | 15300 |

13. By what date will the county be prepared to reach that maximum capacity for administering vaccines?

- Current space will allow us to achieve 4000 per week
- Human resources will be needed if scaling up to 4000 per week
- Staffing plan presented to County Leadership with resource needs to achieve 4000 capacity
- January 18th, ready to administer both 1st and 2nd doses simultaneously

14. Currently, the county is preparing two fixed locations to operate drive through vaccine sites: AB Tech and the parking lot on the north side of the Asheville Mall where Sears used to be. How many vaccines can be administered daily and weekly at each of these sites?

- Currently, we have the resources for one fixed site at AB Tech that has potential throughput of 4000 vaccines per week.
- Exploring Sears Lot as a potential drive-through location. Contract is in review.
- Two full sites each with 2000-4000 per week capacity would require additional human resources and operational supplies.



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15. Will people be able to literally "drive through" to get a vaccine at the county sites? In other words, can people just stay in their car and receive the vaccine?

- Currently, our fixed site is a walk-up site at AB Tech Mission Conference center that is large enough to allow for ample social distancing and other precautions.
- We currently do not have a space secured for drive through potential. That contract is currently being reviewed
- Anticipate the throughput for drive through will be somewhat fewer than a walk-in.



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16. Are these the only two sites the county will be administering vaccines? If not, please describe plans for the other sites.

- In Phase 1a- county utilized Erwin Hills site
 - As Phase 1b planning began, secured AB Tech site and planned for simultaneous site at 40 Coxe through existing Immunization Clinic as plan was finalized.
 - Shifting all operations for Phase 1 b Group 1 to AB Tech. This site has capacity for 4000 per week.
 - Sears site still under contract review. May be utilized as drive through site.
 - If vaccine supply exceeds site capacity, BC HHS can scale up to a fully functional 2nd site and/or transfer vaccine to another enrolled provider (eg FQHC).
- * All plans subject to change based on contract requirements, community needs, etc.



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17. What hours of operation is the county preparing for to operate these sites?

- 8:30am – 5:00pm
- M-F
- As vaccine supply increases and phases change, hours will need to expand past 5pm.
 - This will essentially put the Vax staff into 2 shifts and will require more staffing.



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18. How many staff are needed to operate each site at these hours of operation?

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Greeters | 4 |
| Registration | 6 |
| Triage | 4 |
| Decon | 2 |
| Runners | 1 |
| Educator | 2 |
| Translator | 2 |
| Observer | 2 |
| Medical | 2 |
| Vaccinator | 12 |
| Pharmacy | 4 |
| Clinic Support | 1 |
| Prep Support | 1 |
| Traffic Control | 4 |
| Logistics | 2 |
| IT Support | 1 |
| POD Manager | 1 |
| LE | 4 |
| Total | 56 |

| | |
|------------|---|
| Vaccinator | 6 |
| Paramedic | 3 |
| Total | 9 |



19. Some of the staff need to be trained medical professionals to administer the vaccine but other staff at the sites do not have to be medical professionals and are there to help handle logistics. Is that correct? If so, how many of the staff at each site need to be medical professionals and how many can be non-medical professionals who are helping with logistics?

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Greeters | 4 |
| Registration | 6 |
| Triage | 4 |
| Decon | 2 |
| Runners | 1 |
| Total | 17 |

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Educator | 2 |
| Translator | 2 |
| Observer | 2 |
| Medical | 2 |
| Vaccinator | 12 |
| Pharmacy | 4 |
| Clinic Support | 1 |
| Prep Support | 1 |
| Traffic Control | 4 |
| Logistics | 2 |
| IT Support | 1 |
| POD Manager | 1 |
| LE | 4 |
| Total | 38 |



20. Please describe the current status of securing the staff to operate the sites and the plan and time-frame to assemble and train all the staff that will be needed.

- Week of Jan 11th – Capacity 2,000
- Week of Jan 18th – Capacity 4,000
- Please note, this is the capacity we can cover. This is not indicative of the vaccine supply we receive. That is much less than the capacity we have at this time.



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21. Are there any plans to utilize volunteers, who would be trained, to help with the vaccination efforts?

- Volunteers are utilized at vaccination sites since week 1
- Utilizing both medical and non-medical volunteers
 - Medical consultation
 - Mobile vaccinator team for LTCF
 - Greeters, triage, etc
- Individuals interested in volunteering must complete volunteer forms, background check and drug screen.
- School of Pharmacy students and preceptors will be joining vaccination efforts in the Spring
- We have had annual Preparedness exercises with UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy for the last 4 years specifically to train a pool of student volunteers in the case of Pandemic Influenza.
- We are looking for skilled volunteers that have medical experience and are able to commit to multiple days per week.



