

Delaware Endorses COVID-19 Booster Vaccines for All Persons 18 and Older

DOVER, DE (Nov. 19, 2021) – Following action today by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) advisory committee, Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) is encouraging all fully vaccinated Delawareans 18 and older to get a booster dose of Pfizer, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccines.

On Friday, the FDA expanded booster dose eligibility to all adults 18 and older, who were originally fully vaccinated with either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines at least 6 months prior. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices subsequently voted to recommend expanding booster eligibility to align with the FDA's authorization. Originally, eligibility was limited to individuals 65 and older and those 18-64 with underlying health conditions or occupational or residential risks of exposure to COVID-19. Booster doses were already approved for anyone who initially received J&J, 2 months after their original vaccine.

Evidence from clinical studies show that boosters do not merely top off immunity, but elevate protection well beyond peak levels from the primary series. Some experts say the elevated levels of protection can be as high as 95%. The same study showed an 85% reduction in hospitalization, 76% reduction in severe disease, and 94% reduction in deaths in those who received a booster dose. Boosters are designed to increase protection from COVID-19 in those who originally mounted a good immune response from vaccination to begin with.

Boosters became recommended after some evidence of waning immunity over time, especially as the Delta variant surged.

“We applaud the latest federal action to make all adults eligible for a booster vaccine,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “COVID-19 cases are again rising and having this tool in our arsenal can help us in holding off another winter surge that could come with people gathering inside more often as the weather turns colder.”

Dr. Rattay says, ultimately, the most effective step continues to be for more people to get their first and second doses of the vaccine as over 75% of current COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are among people who have not yet been vaccinated.

For more information on second, third and booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, visit de.gov/boosters.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. COVID-19 vaccines were evaluated in tens of thousands of participants in clinical trials. The vaccines met the FDA’s rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality needed to support approval or authorization of a vaccine.

Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This

monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems.