

New Bedford establishes waterfront vaccination center for essential seafood industry workers

Mayor Jon Mitchell, joined by U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, Congressman Bill Keating, and members of the City Council and state legislative delegation, announced today that the City of New Bedford has established a waterfront vaccination center to vaccinate essential seafood industry workers.

The site is located at the former Environmental Protection Agency's Dewatering Facility on the waterfront, recently turned over to the New Bedford Port Authority by the EPA. It will launch in the coming weeks with additional vaccine supply and through a partnership with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center.

New Bedford has implemented protections for essential workers since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020, Mayor Mitchell announced that the City would offer a free mask, produced at Joseph Abboud Manufacturing Corp. in New Bedford's North End, to any city resident who wanted one.

On May 6, 2020, Mayor Mitchell and the Board of Health announced strong workplace safety standards, including a special industrial workplace order, ensuring stringent health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among essential workers in the seafood processing industry.

The waterfront vaccination center will be operated as a partnership between the City and the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, which will staff the vaccination site. The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center recently received an award of nearly \$4 million from the Health

Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as part of the American Rescue Plan to support its work, including direct receipt of vaccine, which makes possible the operation of this site.

“New Bedford’s essential seafood processing workforce plays a vital role in feeding the United States and distributing seafood from America’s top commercial fishing port. It is critical that we continue to do everything we can to keep essential workers safe and support the equitable distribution of vaccines,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I am grateful to Senator Warren, Senator Markey, and Congressman Keating for their advocacy in securing these critical funds for New Bedford, which the Community Health Center, under the leadership of Cheryl Bartlett, will use to protect our residents and our essential workers.”

The site is expected to open in early April and to handle at least 125 vaccinations per hour, with the ability to vaccinate up to 800 to 1,000 people per day. Further details about hours of operation and signup steps will be announced ahead of the center’s opening in collaboration with the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center. Through coordination with employers, essential seafood industry workers will be scheduled for their COVID-19 vaccinations at the site. It is located on the New Bedford waterfront in close proximity to many of the city’s seafood processing facilities.