

SouthCoast Health mobilizes three public vaccination clinics in the New Bedford, Fall River, and Wareham area

During the past several days, Southcoast Health has proudly provided the first dose of the COVID vaccine to nearly 3,000 residents of our region. In a matter of days, an amazing team at Southcoast quickly mobilized three public vaccination clinics in the greater Fall River, New Bedford and Wareham regions. A scheduling process was developed that focused on simplicity and convenience for you, as you sought to make an appointment that fit your schedule and geographic location.

Patients have overwhelmingly reported positive experiences with our vaccine clinics, expressing gratitude to Southcoast clinical staff and leaving the vaccination clinics – second-dose appointment in hand – with a sense of lifesaving relief. What an amazing feeling for all of us.

Helping inspire this sense of hope is what Southcoast set out to do when we established these regional vaccination centers. We know that the community looks to our hospital and health care system during times of crisis, and we stepped up to get shots in the arms of as many people as possible, as quickly and fairly as possible.

Unfortunately, our efforts to vaccinate patients and other residents depend entirely on supply allocation from the state.

And though we communicated – and demonstrated – that our three successful Southcoast Health vaccine clinics combined are prepared to scale up to tens of thousands of vaccinations per week to serve our region, regrettably we learned yesterday that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) will

not be sending additional first-dose vaccines to hospitals and health systems for the foreseeable future.

The state is prioritizing distributing their vaccine supply to their state-controlled mass vaccination sites and other entities administering the vaccine.

To say we are disappointed would be a significant understatement. Without vaccine supply from the state for at least the next few weeks, and with no commitment of future allocations, we are unfortunately unable to schedule any further first-dose appointments at this time.

As you can imagine we are devastated to have to inform you of this recent development. And, we anticipate that many of you will be just as disappointed. As your local healthcare provider, we maintain a responsibility to proudly serve our community as a leader and advocate for your health and wellness. We will continue to strongly advocate for the sufficient vaccine supply our region deserves, with a scheduling process that is convenient and simple, and from locations that are local and accessible to you.

In the meantime, we fully expect the state to honor its commitment to provide us with enough doses for individuals with existing appointments for both first and second doses. We will stay in close contact with those patients directly.

Regardless of the current circumstances, we strongly encourage everyone, when eligible, to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. While we hope and advocate for additional first-dose supply, we will continue to serve you as a trusted resource for COVID health, wellness and vaccine information. Please stay connected with us for additional information and updates at www.southcoast.org, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and through text updates (<https://www.southcoast.org/opt-in-for-text-updates/>).

For more information from the Commonwealth and to find other

locations administering vaccine, please call 2-1-1 or visit <https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>. For answers to questions about the state's vaccination program, you can contact MDPH via <https://www.mass.gov/forms/contact-dph-by-web-form>.

We will continue to work with the Commonwealth, municipalities, and community partners to ensure everyone has access to this safe and effective vaccine.

Massachusetts State Police K9 “Binks” tracks two suspects who fled from pursued vehicle

One of the newest Massachusetts State Police dogs, Binks, had a good night. The three-year-old Belgian Malinois and his handler, MSP K9 Trooper Daniel Purtell, along with MSP patrols, tracked down two men who fled a wanted motor vehicle that the suspects abandoned last night on the Massachusetts Turnpike after a pursuit.

The sequence of events began late Thursday night, when a Trooper from the State Police-Medford Barracks attempted to pull over a black 2012 Honda Accord with a Connecticut registration for a light violation on Route 99 southbound in Everett. The driver of the Accord failed to stop and fled on Route 99 toward Boston. The pursuit was terminated and a description of the wanted vehicle was broadcast.

At exactly midnight, State Police were notified by an off-duty police officer that he was behind the wanted black Accord westbound on the Turnpike in Weston. The Accord was occupied

by two men, the off-duty officer stated. Troopers Darius McPherson, Kyle Panciera, and George Costa responded to the area and positioned themselves near the Weston Barracks.

Meanwhile, Trooper Cory Hetu prepared to deploy stop sticks tire deflation equipment several miles further west on the Turnpike if necessary.



Massachusetts State Police photo.

Troopers attempted to stop the Accord, whose driver failed to stop and continued to flee westbound, travelling across multiple lanes at speeds that reached as high as 110 mph.

