

NYS DOH Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services Vaccination Update for Agency Leadership and Providers Wednesday 12/23/20, 5:07 PM to 6:25 PM

Unofficial Notes

This is not verbatim transcript of the call. Notes were typed during the call and reviewed and added to afterward. There was no prepared agenda distributed before the call. Questions and/or comments from providers were submitted before and during the call.

At the beginning of the briefing there was an automatic message that it was being recorded, however, there was no mention if the recording would be posted for public access.

Panelists:

Ryan Greenberg, Director, Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services
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Peter Brodie, Deputy Chief, Informatics, Bureau of EMS & Trauma Services (Host)
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Adrienne Mazeau, Deputy Director, NYS DOH Office of Public Health

It was indicated that there were over 700 logged on to the call and 81 questions submitted.

Comment made that some of the associations are sending out their own notes from the calls.

During the overnight hours BEMS&TS sent out information on scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations and a number of EMS providers were vaccinated during the day.

It was stressed that [Policy Statement 20-08 Guidance for EMS Personnel to Receive COVID-19 Vaccination](#) should be followed. Prioritization of providers in different categories (buckets) should be done. Guidance has been provided but it is left up to agencies to determine when to schedule career, volunteers, active providers with high numbers of patient contacts, less active providers, full time, part time, etc. so operations are minimally effected. If an agency has 30 providers it may want to schedule 10 per bucket or group. Agency may provide link to 1 POD or maybe 2 PODs if appropriate for people to sign up for appointments. Link for actual scheduling appointment should not be shared with those not presently being offered opportunity to schedule an appointment. Don't post it on Facebook as it could create a problem for the system. There was an oversight, since corrected, in wording about agencies signing up providers. It's preferred that agencies register people but agency can send link so individuals can schedule their own appointment.

Be patient as things are evolving daily. Some things went really well but there were hiccups and some parts of the distribution system were overwhelmed today. Phase 1 problems are being dealt with and things will be getting better.

Licensed ambulance services are all treated equally in Tier 1A be they volunteer, fire department based, not-for-profit, municipal, etc. EMS personnel with DOH recognized BLS non-transporting 1st responder services that have an EMS agency code [click [HERE](#) to open link to the list] are also included in Tier 1A. These are mainly fire department based services. Other personnel with ambulance and BLSFR services not involved in direct patient care will get vaccinated in later phases.

Countermeasure Data Management System (CDMS) is a new system and hospitals are learning to use it as they go.

The e-mail for technical support is CDMS-IT-Support@health.ny.gov

There have been reports of no open slots when logging in to CMDS but the available slots may have been taken by those who went in sooner to schedule appointments.

A site may open up additional slots at any time and go from 20 to 100 slots available on a day. Be patient and check back regularly and/or look to another nearby POD location.

Contrary to prior information, EMS agencies are not being assigned to specific PODs. There may be good choices if there are multiple POD locations in a county. Agencies can schedule providers outside of their county if it makes sense. Such may be the case if an in-county POD is a good distance away but an out-of-county POD is just over a nearby county line. Going 5 counties away is not advised as that could throw thing off. An agency reported being assigned to a specific POD and this may have been done by a local county health department.

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Adrienne Mazeau was introduced as a panelist. She has been involved in COVID-19 policy development and leading deployment teams in areas of testing, enforcement, communications and guidance development. Her comments and responses to questions were:

- NYS will be distributing 19.5 million doses (1st & 2nd).
- The vaccination team is working around the clock. They have been on phone calls all day long with hospitals.
- The flexibility shown is appreciated and she acknowledged the frustrations.
- If agencies/providers are looking for PODs at specific hospitals they should keep checking on the link.
- DOH is looking for feedback – both positive and negative.
- Phase 1A length depends on Pfizer and Moderna vaccine allocations. More was anticipated than actually received. It is hoped to finish Phase 1 by the end of January 2021.
- Hospitals have received vaccines and there were specific allocations for hospital staff and for other healthcare providers such as EMS, coroners, medical examiners, etc.

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“Add Group Member” button in CMDS is not to be used by an EMS agency to schedule additional people at a POD. It was designed to add a family member and is not meant for use to schedule 30 from a department at one time. The button may have already been deactivated. Agency should schedule only 1 person per slot at a time. If 30 show up at one time it will likely cause a problem at a POD.

EMS really wants the vaccine and there is no shortage of people. Scheduling system was flooded today. Goal, however is not to do all providers in an agency in 1 day. They do not want a situation where all providers in 1 agency are vaccinated but a neighboring agency can't get any providers scheduled for vaccinations.

There was report from an agency in one area that the next POD is scheduled for 1/24/21. DOH is working with hospitals to determine what their process is. Hospitals will need to put their spots into CDMS. A hospital may need a couple days to adjust to the system. When we get past the holidays more spots are expected to open up. Through last Friday vaccines deliveries went from 95 to 150 sites. A second manufacturer, Moderna, was added to the distribution this week.

