

MEDIA RELEASE

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LINK TO MEDIA RELEASE

Orange County, NC Frontline Essential Workers Eligible for Vaccination Beginning March 3

HILLSBOROUGH, N.C. Mar. 3, 2021 — Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. announced that additional frontline essential workers in Group 3 will be eligible for vaccinations beginning today, March 3. The expedited timeline follows the approval of the Johnson & Johnson one-shot vaccine and an expected increase in vaccine supply to North Carolina.

“The state and our providers continue to work extremely hard to get people vaccinated in a way that’s fast and fair,” said Gov. Cooper. “The third vaccine and improving vaccine supply will help us get more people vaccinated more quickly. Our essential frontline workers have remained on the job throughout this pandemic and I am grateful for their work.”

Group 4 to begin Mar. 24

Gov. Cooper also outlined an expected timeline for beginning Group 4 vaccinations. Beginning on Mar. 24, people at higher risk from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions will become eligible to receive a vaccine, as well as people in certain congregate-living settings. (See [Deeper Dive](#) for additional detail)

“This is a really exciting moment,” said Secretary Cohen. “A third COVID-19 vaccine means North Carolina can get more people vaccinated sooner and keep people out of the hospital and prevent deaths from this pandemic.”

NCDHHS also shared clarifications for Groups 1 and 4. The definition of long-term care in [Group 1](#) has been updated for people with intellectual and developmental disability. Higher-risk medical conditions for [Group 4](#) include intellectual and developmental disabilities including Down Syndrome, and neurologic conditions, such as dementia.

Gov. Cooper will continue to advocate to increase vaccine supply in North Carolina. Since January 20, the amount of vaccine received by the state has increased by 135%.

Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Authorized

This week, the federal government authorized the distribution of Johnson & Johnson’s (Janssen) one-shot vaccine and more than 80,000 doses are expected to arrive in the state beginning on Wednesday.

“The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is good news in the fight against COVID,” said Orange County Health Director, Quintana Stewart. “It is an extremely effective vaccine that prevents hospitalization and death with no safety concerns.”

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine comes as the federal government has also increased vaccine in North Carolina beyond the state’s allocation. A new federally-supported site will open in Greensboro on March 10. The federal government will provide the center’s vaccine supply, which will be in addition to North Carolina’s weekly allotment from the Centers for Disease Control. It will operate seven days a week with the capacity to provide up to 3,000 vaccinations per day, with options for drive-thru service in the parking lot and walk-in service.

Walgreens is also providing vaccine through the federal pharmacy program. While there is still not enough vaccine for everyone, the improved supply has contributed to providers reporting readiness to expand access to additional Group 3 essential workers.

State officials continue to prioritize speed and equity in vaccine distribution as eligibility prioritization expands. On February 26, the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) ranked North Carolina as first in the nation for vaccinating the largest share of its 65 and older population.

Detailed information about each vaccine group is online at [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](https://www.yourshot.nc.gov) (English) or [vacunate.nc.gov](https://www.vacunate.nc.gov) (Spanish).

Watch the DHHS Group 3 Vaccine PSA [Here](#).

Related Links

- Group 1 Health Care Workers and Long-Term Care Staff and Residents: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/Deeper-Dive-Group-1.pdf>
- Group 3 Frontline Essential Workers: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines/find-your-spot-take-your-shot/deeper-dive-group-3>
- Group 4 Adults at Higher Risk for Exposure and Increased Risk of Severe Illness (Essential Workers Not Yet Vaccinated and Other Group Living Settings) : <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/Deeper-Dive-Group-4-Essential-Workers-Not-Yet-Vaccinated.pdf>
- Orange County, NC “What is a Frontline Essential Worker?” Flyer: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/DocumentCenter/View/15007/Group3-Frontline-Essential-Workers---English-PDF>

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