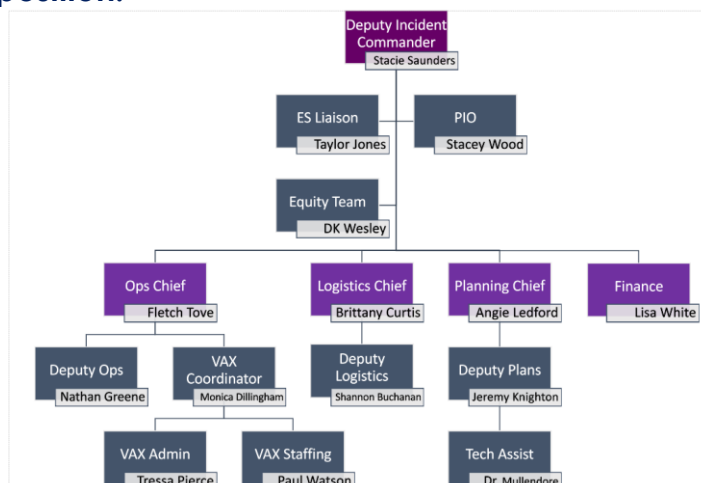
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22. If the volume of vaccines being shipped to Buncombe County were not a limiting factor, how quickly could the county and the other organizations involved in administering vaccines be able to provide 90% of the residents of the county two vaccine shots?

- Public Health Goal for 2021 is 70% vaccine uptake
 - Hesitancy rate hovers around 50% depending on population
- We can determine our rate of dispensing, but there are too many unknown variables to accurately determine a timeline for achieving this goal:
 - At what rate Federal supply to state will expand?
 - State schedule for advancing through phases?
 - How many community providers will enroll and receive vaccine and in what quantities?
 - To what degree can HCA System support the community?
 - How will sentiments towards hesitancy change over time?



23. Please describe the county staff leadership team that is planning and will coordinate the vaccination program and the role of each person in a leadership position.



25. Currently, vaccines are in very limited supply due to very few being physically shipped to the county. There are 40,000 people in the 75+ age group now eligible to get vaccines and many tens of thousands more will become eligible soon in other groups. Please describe the process by which these people will be able to make a reservation to receive a vaccine from Buncombe County.

Depending on vaccine supply provided to our county:

- Calling 828-250-5000, prompted to scheduler OR
- Online at buncombeready.org
- Surge staffing to 18 for call center and another request for 20 new contract staff.
- Note: Even with perfect phone system and online scheduling, there is likely to be discontent and frustration as vaccine supply remains low



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26. Please describe how the online portal works now and how we expect it to work once all its capabilities are in place?

- Temporarily using Bookings tool for scheduling
- Click on the link, choose your appointment
- Receive confirmation – issues intermittently with notifications, likely that Bookings not built for this type of function. IT and PH staff periodically troubleshooting and sending out manual confirmations when problem identified.
- Switching to CureMD online scheduling portal for vaccine once approved. UPDATE – received notification 1/12 that IT and Legal have reviewed and approved. Working on plan to switch over to CureMD tentatively the week of Jan 18 *subject to IT build, etc. This will occur on the back end and public facing portion of website will not change much.



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27. If people wish to indicate their interest in getting a vaccine by registering on the county online portal or by calling the health dept, will it be possible for them to get on a list to receive texts or emails from the county about the status of the vaccination efforts? What are the various ways the county will communicate with the public?

- As new appointments are opened, current notification methods:
 - Website message updated
 - Phone message updated
 - County Newsletter
 - Social Media
 - Press Release
 - Media Outlets



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28. One approach to administering vaccines is to have residents schedule themselves by calling the county or using an online portal. Another potential option would enable people to indicate they wish to receive a vaccine and then the county could schedule a date for them as supplies allow and then notify the resident via phone, email or text. Is the county planning to use one of these approaches or the other, a combination of the two, or some other strategy?

- The State receives through allocation from the Federal Administration
- State reserves an amount of that allocation to the LTCF Federal Vaccination Program administered via CVS/Walgreens
- After that allocation to the federal program, allocation to county is based on population size, burden within the county of the current phase population, and then divided between the existing vaccine providers (hospital and health departments initially).
- Going forward, it is likely that state will utilize the CVMS inventory and doses administered each week by county and agency to determine future allocations.



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29. For residents who do not have personal transportation and may not be able to use public transit, are their resources to help provide them transportation to receive a vaccine?

