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## **McLean County Health Department Expands Into Phase 1B Plus Population**

Appointments available for clinics this week

Bloomington, IL—The McLean County Health Department (MCHD) will begin scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations for residents in the expanded Phase 1B Plus population starting this week. First dose appointments will be added to the Health Department’s website this afternoon at 2:00pm that are open to anyone in Phase 1A, 1B and 1B plus. Click [here](#) for a definition of Phases 1A, 1B and 1B Plus eligibility.

Last month, Governor JB Pritzker announced that counties in Illinois could expanded eligibility criteria starting February 25 to include people age 16-64 with underlying health conditions when “significant progress” had been made vaccinating county residents in the Phase 1A and 1B populations. Like many counties across the state, the McLean County Health Department announced that we would not be expanding eligibility at that time.

“Due to the limited vaccine that was arriving each week in our county we made the difficult decision to hold off on the expansion in February,” explained Jessica McKnight, MCHD Administrator. “We wanted to prioritize access for those age 65 and older in our community who are most vulnerable.”

Over 80% of the COVID-related deaths reported in McLean County have been among those age 70 and older.

The Health Department initially targeted expanding eligibility in mid-April, but things have progressed quicker than anticipated.

“I am thrilled that, because of the increased vaccine allocations, we have seen in recent weeks that we are able to open up eligibility earlier than previously projected. And now more McLean County residents will have access to the vaccine,” McKnight said.

To date, over 63% of McLean County residents age 65 and older have now received at least their first dose of vaccine.

McKnight added that the time it took for clinics to fill was also closely monitored. “We have seen the time slow down dramatically from the first weeks where all appointments were filled within five minutes,” McKnight said.

In addition to the appointments posted this afternoon, the McLean County Health Department will post new vaccine clinics for the following week on its website at the normal scheduled time of Thursday at 11:00 am. Individuals who live or work in McLean County who are eligible as part of the Phase 1A, 1B or 1B Plus can register for an appointment via the MCHD website at <https://health.mcleancountyil.gov/790/COVID-19-Vaccine> . Those with limited or no online access may call the MCHD COVID-19 Call Center (309) 888-5600 for assistance with scheduling. The Call Center is available Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm.

First-dose appointments for vaccination clinics this week at the Grossinger Motors Arena are scheduled for the following dates:

- Tuesday, March 16
- Wednesday, March 17
- Thursday, March 18
- Friday, March 19
- Saturday, March 20

Viewing a tutorial of the online registration process can help speed things up once appointments become available. To view the 6 important steps to online registration click here: [In English](#) or [In Spanish](#).

Because Phase 1B Plus eligible residents include some residents who are 16 and 17 years of age, it is important to note that [16 and 17-year-olds can only get the Pfizer vaccine](#) and minor residents must also be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian, or provide proof of emancipation, to receive a vaccine.

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