

*City of Taunton
Office of the Mayor*



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Mayor O'Connell Shares COVID-19 Vaccine Updates

Taunton, MA . . . Today Mayor Shaunna O'Connell shares COVID-19 vaccine updates, including an update on second dose vaccines for seniors vaccinated at local clinics.

On Monday, March 1, 2021, the City of Taunton learned that the expected second dose vaccines for seniors would not arrive as planned. "One thing this pandemic has taught us is to expect the unexpected. As soon as we heard that Taunton had not been allocated the vaccines needed for this week, we immediately took action," said O'Connell.

In multiple urgent meetings on Monday, Mayor O'Connell reached out to decision-makers at the state level and called upon local officials to work with the Mayor's Office in taking immediate steps to provide the second dose vaccines for Taunton seniors. An automated call was sent out to seniors who received their first dose of the vaccine at local clinics letting them know the second dose vaccines were delayed.

On Tuesday, March 2, 2021, the Mayor's Office was inundated with calls from supportive seniors. "I know this isn't the Mayor's fault. She is doing all she can to help us. We need the state to do their part. I called the Governor's Office and told them we expect them to give us the vaccines they promised us," said one senior. The City of Taunton's Facebook page was similarly filled with supportive comments and calls on the state government to fulfill its promise to Taunton seniors.

Brewster Ambulance, who has partnered with the city in administering the vaccines, was informed on Monday evening that they would be receiving a full shipment of second dose vaccines. Early on Tuesday, state officials confirmed the good news that the second dose vaccines for Taunton seniors would ship this week and arrive next Monday, March 8th. Mayor O'Connell credits the quick turnaround to combined efforts from city officials, Brewster Ambulance, and proactive Taunton seniors and their families. "I am proud of our city. This is truly an example of how well we can work together. The calls I made were backed up by dozens of calls from our seniors and together we made a difference," said O'Connell.

Although vaccine supply remains limited, progress has been made in increasing vaccination options in Taunton. CVS Pharmacy at Hart's Four Corners on County Street opened a vaccine clinic last week and has scheduled thousands of vaccine appointments in the past week. Additional appointments are now being opened on a regular basis at CVS. This week, the Target CVS in Taunton will begin administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in limited amounts.

In addition, the Mayor's Office is in the final stages of putting together a regional site plan proposal to be submitted to the state. By working with neighboring cities and towns, Taunton can meet the state's requirement of vaccinating 750 people per day as a regional site. "We have been exploring this option for weeks. We have also requested a state-sponsored site, but we are prepared to run our own vaccination site. We have proven that we have the experience and the capability to vaccinate our residents," said O'Connell.

Mayor O'Connell has been vocal in her efforts to increase vaccination options in Taunton. She has reached out to multiple decision-makers at the state level making her concerns known to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, and the Joint Committee on COVID-19 Preparedness. She has proposed several options to increase vaccination options in Taunton and has put in considerable effort to leverage the community's resources and contacts to bring more vaccines to Taunton.

As the Governor has announced today that the next group in Phase 2 will be eligible for vaccines starting next week on March 11th, the need for additional vaccination options has become even more critical. The next group eligible to be vaccinated includes **K-12 and early childhood educators, childcare workers, and K-12 school staff**. This group includes approximately 300,000 people who will now join the hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents seeking the vaccine. With a third vaccine by Johnson & Johnson now approved for distribution, there is hope that the supply of vaccines will eventually increase enough to meet the present need.

Information pertaining to the COVID-19 vaccine often changes quickly and the Mayor's Office is committed to keeping city residents informed. As additional information becomes available, it will be shared on the city website (taunton-ma.gov), the City of Taunton Facebook page, and local media outlets.

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