



POINTS FROM 1.21.21 SWORN TESTIMONY STAFF SUMMARY

House Legislative Oversight Ad Hoc Committee Review of DHEC's Receipt and Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccine

Receipt of a second vaccine dose, of the same vaccine from the same provider, within the prescribed time maximizes the effectiveness of the vaccine and the efficiency in accounting for the distribution of the vaccine.

*Testimony was received from DHEC leadership (agency head, interim public health director, state epidemiologist, immunization director, and CFO).
Testimony was received from representatives of the SC Hospital Association, SC Medical Association, SC Retail Association, and SC Pharmacy Association.*

Can I get the vaccine now and is there enough?

DHEC leadership determines priority for first dose, with final decision by the director; he requested DHEC board determine an allocation method (meeting week of January 25th).

There are enough second doses for everyone who receives a first dose.

The state has not been allocated enough first doses for everyone to receive right now. DHEC's prioritization guiding principle is to "prevent death."

How do I get the vaccine?

Currently, registration is through a federal system (VAMS – Vaccine Administration Management System), which has requirements (e.g., email address) that are difficult for many to use.

COMING SOON

DHEC is building a state system to improve ease in registering and opening a call center to better respond to the public's many questions.

What opportunities are there for improvement to the distribution process?

The agency and representatives of stakeholder organizations were asked to identify needs, and in particular, any legislative solutions necessary to improve the distribution process.

IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Maximize communities' existing, trusted pipeline for vaccine medicine distribution (e.g., physicians and pharmacists).
- Leverage the logistics and distribution expertise of the state's private sector.
- Continue accountability for DHEC and providers to ensure safeguards are in place so individuals receive the second, necessary dose.

Information on the following pages was obtained from sworn testimony during the House Legislative Oversight Ad hoc Committee's January 21, 2021 meeting with DHEC leadership (agency head, interim public health director, state epidemiologist, immunization director, and CFO) and representatives of the SC Hospital Association, SC Medical Association, SC Retail Association, and SC Pharmacy Association. See agency presentation [here](#). Also from [DHEC's January 17, 2021 Updated Guidance to Enrolled COVID-19 Vaccine Providers](#) and from [DHEC's December 10, 2020 COVID Vaccine Update](#) from Jane Kelly, MD.

Current Process and Responsibilities

How does an individual get the vaccine?

Individual receives second dose	Individual Provider	(1) Schedule appointment; (2) Go to scheduled appointment (1) Order second dose (guaranteed if ordered) (2) Schedule individual's appointment Receipt of a second dose, of the same vaccine from the same provider, within the prescribed time maximizes the effectiveness of the vaccine and the efficiency in accounting for distribution of the vaccine
Individual receives first dose	Individual Provider	(1) Schedule appointment; (2) Go to scheduled appointment (1) Order first doses (not guaranteed to receive all ordered) (2) Schedule individuals' appointments
Individual registers	Individual DHEC	Register to schedule an appointment Determine systems individuals can utilize to register, as long as it provides the information federally required

Where can an individual get a vaccine?

Providers supplied	Individual DHEC Provider	Check DHEC's website for a map of the state with the location of providers Determine number of vaccines each provider receives Order vaccines (guaranteed to receive all second doses ordered; may not receive all first doses ordered)
Providers activated	DHEC	Determine, from the providers approved, which to activate and allow to order vaccines
Providers approved	DHEC	Review and approve a provider's enrollment information
Providers enrolled	Provider DHEC	Complete enrollment information on DHEC website (form completion and submission does not guarantee enrollment) Recruit providers to enroll

Can an individual get the vaccine now?

DHEC allocates supply	Individual DHEC	Check DHEC's website to determine if you are in the phase currently eligible for the vaccine Determine who is in each phase and their prioritization within each
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Is there enough vaccine for everyone?