Several miles down the road, Trooper Hetu deployed the stop sticks and the Accord hit them and continued to travel westbound on damaged tires. Moments later, the Accord came to a stop in the breakdown lane in the town of Westborough.

Trooper Purtell from the K9 Unit was the first to reach the Accord, and observed a man jumping over the guardrail and fleeing into the woods. Trooper Purtell deployed Binks (a recent graduate of the MSP's K9 certification school), who acquired a scent and began tracking down a steep incline into the woods, where a set of footprints was visible in the snow.

Binks tracked down to a deer fence, where he showed a proximity alert and began to jump and whine at the fence, and stood on his hinds legs peering deeper into the woods. Trooper Purtell called out the suspect, heard him respond from a distance, and was able to persuade him to surrender. The suspect, who was the driver and was identified as ARTHUR HARRIOTT, 19, of Windsor, Ct., was taken into custody by Troopers.

Then Binks pulled away from that location, moving to his left and whining, and began tracking again. Trooper Purtell observed a second set of footprints in the snow. Joined by Trooper Costa, the K9 team tracked through deep snow and thick woods until they encountered a stream. Binks tracked down the stream bed and moments later the Troopers picked up the footprints again about 15 feet away.

Binks continued tracking toward a home, down the driveway, and out to Fox Lane in Westborough. He tracked up the road. Three houses up Binks took a right down another home's driveway, tracking between a truck and a sedan. Once through the vehicles Binks spun back and stood on his hind legs again.

Trooper Purtell lit up the vehicles and observed a man lying down trying to conceal himself in the sedan. Troopers called out the suspect, who surrendered and was taken into custody

and was identified as NICKOLAS BURBA, 21, of Manchester, Ct. MSP K9 Trooper John Doherty and his partner Duke also responded to the scene to assist and completed a visual search around the vehicles and inside the sedan.

Troopers transported both suspects to State Police-Weston to be booked.

ARTHUR HARRIOTT was charged with the following offenses:

1. Unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle;
2. Negligent operation of a motor vehicle;
3. Failure to stop for police;
4. Lights violation;
5. Speeding;
6. Marked lanes violation; and
7. Marked lanes violation, Massachusetts Turnpike.

NICKOLAS BURBA was charged with breaking and entering into a vehicle.

Binks, pictured, completed certification last year and has been on the road for two weeks. He is dual-certified in patrol and human remains detection.

Governor Baker: People Who Have Had COVID-19 Should Get Vaccinated

By Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

With the state's COVID-19 vaccine rollout still early in its

second phase, Gov. Charlie Baker on Thursday urged residents to seek the immunization when it is their turn even if they previously contracted the virus.

Baker, who faced sharp criticism Thursday from Cape Cod officials frustrated by vaccine distribution, touted the vaccine's protection against new strains of the virus that have been spreading in the United States in recent weeks.

Many health care providers, including those in communities of color that have been hardest hit, have recounted conversations with patients who believe that they are immune after recovering from COVID-19, Baker said.

"This is just not true," Baker told reporters after touring the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. "You really should get vaccinated because, as COVID morphs into different variants, all those variants so far, based on the testing that's been done on the vaccines indicates, are effective. That's not necessarily going to be true if you just had COVID yourself."

His recommendation aligns with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's outlook. Although the federal health agency notes that reinfection appears uncommon in the first 90 days after contracting COVID-19, it emphasizes that experts do not yet have a consensus on how long that protection lasts.

Immunity developed from an infection can vary person-to-person, the CDC says on its vaccine FAQ website, and "some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long."

Baker's advice could apply to a massive chunk of the state's population. Through Wednesday afternoon, the Department of Public Health tallied 521,045 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the first infection was identified in Massachusetts more than a year ago, plus another 27,901 probable cases.

There are likely many others who contracted the virus but were never tested to confirm it.

Massachusetts remains in the opening step of its second vaccine rollout phase, which means many of those who have recovered from COVID-19 are likely still not eligible to receive vaccines.

While touring the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Baker praised community health centers for the “crucial role” they have played in caring for vulnerable populations. Those centers have received more than 75,000 vaccine doses so far.

Appointments Needed

The governor also urged providers to stick to an appointment system for administering doses as much as possible, cautioning that opening up availability to patients who did not book slots creates confusion.

