

February 9, 2021



Dear families and friends:

We are writing with some very encouraging news. On Saturday February 6, 2021, we received an update from OPWDD Commissioner Kastner, that “the recent expansion of prioritization in the New York State vaccination rollout now includes all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

Beginning Monday, February 15, 2021, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. See attached communication. Governor Cuomo announced yesterday that you can begin scheduling your vaccinations on Sunday, February 14. To qualify for the vaccination under the expanded criteria, New Yorkers must provide documentation as required by the facility where they are getting vaccinated. This could include a doctor's letter, medical information evidencing an intellectual/developmental disability, or a signed certification to the like. When scheduling, please be sure to ask what documentation the facility requires, we may be able to assist you with securing documentation that may be in our records or that we may be legally entitled to generate.

While access to the vaccine is not without its challenges, this prioritization provides an avenue to get the vaccine if you are able to access an appointment. While gaining an appointment may prove challenging, it is achievable. It is our hope that the information we provide today and in the future will be a resource for you and your family member(s) toward identifying and securing the vaccination. Please take the time to explore the links below as they may prove to be helpful toward that objective.

New York State Department of Health: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>

Albany Medical College (listing of local vaccination point of delivery sites):
<https://www.amc.edu/capitalregionvax/>

Price Chopper: <https://www.pricechopper.com/covidvaccine/>

At the current time, we are unaware of additional vaccination clinics currently being run, however, should we be notified, we will immediately send an email to families that have provided their email address for quick notification of availability. If you would like to provide an email address or updated contacted information, please send an email to info@livingresources.org with the updated information.

Our goal is to prevent the spread of this virus and much of our efforts are toward resourcing the individuals we serve, their families and our staff with the hopes so that we can take that big step forward and again safely provide in-person day services and community based services. Please be patient as we move forward with this process.

Should you have any questions, please reach out to Steve Klein, Associate Executive Director for Program Services at sklein@livingresources.org or 518-218-0000 x 4312. You can also contact me at emartin@livingresources.org or 518-218-0000 x 5530.

Best regards for your health and safety,

Elizabeth Martin
Chief Executive Officer

Please remember that regardless of whether you have received the vaccine or not, you MUST continue to wear your facemask covering both your mouth and nose; wash your hands and/or disinfect frequently; and maintain social distancing when possible.



Office for People With
Developmental Disabilities

A Message from Commissioner Kastner

UPDATE RE: COVID-19 Vaccine for People With Developmental Disabilities Living at Home

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

I am pleased to share that the most recent expansion of prioritization in the New York State vaccination rollout now includes all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As you know, people living in OPWDD certified residential settings, as well as staff providing support to people in all settings, were previously prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine. On February 5, 2021, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in non-certified settings will be added to the 1b prioritization category and will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines as of February 15, 2021.

Access to the vaccine has been a challenge across the country and we will continue to work diligently to ensure that all people supported by OPWDD have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Information about NY's vaccination rollout, including eligibility and prioritization can be found here: <https://link.zixcentral.com/u/d351ac88/QMVEra1o6xGvgn2GUabuWQ?u=https%3A%2F%2Fcovid19vaccine.health.ny.gov%2F>. Additional guidance related to the announcement about newly eligible populations will also be posted in the coming days.

I would like to emphasize that, while it is up to each person to choose to receive the vaccine, the more people who receive the COVID-19 vaccine, the better the public health outcome will be. Answers to some frequently asked questions about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine are available at the [Department of Health website](#) as well as [information about the benefits of the vaccine](#), and [the federal approval process](#).

As valued members of our OPWDD community, I appeal to every one of you to help educate others about the importance of this vaccine and to do your part to encourage widespread vaccination. And please remember that the threat of COVID-19 is far from over. Even after you receive the vaccine, please continue to follow guidance on social distancing, avoid crowds, wear a mask in public and wash your hands frequently.

Working together, we can defeat COVID-19.

Please stay safe,

Theodore Kastner, M.D., M.S.
Commissioner