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**For Immediate Release: Tuesday, January 26, 2021**

## **Cayuga County Health Department Statement on NYS Vaccine Rollout and Priority Populations**

On Monday, January 25, 2021 we issued our daily situational update in which we explained the change in guidance from New York State (NYS) regarding the NYS Vaccine Rollout and the phased in prioritization approach.

The Cayuga County Health Department held the first clinic for members of 1A vaccine eligibility on January 9, 2021. On Friday, January 8, 2021, NYS expanded the eligibility to those members of the 1B category, which included those 75 years and older. On Monday, January 11, 2021 NYS expanded the 1B category to those 65 years and older. As your local health department, we continued to adapt to the ever-changing vaccine landscape and held clinics for those in 1A and 1B throughout the week of January 11, 2021.

Effective January 15, 2021, NYS once again changed the focus of who local health departments should be serving. Announcements were made informing the public that pharmacies would be receiving vaccine shipments and they would be able to accommodate those 65 years and older; however, not every pharmacy is participating in this opportunity. Recently, New York State Department of Health approved mass vaccination sites are providing opportunities in our region for temporary “pop up” clinics that serve those 65 years and older. These are being hosted by New York State and we are not aware of any being held in Cayuga County at this time.

Those who have attended our first dose clinics will be able to receive a second dose from us, even if you are 65 years and older. New York State is advising that all individuals return to the same vaccine distribution provider of their first dose as that is how second dose allotments are being shipped out. We will be holding second dose clinics and will be communicating the date, time and location of those clinics once we have the second dose supply of vaccine in our possession.

The Health Department is aware of how challenging these changes can be for everyone, including our seniors. We had made plans with our community partners to serve those 65 years and older and those in our rural communities. Our department has practiced our skills by holding annual drills and we are confident that we can serve our community and meet the needs of our residents.

The Cayuga County Health Department continues to advocate on behalf of our community for more vaccine and for New York State to allow the local health department to be able to serve all those who are eligible in the priority groups. We understand the transportation, accessibility and safety concerns in our community.



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We ask that the public continue to work with us in preventing the spread of the virus, by practicing safe social distancing by staying six feet apart from others both indoors and outdoors, wearing a face covering both indoors and outdoors when safe social distancing (six feet apart) cannot be maintained. At this time, in New York State gatherings of 50 or more people are prohibited by law in public and private venues, except where specifically identified by New York State such as a restaurant or house of worship, which have their own regulations. Also, please be aware that NYS still requires quarantine for those who travel outside of NYS for more than 24 hours.

As we become aware of additional information, we will post it on the Cayuga County Health Department website, on our Facebook page and send out media updates.

Your patience and understanding is appreciated as we continue to move forward in the COVID-19 vaccination process.

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