On Wednesday, hundreds of people waited at the state-run mass vaccination site in Danvers, with multiple news reports indicating that some were told there were extra doses available without an appointment required.

The confusion in Danvers underscored the at-times common uncertainty about vaccine availability, particularly amid a rollout that is taking place in the winter when snowstorms can cancel appointments.

Residents should do everything they can to make it to their vaccine appointments or cancel if they are unable to keep an appointment, Baker said, while providers should be “judicious” about how much supply they should prepare over the course of the day, Baker said.

“In the end, you should be vaccinating the people who have appointments, so that the people who have appointments don’t end up seeing something on their phone or in their email or a

text message or something else that says, 'Oh my, I might not get my vaccine even though I have an appointment,' " Baker said. "The game here is: you have an appointment, you're going to get a vaccine."

Massachusetts has been "lucky" so far that only about 0.13 percent of the vaccine doses it has received – likely less than 2,000 total doses – have spoiled without being used, Baker said.

"In my view, any dose you lose is a problem, but that's a pretty small number in the grand scheme of things," Baker said.

A day after launching a new policy allowing companions of adults 75 and older to receive doses if they accompany seniors to a mass vaccination site, Baker urged older adults not to give out personal information.

Anyone who is solicited by a stranger with an offer of transportation to an appointment should report it to the authorities, Baker said.

"We have heard some pretty disturbing reports of some people trying to take advantage of this program already, with some people posting online to try to get a senior to bring them to a vaccination site, or in some cases, asking to be paid to drive someone to one," he said. "If you're 75 years or older and you need assistance going through the vaccination process, you should only reach out to somebody who you know or trust to bring you as your companion, whether that's a child, a companion, a spouse, a neighbor or a caregiver."

"Pretty Enraged"

Baker, who faced criticism earlier this month amid a rocky vaccine access expansion to senior citizens, described significant progress Thursday in the state's vaccination efforts.

The state has administered 987,000 vaccine doses and is “on track” to exceed 1 million by the end of the day, he said, adding that his administration “surpassed the goal we set for ourselves at the beginning of Phase 2 to be able to administer 242,000 doses per week.”

Hours earlier, though, a Democratic state senator representing the Cape and Islands lambasted the administration, arguing that the rollout has not come close to meeting its goals for an equitable distribution.

Sen. Julian Cyr of Truro said he is “frustrated, disappointed and, quite frankly, pretty enraged” by Baker’s approach and the impacts on the Cape. During a weekly Cape Cod COVID-19 Response Task Force, Cyr said that pleas from the region’s delegation for a mass vaccination site or additional doses have gone unanswered.

“Cape Codders are being left out of this vaccination,” Cyr said. “I don’t know why, and I don’t know what else to do other than air these frustrations because our pleas for help are not being answered.”

As a percent of population, Barnstable County has a significantly older population than the rest of the state. About 12.7 percent of the county’s residents are 75 or older, compared to 7.1 percent in Massachusetts as a whole, according to figures presented by Cyr, who called Barnstable the third-oldest county in the country.

In raw population, though, the numbers are smaller. Cyr said Barnstable County has more than 27,000 residents over the age of 75, and by comparison, Census data show that Middlesex County has more than 65,000 residents over the even-higher age threshold of 80.

Baker on Wednesday announced the state would stand up additional mass vaccination sites in Natick, and one in Dartmouth, which is just over an hour’s drive from Hyannis. He

has hinted that there could be more to come, but it remains unclear if anything closer to Barnstable County will emerge than Gillette Stadium, which is more than an hour's drive away from most towns on the Cape.

This week, there were 1,300 appointments available for vaccines on the Cape that filled up in 29 minutes, Cyr said. He contrasted that with the tens of thousands of appointments available at the state's mass vaccination sites, some of which are still available days after they open.

"To me, that indicates that where the vaccines are being made available is actually not accessible to the people who need them," Cyr said.

The senator also criticized other steps the administration has taken as "exacerbating the problem," pointing in particular to the 211 call center Baker launched last week to help seniors who struggle to book appointments online.

While the phone line is a "step in the right direction," Cyr said, he argued that the administration needs to implement additional training.

"I have reams of emails from constituents of mine who have called this number, and it is very clear that people answering the line do not know that Sandwich is not near Springfield, and that Dennis is not up the street from Danvers," Cyr said.

