

**From:** [Chief Medical Officer](#)  
**Subject:** Message from Chief Medical Officer on COVID-19 Vaccine Availability  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 6:08:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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April 7, 2021

## Message from Chief Medical Officer on COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier this week, [President Biden announced](#) the timeline for all U.S. adults to be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine was moved up to April 19, from the original goal of May 1. That means that in just over a week, any adult in our country who wants a vaccine will be eligible to register for one. This news brings us hope and encouragement that we are on the right path to defeat the pandemic.

I want to provide as many resources as possible to help you navigate the various pathways for getting the vaccine. As a DHS employee, there are several [roads to vaccination](#).

- Mission-essential, location-dependent (1A/1B) employees were provided an opportunity to receive the vaccine through our partnership with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Currently, 163 VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) across the country are scheduling and vaccinating those 1A/1B employees who opted in.
- DHS employees also have several options to locate vaccine opportunities in their communities through [VaccineFinder.org](#) or local [retail pharmacies](#).
- **NEW:** All non-1A/1B DHS employees may present this [designation letter](#) to their local vaccine provider immediately as proof of priority eligibility to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Phase 1C (essential workforce) recommendation.
  - **Note:** This designation letter is not for use as part of our VHA partnership, as the VAMCs are completing vaccinations for DHS 1A/1B colleagues only.

As vaccines become readily available in your community, you may find that you are offered a more convenient opportunity and need to cancel a previously scheduled appointment. If you are not able to attend a scheduled vaccine appointment, either at a VAMC or in the community, please cancel with as much notice as you can so that the vaccine can be used for someone else.

Again, I encourage you to get vaccinated as soon as you are eligible. Getting vaccinated is one more step you can take to protect yourself and others from this virus. Everyone—including those who are already vaccinated—should continue to wear a mask, wash their hands, and maintain physical distance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pritesh Gandhi  
Chief Medical Officer