

March 4, 2021

**Vaccine Equity
Vaccine Navigation Support and Data Integrity**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the disproportionate impact of this virus on certain populations and has made it imperative to focus interventions and resources to address the health of those disproportionately impacted, including communities of color and persons with disabilities. Consequently, as part of the vaccine distribution process, a vaccine equity framework is being implemented to support both efforts. Equitable vaccine administration is a crucial tool to not only address disease burden, but to reopen safely and effectively. By proactively preventing transmission and protecting the hardest hit and most vulnerable groups, there is a better chance of more quickly ending the pandemic in this state.

Accordingly, the Administration has announced modifications to the Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework to account for the added protection of vaccines in the hardest hit communities. Specifically, the framework is being modified to encourage administration of doses in disproportionately impacted communities, as measured by the Healthy Places Index (HPI). Moreover, the Administration has announced a new vaccine allocation formula with a focus on these communities and eligible employment sectors. The formula will be updated periodically to account for vaccine supply, additional counties being brought into the Third-Party Administrator network, and other factors. As a part of this expanded framework, the Administration is initially announcing two efforts which have fiscal implications.

Supporting Critical Providers with Onboarding onto My Turn Vaccine System—The state will make funding available to onboard and support providers—especially those serving low-income individuals—which will expand critical infrastructure for vaccine distribution and provide the resources needed for data entry to bring these providers onto My Turn, the state's information system that integrates vaccination scheduling, claims administration, and vaccination reporting across all providers. These additional resources will improve accuracy and timeliness in data reporting. By providing resources to improve the accuracy of the data in this system, the state will have an improved real-time view of current and future appointments as well as improved vaccine administration rates across providers, counties, and different population pools. The My Turn system will also allow for the reservation of appointments to address a more equitable distribution of vaccines to eligible individuals living in the lowest quartile of the HPI. Depending upon the duration of the vaccine effort, the Administration estimates the costs of this effort to be \$60 million.

Vaccine Navigation Support—The state will support trusted messengers in communities significantly impacted by COVID-19 to sign-up individuals for vaccination appointments. This assistance will focus on communities identified in the lowest quartile of the HPI with the goal of achieving greater equity in the state's vaccination efforts. Assisters will be responsible for scheduling vaccinations utilizing My Turn, and will be compensated from the overall program's budget if the individuals they sign-up get vaccinated. The effort will build on the community outreach grants supported by the Department of Social Services. The Administration estimates the cost to be \$30 million.