Some hospitals and PODs may want to use their own system vs. CDMS but BEMS&TS will be pushing for CDMS use.

Responses to Questions and Comments Submitted Before and During the Call

Fact sheets on vaccination information advice and reference for providers do exist. These sheets may cover pregnancy, medical treatment in the last 90 days, existing medical conditions, etc.

Question on vaccination for a COVID-19 positive provider was referred to epidemiologist.

Regions have links on their web sites to resources.

Jeremy Cushman, MD University of Rochester Medical Center and Joseph A. Bart, DO Erie County Medical Center have YouTube videos providing information on the COVID-19 vaccines. Both physicians are on the State Emergency Medical Advisory Committee (SEMAC).

NYS DOH COVID-19 web site is at <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>
Frequently asked questions and answers are at: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

Providers under age 18 would likely require parental consent for vaccination. There may be some other things. Most are not riding right now.

Agency leader asked reporting encountering problems or challenges at a site such as a provider turned away because of a flu shot within last 2 weeks, lack of an agency specific ID although there was verification on an agency letterhead, someone with proof of scheduled time of vaccination but turned away saying appointment was 2 hours later, etc. Scheduling problem can be handled if person is patient and bears with it and gets vaccine the same days. Another agency called to say a significant number (50) of its providers scheduled over a period of days cancelled out – this kind of issue the BEMS&TS would like to be advised of. In another situation providers showing up at a site were told by staff that they were not vaccinating that day. Maybe DOH made a mistake in entering the POD date when it should have been on a different day. Hospitals send info to BEMS&TS and errors could be made at some point. Advice is if problem comes up to notify BEMS&TS and also try to work with hospital to reschedule providers for vaccinations.

There is no specific % of an EMS agency staff to schedule for vaccinations on any given day. % may be more specific to a county. Trying to complete Tier 1A through January.
When agency's wave 1 is done agency should schedule wave 2. Spread out vaccination schedule.

Counties and hospitals are asking about EMS help doing vaccinations. BEMS&TS is waiting for the education part such as training and info on skills sign offs are completed. It should be in the very near future. ALS providers would probably be used first and then others such as EMTs who have not done injections on a regular basis would be in the 2nd phase. CFRs would not be doing vaccinations.

Documentation card will be provided after a person has been vaccination. Information will include manufacturer, lot and when 2nd vaccination should be done. 2nd vaccination at 21 days for Pfizer or 28 days for Moderna out may have to take into account shift schedules and personal responsibilities. Some sites are scheduling provider's 2nd dose while others are advising provider to go online and do their own scheduling.

Facebook group [NYSDOH – New York State Health Department – EMS Community](#) can accept compliant posts and pictures providers want to post about themselves getting vaccinations. It is a closed group and is monitored by BEMS&TS.

Providers are assured there will be enough vaccine for everyone. NYS is planning vaccinating almost 20 million people. Pace of vaccine receipts could affect things. Hospital vaccine receipts are broken into dose allocations for hospital staff and other Tier 1A eligible such as EMS providers. It is expected that more vaccines will be approved over the coming months.

Mask mandates will probably not change over the coming months even for those who receive COVID-19 vaccinations. In time that may change. The continued spread of COVID-19 is uncertain especially as are risk and exposures if a big chunk of the population is not vaccinated.

Syracuse area has only 1 POD location listed on the CMDS open for appointments. Other hospitals and local health departments may not presently be able to deal with ultra-cold vaccine storage requirements. Expect more sites will be added over the next 2 to 4 weeks.

An individual can go into CMDS and cancel their vaccination appointment. An agency would not be able to cancel an individual's appointment.

2nd vaccination may be automatically scheduled for 21 or 28 days at time of 1st vaccination or it may be facility dependent for scheduling. How to get second dose in 21 or 28 days at the same location is part of the planning. PODs may need to accommodate 50 2nd dose vaccinations while also doing 50 1st dose vaccinations. If concerned with flexibility about the exact interval for the 2nd dose ask for information at the POD.

Large EMS agencies with operations in multiple counties should send their providers to PODs in areas where they are based and not where the provider lives.

DOH BEMS&TS sends out the link for POD vaccination scheduling to EMS agencies.

College based services work with team athletic trainers for training and other things. Non-EMS personnel who do not provide direct patient care would not be in Tier 1A.

NYS DOH is serious about monitoring vaccination eligibility in Tier 1A and legal action may be taken if guidance is not followed.

College based services may have members dispersed all over right now. The goal is to have them vaccinated in the county where the service operates but there could be limited exceptions. BEMS&TS wants to know about these situations.

New York City is not using CDMS for scheduling vaccination appointments but has its own arrangements:

- FDNY EMS is vaccinating its own EMS providers
- Voluntary hospitals with ambulances in the 911 system are handling their employees.
- NYC REMSCO and NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOH&MH) will be handling scheduled vaccinations for volunteer EMS providers and employees of commercial ambulance services. It is a web based system. The first vaccinations for these providers will be Sunday 12/27/20.