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife respond

to barn owl sitting in fireplace

We received a call from a homeowner with an interesting predicament. A barred owl had found its way into their chimney and was now sitting in the fireplace.

Fortunately, our Central District Manager Todd Olanyk was able to assist, carefully removing the owl from the fireplace and examining it for injuries before releasing it outside, where it quickly flew off.

If you're wondering why a barred owl would be attracted to a chimney, a look at their life history might give a clue. From February through May, barred owls across Massachusetts begin laying eggs. Barred owls do not build their own nests. They are cavity nesters, meaning they typically will select a hollow tree or use the nest of a hawk or squirrel to lay their eggs.

This particular barred owl might have been looking for a cavity to nest when it found itself in a chimney with no easy escape. To help prevent wild animals like birds, bats, raccoons, or squirrels from entering your home, we recommend placing a metal cap with a screen on your chimney. mass.gov/news/barred-owl-rescued-from-fireplace.



Mattapoisett Fire Department responds to reported gas fire

Last night Engine 2, Engine 4, and Rescue 1 responded to a reported "gas fire" inside a home on Beacon Street.

A propane tank had caught fire while being used to supply a patio heater in a screened-in porch connected to the home. The fire was caused by a loose hose connection and the tank being right next to the ignition source.

Luckily, the homeowner used a fire extinguisher to extinguish the flames prior to our arrival.

Propane tanks should NEVER be stored or used in a home, garage, or screened-in porches. Tanks need to also be at least 10' from a source of ignition.

New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of February 15, 2021 – February 19, 2021

The City of New Bedford has roadwork sites for the upcoming week of February 15, 2021 – February 19, 2021 and they are as follows:

Eversource:

- Union St from N. Orchard St to S. Sixth St
- Lucas St from Brock Ave to W. Rodney French Blvd
- Chestnut St from Sycamore St to Robeson St
- Phillips Ave from Onoko Lane to Riverside Ave
- Oaklawn St from Brock Ave to W. Rodney French Blvd
- Cove Rd from County St to Margin St
- Cove Rd from County St to Crapo St

Other:

- Department of Public Infrastructure will be filling potholes city-wide on a continuous basis.
- The contractor (Baystate WinSupply) is scheduled to continue large water meter replacements at various locations throughout the city. There are no anticipated traffic controls for this work.
- Due to ongoing construction at the High Hill Reservoir residents may experience discolored water. The water is safe, and the discoloration will be temporary. We recommend allowing the water to settle for a few hours and then flushing your service line by letting the bathtub run for a few minutes

until the water clears.

*** Please note: Contractors will continue to follow guidelines and protocol regarding COVID-19 social distancing while conducting work in construction zone.*

Due to the current COVID-19 situation the Department of Public Infrastructure will be closed to the public entry. Office staff is available to assist by email and telephone.

Massachusetts State Police search for 11-year old Aiden continues

Chicopee Police and the Massachusetts State Police continue to search for Aiden Blanchard, the 11-year-old boy who went missing last Friday. A flight crew from the Massachusetts State Police Air Wing today conducted an aerial search of the Connecticut River and its banks from the Massachusetts Turnpike down to the Connecticut state line, seeking any evidence related to Aiden's disappearance.

The flight crew did not locate any evidence related to Aiden's disappearance. The crew observed vast areas of ice covering parts of the river, including south of where Route 91 crosses the river down to Memorial Bridge in Springfield, and again further south north of Six Flags in Agawam.

Various State Police specialized units, including our Air Wing, Marine Unit, Dive Team, and Drone Unit, along the State Police Detective Unit for Hampden County, will continue their search efforts with local police in coming days.



Massachusetts State Police photo.

Aiden was last seen Friday, February 5, 2021 at approximately 11:30 a.m. as he was walking in the Willamansett area of Chicopee, near Old Field Road, and was believed to be heading in the direction of the Medina Street boat launch along the Connecticut River.

Aiden is 5' tall, 100 lbs., with brown hair and blue eyes, and was last seen wearing a red ski jacket and black ski pants. Local and State Police previously searched the Connecticut and Chicopee Rivers using divers, boats, drones, and the State Police Air Wing. The MSP Marine Unit hauled one of its boats to the river from Boston and conducted a water search during Tuesday's snowstorm. MSP and fire department divers searched over the weekend. The area was searched based on information that Aiden was last known to be in the area of the boat ramp. The operation remains focused on locating Aiden, or any evidence showing his direction of travel or whereabouts.