- We reached out to Dogwood Health Trust to discuss potential support of transportation for individuals.
- Foundation has shown interest and coordinating meeting to further discuss.



30. I received an inquiry from Aeroflow Healthcare, which has a facility in south Asheville. Some of their staff are technicians who install and service bedside medical equipment in the homes of elderly residents. They are hoping their staff who work in close proximity to the elderly can receive vaccines as other health care workers are. How can this company, and others like them, get clarification when staff such as these can be vaccinated?

- NC DHHS has posted the Vaccination Prioritization Plan online
- <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/NCDHHS-Vaccine-Infographic.pdf>
- Deeper Dive documents are available for Phase 1a and Phase 1b Group1:
- <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/Deeper-Dive-Phase-1a.pdf>
- <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/Deeper-Dive-Phase-1b.pdf>



31. Is it correct that the FDA has not yet authorized the vaccines to be approved for people under age 16 but that the approvals are expected in the coming days, so most people under 16 will be eligible and encouraged to receive a vaccine?

- Students 16 years and older are included in Phase 3
- Those younger than 16 years will be vaccinated only when approved for them to receive.



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32. What is the state formula for how each county receives vaccines?

- Initially, it was based on the state allocation from federal government



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34. What are the plans for how we will manage the process of the 2nd doses? When will those doses begin for those who were first vaccinated?

- Moderna – 28 Days (4 Day grace window) or anytime after
- Pfizer – 21 Days (4 Day grace window) or anytime after

- Week of January 18th begin 2nd dose of Moderna that received 1st dose December 21.
- Individuals will receive their reminder from CVMS about 1 week prior to 2nd dose.

- For Phase 1a:
 - Follow same procedure for 1a that we did for their 1st dose
 - Email to the provider groups with a link for scheduling 2nd dose – don't send your 1as

- For Phase 1b Group 1:
 - 250-5000 or buncombeready.org
 - Link on buncombeready.org that says schedule your vaccine, one for 1st dose and one for 2nd dose.
 - Once 1st dose clicked, if appointments available then they will sign up or a
 - Once 2nd dose clicked, then choose Moderna or Pfizer
 - In addition, once CureMD tool launch, we can begin scheduling 2nd dose at time of 1st dose along with appointment reminder notifications.



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33. Have all the long-term facilities who the county is responsible for providing vaccines been covered?

- No as of 1/12/2021
- BC HHS received a list of 90 LTCFs who were not enrolled in the federal program.
- Assigned coordinator to reach out to LTCFs on that list.
- Found that some were covered by CVS/Walgreens but not on the list we received from NC DHHS, some declined vaccine, and others began to be scheduled.
- Using mobile vaccination team for this population.
- Deployed last week, vaccinated 110 last week and scheduled to vaccinate about 330 in this population this week.



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35. What are our strategies for reaching those who aren't tech savvy? Basically, this is two-fold, first of all how are we getting the word out to community members who aren't on social media and computers about the process? Then, how are we making it easily accessible for them to get signed up?

- Information has been shared with print and TV media partners
- Joint Information Center team sent information to community stakeholders to assist in getting information out to community
- Individuals can use the phone option or online to schedule an appointment. Caregivers, friends, support people can make the appointment for an individual who may not have ease of access.



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36. Is it possible to have a comprehensive list of agencies that are providing vaccinations published on our website so that people know that they have options?

- At this time only Public Health is providing to the general public.
- NC DHHS is launching some FQHCs and other providers this week and into the next few weeks as enrolled providers. However, it is not anticipated that they will receive direct allocation of vaccine immediately. This may take more time. But they would be eligible for vaccine transfer from another provider (hospital or LHDs) if vaccine supply allows.



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37. In what ways are we communicating vaccine information to the public? Feedback on existing communications includes: confusing phone prompts immunization button on the Buncombe Ready site needs to stand out. Some didn't receive appt. confirmations and at least one person received the following confusing confirmation that listed two vaccine site addresses and this message: Please make sure that you are registered in the COVID Vaccine Management System (CVMS) and have received a confirmation email stating that you are approved to receive your vaccine.

- Website, social media, media outlets, etc. Continuing to tweak webpage prompts
- Continually refining the process for making an appointment
- Online scheduler not robust and not intended for function and therefore finding intermittent issues with confirmation emails and other "bugs". IT team troubleshooting and creating work arounds so that manual push of notification will occur.



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38. What does an individual need to bring with them to a) prove they are the correct person for the corresponding appointment and b) prove they are eligible for the appropriate category?

- Individual attest at time of scheduling that they meet the criteria
- At time of vaccination, individuals check in with their name
- No ID is needed at time



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