Federal government allocates to the state	Federal	Determines amount each state will receive. S.C. has received on average, 32,700 first doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and 30,200 of the Moderna vaccine, per week for the last four weeks. DHEC anticipates no changes in the foreseeable future. DHEC estimates over 975,000 people in Phase 1A, and over 3 million in Phase 1B and 1C. DHEC and stakeholders all expressed the need for more vaccine.
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"Provider" means medical personnel providing vaccine directly to the individual (e.g., hospital, pharmacy, individual physician)

"DHEC" means the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control. Prior to making decisions, DHEC leadership consults information from the [S.C. Vaccine Advisory Committee](#); [Operation Warp Speed](#); [Center for Disease Control](#); and other federal sources.

Vaccines

- Until mid-January, the weekly allocation of Pfizer first doses the state received from the federal government was sufficient to meet most of the vaccine orders placed by hospitals.
- Hospital orders in recent weeks totaled more than four times the amount previously allocated to the state. As a result, DHEC could only fulfill 20-25% of each hospital's first-dose order of Pfizer vaccine. All orders for second doses were able to be fulfilled because the state has a separate federal allocation of second doses that equals the number of first doses provided.
- Since vaccine demand for first doses has now far exceeded supply, DHEC leadership requested the DHEC Board determine an allocation model. DHEC leadership is presenting models for the Board's consideration on the week of January 25, 2021.

Supply for first dose		Demand for first dose	
Per Week:	63,000	Phase 1a:	987,039
Per Month:	252,000	Phase 1b:	573,501
		Phase 1c:	2,897,527
		Phase 2:	690,648
DHEC does not expect the state's weekly allocation to increase any time soon.		Demand estimated by DHEC. See description of phases here .	

Vaccines Available as of January 21, 2021		
	Pfizer vaccine	Moderna vaccine
Supply¹	32,700 first doses per week	30,200 first doses per week
Storage requirements	Multiple options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultra-low-temperature freezers • Pfizer thermal shippers can be used as temporary storage units by refilling with dry ice every five days for up to 30 days of storage. • Refrigeration units that are commonly available in hospitals • Once thawed, vaccine can be stored for five days at refrigerated 2-8°C conditions 	Less stringent storage options <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be stored in standard vaccine freezers (-20°C)
Method of shipping to providers	Directly or via DHEC's redistribution center	Directly or via DHEC's redistribution center
Current providers giving vaccine to individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitals • Some urgent cares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walgreens/CVS to provide to long term care facilities through Federal Long Term Care Program • Some retail pharmacies; large medical practices, Federally qualified health centers, DHEC clinics; and starting week of Jan. 17, Rural Health Centers
Potential new providers to give vaccine to individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent pharmacies (if partnerships are established for storage of more than a few days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private physicians • Independent pharmacies • Additional retail pharmacies

Table Note: 1. Based on average number of first doses for the last four weeks (December/January)

Leverage Existing Strengths in Distribution

The goal is for South Carolinians to receive a second dose within the prescribed time. Receipt of a second dose, of the same vaccine from the same provider, within the prescribed time maximizes the effectiveness of the vaccine and the efficiency in accounting for distribution of the vaccine. There are aspects of current distribution and accountability for which South Carolina has complete control, which may be revised to leverage the strengths of those within our state.

Entities	Strengths regarding distribution of vaccine
DHEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of provider distribution locations throughout the state • Authority and flexibility to determine which providers distribute the vaccine and amount each receives to distribute equitably throughout the state • Direct communication with the federal government to know the amount of vaccine arriving
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage capacity for Pfizer vaccine • Storage capacity for Moderna vaccine
Private physicians Independent pharmacies Retail pharmacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential storage for Pfizer vaccine (if partnerships are established for storage of more than a few days) • Storage capacity for Moderna vaccine • Established long term relationship with patients • Established infrastructure for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ...providing vaccines and billing (e.g., private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare)* ○ ...coordinating first and second dose appointments at locations familiar to patients ○ ...access to patient electronic medical records
Various private sector entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and expertise in logistical planning and execution of mass distribution statewide on a regular/frequent basis

Table Note: An asterisk (*) indicates representative from association testified they did not anticipate the need for supplemental funding from the state