All evidence known thus far suggests Aiden was alone and near the river when he went missing. Based on the information currently known to detectives, no foul play is suspected at this time. All leads continue to be investigated.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has created a missing person poster for Aiden. Anyone who has information that may help locate Aiden, or who believes they may have seen him, should immediately call 911, Chicopee Police at 413-594-1639, or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST.

Photos of the Connecticut River taken by the MSP Air Wing flight crew are below. Please attribute photos to Massachusetts State Police. Aiden's Missing Person poster is also included again.

Missing

Aiden Blanchard



Birth:	03/14/2009	Hair:	Brown
Missing:	02/05/2021	Eyes:	Blue
Race:	White	Height:	5'00"
Sex:	M	Weight:	100 lbs
Missing From : Chicopee MA United States			

Age Missing: 11 yrs **Age Now:** 11 yrs

Aiden was last seen on February 5, 2021. He was last seen wearing black snow pants over black sweatpants, a black hoodie, a red coat, and black boots.



ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT
The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST) OR

Chicopee Police Department (Massachusetts) 1-413-594-1639

Massachusetts State Police photo.

Massachusetts State Troopers, US Marshals, Haverhill Police track and arrest man wanted for Virginia shooting

Troopers from the Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section (MSP VFAS), in partnership with the US Marshals Service and Haverhill Police, this morning located and arrested a man wanted for a shooting in Virginia and seized a rifle and two pistols that were in his possession.

Troopers from the MSP VFAS North Team, Deputy US Marshals, and Haverhill Police detectives recently identified an apartment on Proctor Street in Haverhill as a possible location for HECTOR JAVIER BIDO, 23. Troopers, Marshals and Officers went to the address early this morning and located BIDO in a bedroom and arrested him without incident.

During the arrest, the apprehension team observed two firearms in plain view: a Smith & Wesson SD40 .40 caliber pistol with a round in the chamber and a fully-loaded 13-round magazine, as well as a Safeside Tactical AR-15 with a fully-loaded 30-round magazine. BIDO informed Troopers that he had an additional firearm in his Dodge Challenger and provided the keys to the vehicle. Inside the Challenger, members of the apprehension team located Glock 17 9mm pistol with a round in the chamber and two fully-loaded 17-round magazines. All three firearms and the ammunition were seized.

BIDO was charged with the warrant related to the Virginia shooting, which lists the following offenses:

1. Use of a firearm in commission of a felony;
2. Malicious shooting in/at an occupied building (2 counts);
3. Aggravated malicious wounding;

4. Simple assault and battery; and
5. Pointing or brandishing a firearm (2 counts).

BIDO will additionally be charged in connection with the firearms seized during today's arrest.

BIDO is one of three suspects wanted for the early morning Jan. 24 shooting in Radford, Va. The shooting occurred on the 400 block of Sanford Street in Radford and caused serious injuries to the victim. BIDO was listed as living in Dublin, Va., at the time of the shooting. According to Radford Police, two other suspects wanted in connection with the shooting remain at large.

Suspect charged in \$9,500 scam of elderly victim in New Bedford

Charges have been filed for 26-year old Joel Eduardo Hernandez Quezda of Hartford, Connecticut following an investigation into a scam. On Feb. 8, an elderly male reported he had been duped out of \$9,500.

The victim reported that around 9 a.m. he received a phone call from a male indicating the victim's granddaughter was in jail and needed \$9,500 to be bailed. Shortly after, a male and female arrived at the residence and retrieved the funds from the victim.

Police were made aware of the incident and it was soon learned that a second attempt was being made to take an additional \$3,300 from the victim. NBPD patrol officers stopped a suspect

vehicle in the victim's neighborhood. Quezda, the operator, was arrested for an active warrant for larceny out of Stoughton District Court and a warrant out of Connecticut for a similar offense, as well as possession of an open container of alcohol.

As the investigation continued, Quezda was tied to the initial larceny and \$1,100 was retrieved. Upon appearing at Stoughton Court on Feb. 10 he was released on personal recognizance.