Reopening Plan is required of all organizations even essential services such as EMS. This is per Governor's Executive Order. The plan would include provisions for handling COVID-19 positive provider, provider exposure, testing, etc. Reopening Plan information is on the state web site – click [HERE](#).

Prioritization plan for scheduling providers for vaccinations does not need to be submitted to the BEMS&TS, however, agencies may be asked what their plan was including tracking for the 2nd vaccination dose. Agencies need to follow Policy Statement 20-08.

Some glitches and problem situations across the state were noted at different points during the call:

- A hospital erased its schedule and told people showing up that it was not vaccinating that day.
- Canton Potsdam Hospital's ZIP code reference in CMDS is incorrect
- Crouse Hospital in Syracuse may not have received vaccine yet
- Rochester Regional Health System was sent vaccine and was listed in CMDS spread sheet but advised it was not ready for EMS in Tier 1A and planned for EMS into late January.
- Nassau University Medical Center is working on technical difficulties with the scheduling link.
- Utica Hospital's scheduled POD was cancelled without explanation.
- ZIP code 14001 is showing up as Dallas, TX. Fix for this glitch is to go to the next box and enter the correct city & state and the appropriate POD(s) will show up.

Hospital may be short staffed on a vaccination day but providers should expect some contact if their appointment is cancelled.

Advice was given to work with County EMS Coordinators and the Regional EMS Councils.

Google form to report problems has been set up and after testing information on it will be sent out.

BEMS&TS needs to know about major problem situations. Send e-mail to: covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov

There were some smooth operations noted:

- Comment giving kudos to United Health Services in Binghamton.
- Comment was received that CMDS was easy to use.
- Comment received about awesome experience at Fox Hospital in Oneonta.

There have been a variety of answers on vaccination for someone who previously tested COVID-19 positive but who has now recovered. BEMS&TS is working on getting a definitive answer.

Quarantined EMS provider must follow restrictions and stay at home until cleared. They would be free to schedule a vaccination appointment after the quarantine period.

There is no cost for vaccination. There may be insurance billing at a later point in time.

Older EMS providers may have held back on service. If they are now responding and providing direct patient care including driving an ambulance they are eligible in Tier 1A.

Consent forms for vaccinations are not needed by BEMS&TS. PODs will be deciding what to do with them.

Declination forms are not mandated by BEMS&TS but an EMS agency may ask for it.

Next briefing is scheduled for Wednesday 12/30/20 at 4:00 PM.

There may be calls on operations issues separate from COVID-19 calls.

Feedback on these calls if helpful.

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From: BEMS - Program Agency Directors <BEMS-PA-DIRECT-L@LISTSERV.HEALTH.STATE.NY.US> On Behalf Of Greenberg, Ryan P (HEALTH)
Sent: Thursday, December 24, 2020 3:09 PM
To: BEMS-PA-DIRECT-L@LISTSERV.HEALTH.STATE.NY.US
Subject: Vaccine "Group Scheduling" Function Issue - Overbooked Appointments will be Cancelled

Good Afternoon Everyone,

On the Wednesday, December 23rd 5:00 PM "Statewide EMS Leadership Conference Call" we spoke about an issue with CDMS vaccine schedule appointments that were made using the "Add Group Member" button. This issue has caused an overbooking of appointment slots when the "Add Group Member" button was utilized.

The NYS DOH has to cancel all overbooked appointments at the following facilities:

- Glen Cove Hospital
- Huntington Hospital
- JT Mather Hospital
- Long Island Jewish, Valley Stream
- North Shore University Hospital
- Peconic Bay Medical Center
- Phelps Hospital
- Plainview Hospital
- South Shore University Hospital
- Syosset Hospital

The good news is this isn't a very large number of vaccine appointments of EMS providers that were overbooked, however it will affect some providers who have been registered.

Please pass on that any person that was booked by using this the "add group members" button (see photo below) that those scheduled will receive an email that their appointment has been cancelled. Anyone who receives this cancelled appointment email needs to go back into the registration system and choose a different, open appointment. You can share the scheduling link with these providers affected if you prefer to have them schedule themselves or you can schedule for them as the agency coordinator.

Please note while the "Add Group Member" will be disabled soon if you are registering and still seeing this button, do not click it. Each appointment needs to be an individual appointment and cannot be part of a group. Vaccine allocations account for one vaccine per vaccine appointment.

If you receive an email that also notes "click here to re-activate appointment" do not click this. Please do not re-activate your appointment and we kindly ask you to reschedule at your earliest convenience.

You do not need to reschedule at the same location. You can click another location from the excel file sent out on Tuesday evening if another location offers more availability.

Please note that more appointment slots are added in on a regular basis based on the expected arrival of vaccine to the distribution points. Please check back regularly to make an appointment if one is not available right way.

We still are working to get everyone in Phase 1A vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Should you have any additional questions or problems please feel free to reach out at any time to covidemsinfo@health.ny.gov and we will get back to you as quickly as possible.

We apologize for any inconvenience.

Ryan