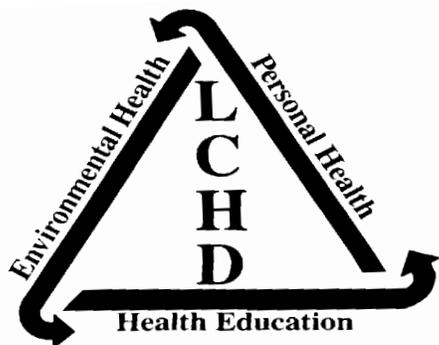


## MEDIA RELEASE



Date: February 16, 2021  
To: All Media  
From: LaSalle County Health Department  
717 Etna Road  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)  
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)  
Phone: (815) 433-3366  
**For Immediate Release**

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### **“Changes to the COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-Out and How it Effects LaSalle County”**

Late last week, the LaSalle County Health Department was made aware of two changes to the vaccine rollout plan that will have a serious impact on how and when doses will be available to the majority of our residents. These changes were announced by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).

First, local health departments will be allocated fewer first doses of vaccine to make sure that everyone who already got their first dose will get their second dose. By now, national and state public health leaders had expected that vaccine would be more plentiful. This isn't the case. Our weekly allocation has continued to remain small. In addition, we have been informed it will be reduced drastically over the next several weeks.

As of this update, we anticipate receiving only 300 first doses of vaccine this week, as opposed to the 1300 we have been consistently receiving. We don't yet know the number of doses that we will receive in the weeks to come, as those amounts have not been finalized. In addition, we continue to share vaccine doses with our local hospitals as they work to vaccinate the education sub-group. We will continue discussions with our local hospital partners to adjust to the potential decrease in first dose vaccine and the best way to proceed.

This change, by default, will reduce the number of opportunities for people to get their first doses through us, but there is some good news. Pharmacies in LaSalle County are starting to get shipments directly from IDPH. First dose shots could be available at:

- CVS: <https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine> (Mendota)
- Hy-Vee: <https://www.hy-vee.com/my-pharmacy/covid-vaccine-consent> (Peru)
- Kroger: <https://www.kroger.com/i/coronavirus-update/vaccine> (North Ottawa and Streator)
- Walgreens: <https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19> (Peru and Ottawa)

-More-

Please visit their websites for appointment availability. The LaSalle County Health Department understands we still have more people who want the vaccine than we have doses, but the number of ways to be vaccinated is growing.

The second major change is both good and challenging news. Starting Feb. 25, IDPH is opening vaccine opportunities to Illinoisans with certain underlying health conditions, including:

- Cancer
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Diabetes
- Heart Condition
- Immunocompromised State from a Solid Organ Transplant
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary Disease
- Sickle Cell Disease

As you can imagine, we are pleased to be able to offer vaccine protection to people with these serious health conditions. However, we are worried that expanding eligibility without greatly expanding vaccine supply will lead to more frustration. Health Department staff are trying to manage expectations of LaSalle County residents. Individuals in the expansion will have a chance to receive their vaccination, but they could be several weeks away from getting a time slot at a Health Department clinic or with our pharmacy partners. Please understand that public health and our partners are working hard on your behalf and that this process is frustrating for all of us.

We are continuing to prioritize 65 years and older in the Phase 1B category. However, on February 25th, our COVID-19 Vaccine Notification Form will include the category of 16-64 yrs. with underlying medical conditions. Anyone who falls into this category will be able to register at [www.lasallecounty.org](http://www.lasallecounty.org). Click on the red COVID-19 Vaccine Information icon and complete the green Phase 1B notification form.

Since January 12<sup>th</sup>, we have had over 17,000 people sign up for Phase 1B Vaccine Notification. Of this total, 71% are individuals 65 years and older. Please note this list is constantly influx as we have additional people sign up every day and remove people who have contacted us to let us know they have received their vaccination elsewhere. We are working through the Phase 1B list as quickly as possible based on the

weekly vaccine allotment we are receiving. However, this process is going to take time and we appreciate your continued patience.

Despite the frustration with the slow roll-out of COVID-19 vaccine, LaSalle County is making progress. IDPH is keeping track of how many doses are given in each county and bases it on each county's total population. As of February 15<sup>th</sup>, IDPH shows that more than 16,956 doses have been administered in LaSalle County and that 3,614 have gotten both doses. In addition, Health Department staff have been able to vaccinate 4,100 individuals 65 years and older at the clinics being held at Illinois Valley Community College.

This is a herculean effort, and we are incredibly proud of our staff, our partners and our volunteers. We thank you for your continued patience and understand that this process has been frustrating at times. We're frustrated too. The LaSalle County Health Department will continue to distribute the vaccine as efficiently as our supply allows. Until then, please continue to wear your mask, watch your distance and wash your hands. Each dose given brings us closer to making our way out of these challenging times.

Finally, the LaSalle County Health Department has scheduled and will be conducting second-dose vaccination clinics this week. **Please note these clinics are not impacted by the smaller allotment we anticipate receiving this week.** Anyone who had their first COVID-19 vaccine dose at Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC) on January 19th or January 21st, should have received an email with instructions to register for an appointment time at a second dose clinic. Please check your spam/junk folder if you have not received an email. If the individual did not have email/internet access, the LaSalle County Health Department has contacted those individuals to schedule their 2nd dose appointment.

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