These scams are becoming more frequent. NBPD strongly advises that if someone receives a call or message claiming to be a family member or a friend desperate for money:

- Resist the urge to act immediately, no matter how dramatic the story is.
- Check the story out with someone else in your family or circle of friends, even if you've been told to keep it a secret.
- Do not provide money.
- Contact police.

These situations are known as “family emergency scams” and you can learn more about how to deal with them here.

If you have any information on criminal activity in your neighborhood, the New Bedford Police Dept. wants to hear from you. You can leave an anonymous tip on our voicemail at (508) 991-6300 Ext. 1.

City of New Bedford provides

update on COVID-19 vaccination efforts

Ongoing vaccine supply shortages continue to impede the City of New Bedford's multi-pronged vaccination effort. Despite the challenge, last month, the City was able to begin vaccinating its 600+ first responders and nursing/health staff with the first dose of the Moderna vaccine. Administration of a second dose to first responders including EMS, Police, Fire, and nursing/health staff continues this month at the established vaccination clinic at the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center. More than 400 first responders and essential employees have received their first dose at McCoy, with nearly 200 receiving their second dose to date.

Massachusetts entered Phase 2 of its vaccination distribution plan on February 1. Under the current stage of Phase 2, all adults 75 years and older are eligible for vaccination. For its part, the City's Health Department has chosen to target the majority of its limited vaccine resources to the city's major senior housing facilities, including several high-rise complexes dedicated to seniors. Residents in these facilities are particularly vulnerable as the facilities often contain common areas with transmission potential and residents have high rates of medical conditions making them susceptible to the COVID-19 virus. Statistics show that just under 80% of the city's COVID-19 fatalities to date have been among those age 70 and over.

To date, the Health Department has administered 492 vaccines at senior living facilities. New Bedford has more than 20 senior housing complexes, and clinics are being scheduled with the management of each facility so that residents can be signed up automatically and vaccinated a designated time.

A separate federal program using private healthcare companies

is vaccinating the city's nursing home residents.

In total the City's Health Department is currently receiving 400 vaccine doses per week, with an additional allocation for second doses. 300 of the 400 are distributed through the mobile vaccination clinics at senior apartments described above. The remaining 100 continue to be administered to first responders and nursing/health staff needing first or second doses, as well as a small number of eligible seniors age 75 or older who have inquired about vaccine availability with the city's Health Department, Community Services Department, or Council on Aging (COA).

New Bedford residents over the age of 75 are encouraged to contact their primary health care provider or doctor's office to schedule a vaccination appointment. Because of the short supply, the Council on Aging is only able to schedule a very limited amount of vaccinations. About 400 residents over 75 have been scheduled to be vaccinated over the course of the next month at the McCoy vaccination site, with more than 100 currently on a COA waiting list.

The City's Council on Aging continues to receive hundreds of calls inquiring about local vaccination opportunities. The COA staff are pleased to discuss vaccine options and receive contact information from eligible seniors who would be interested in obtaining a vaccine from a city-run clinic in the future. Residents are advised that city-run clinics are not currently listed on the state's regional vaccination site due to their very limited scale. It is hoped that, as the city obtains greater access to vaccine supplies, perhaps in the coming weeks, listings for city-run clinics will be posted on state and city websites.

In the interim, residents 75 and above may call the Council on Aging at 508-991-6250 but again are advised that the current wait time for scheduling a vaccine with the city-run clinics is more than a month due to the supply shortage. Due to high

call volume, residents are encouraged to call once; messages will be returned and residents will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their calls are received.

Given the limitations on city-run clinics due to the supply shortage, residents 75 and above are encouraged, as a first step, to contact their primary health care provider or doctor's office, as local health systems are also beginning to vaccinate under Phase 2. Residents 75 and above may also sign up for non-city-run clinics through the state's regional vaccination sites, mass.gov/covidvaccine or by dialing 211 by telephone.

A new state-run site was recently announced by the state for Greater New Bedford, located at the former Circuit City store on State Road (Route 6) in Dartmouth, and appointments can be made for that site beginning February 18 on the state sign-up website.

The City will continue to provide new information as its vaccine access increases and opportunities for vaccination through city-run clinics is expanded. Residents should monitor local media outlets and the City's social media accounts for these developments.