**Nick Davidson Talking Points (Media Brief)**

**Feb. 5, 2021**

* Good afternoon. DHEC recognizes the urgent need to vaccinate as many people as possible in our state to stop the spread of COVID-19.
* Our state’s shared goal is to save lives by ensuring all South Carolinians who wish to be immunized against COVID-19 are vaccinated as quickly, equitably, and ethically as possible.
* With increased vaccine allocations from the federal government and a streamlined, statewide vaccination plan, we have been able to steadily expand the number of South Carolinians eligible to receive vaccine.
* And we will continue to bring on additional providers who are on standby to help us get more vaccines into the arms of South Carolinians as the flow of vaccines increase into our state.
* At the same time, while South Carolina continues to work to expand our state’s capacity to administer the vaccines, the flow of vaccine from manufactures and the federal government is not currently sufficient to meet the tremendous demand.
* With the limited vaccine supply we are focused on assuring those that **data supports are at highest risk if exposure, severe illness and death** get vaccinated first.
* That means we must all continue to work together to support our state’s shared goal of saving the most amount of lives.
* On Monday, any South Carolina resident aged 65 or older, regardless of health status or preexisting condition can begin scheduling their appointment to receive COVID-19 vaccine.
* Those 65+ are now able to get vaccinated in part because of increased vaccine allocations from the federal government. However, that increase is limited and the demand for the vaccine continues to exceed our supplies.
* We are urging those who are currently not eligible to receive the vaccine to do your part in the fight against COVID-19 by following the guidance of public health officials and not jumping ahead of others to receive your COVID-19 early.
* Everyone will have a chance to receive the vaccine. But until we have enough vaccines on hand, we MUST continue to support those who are at greatest risk.
* In doing so, we want South Carolinians to understand that decisions concerning who is eligible to receive the vaccine are not about whether one is person or group is more essential than another. Every member of our society is essential. It’s about who is at greatest risk. And until we have enough vaccines available for everyone in our state, we must continue to use data to help guide us.
* To help folks better understand the current vaccine supply and flow in our state, I wanted to take a moment to share with you how much vaccine we have on hand, how much we expect to receive, and how much vaccine has been used our is scheduled to be used.
* On a weekly basis the state receives approximately **31,200 first doses of Pfizer** and **31,400 first doses of Moderna**, although starting this week (for 3 weeks) the state allocation of Moderna is 45,200.
* Yet, even with this minimal increase from the federal government, **100% of vaccines currently available in our state have either been put into arms or are scheduled to be put into arms.**
* As of yesterday, South Carolina has:
	+ Received 425,100 doses of Pfizer and 150,700 doses of Moderna for delivery to our vaccinating providers, and
	+ Including doses in LTC facilities, we have given **459,858 doses of** COVID-19 vaccines to the public, yet that actually represents 373,515 residents since many of those vaccinations are 2nd doses.
* **399,452 appointments** to receive the vaccines have been scheduled.
* When looking at the current supply and demand of vaccines, we must also consider the estimated populations for each phase. We still have many people who have NOT yet made appointments.
* Including those age 65-69, who will be able to make appointments starting Monday, results in approximately 309,000 more residents who haven’t yet even had the opportunity to schedule an appointment
* The current estimated Phase 1a population has grown to **nearly 1.3 million South Carolinians and recall that only approximately 373,000 individuals have been vaccinated.**
* We’re working with providers across the state on steps to expedite access to additional South Carolinians – including teachers and others in Phase 1b. Our ability to increase access is based on the use of the vaccine, the number of appointments made, and information on vaccine supply.
* By opening up appointments too early to others, we would be jeopardizing the lives of many by taking vaccines from those among us who are the most vulnerable and have the highest risk of severe illness, and death.
* That is why we are focused on taking a measured approach and why we’re asking others to please wait your turn. We’ll all have a chance to get vaccinated. But without sufficient supply, we must all continue to take actions aimed at saving as many lives as possible.
* In the meantime, DHEC will continue to do everything in our power to bring more vaccines into our state. And we will ensure that as they arrive, we are prepared to vaccinate as many South Carolinians as we can.
* Thank you.

**Notes if asked:**

* **1A Current:** 1,296,246
* **1A w/ Schools:** 1,493,148 (adds 196,902)
* **Remaining to vaccinate (w/schools):** 1,037,630
* **1B Current:** 541,967
* **1B w/o Schools:** 345,065
	+ These numbers assume no unknown tweaks to this phase and reflect moving only the 196,902 school personnel from 1B to 1A.
* **Other relevant information:**
Our dose distribution did increase to 31,200 + 41,400. We do not know if this will sustain or increase. Using weekly throughput of 72,600:
	+ At 100% consumption, phase 1A w/ schools completed in 14.2 weeks.
	+ At 80% consumption (vaccination goal), in 11.5 weeks.
	+ At 70% consumption (most likely), in 10 weeks.