

Governor Phil Murphy

Press Pool Coverage: Governor Murphy Visits Elizabeth Seaport COVID-19 Vaccination Site

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Five hundred dockworkers are scheduled to get COVID-19 vaccines at the Elizabeth seaport Tuesday and Wednesday in an effort to help the seaport's employers return to pre-pandemic staffing levels.

Governor Phil Murphy attended the opening of the mass vaccination event which is sponsored by the International Longshoremen's Association and seaport employer group New York Shipping Association. Gov. Murphy said staging the event at the seaport allowed the dockworkers to easily fit a vaccine into their schedule.

"In looking at the concentration of the workforce here, we thought this is one of the few areas that it makes sense," Gov. Murphy said. "The ILA and the New York Shipping Association have done a great job."

The vaccination effort comes roughly one week after New Jersey opened the vaccination roster to all transport and logistics employees. Pharmacy chain CVS is administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to the dockworkers at a building owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

John Nardi, president of NYSA, said that there were about 30 more requests for vaccine appointments beyond the 500 originally planned.

He said about 500 dockworkers already got vaccines on their own and another ILA local arranged separately for its 300 members to get vaccines. With the two-day vaccination drive, he said about one-third of the roughly 4,000 port employees who move containers and handle repairs and maintenance will be vaccinated.

He said the New Jersey marine terminals, the largest seaport on the U.S. East Coast, have only had about 95 percent of their typical staffing levels because of the pandemic. The lower headcount is due to both COVID-19-related absenteeism and social distancing measures that had to be taken at the seaport to limit COVID-19 transmission.

"We don't have as much absenteeism as we did at the beginning of the pandemic, but we still have COVID-19 marring in place," he said. "That impacts the labor force as we don't have as many workers as we do normally."

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Nardi said that 1,300 dockworkers either contracted COVID-19 or had to quarantine due to exposure. There are currently 91 dockworkers that are not on the job due to COVID-19, he said.

ILA spokesman James McNamara said 22 members of the union died because of COVID-19. He said the union has been lobbying for a while to prioritize longshore workers for vaccines because they are handling the gloves, masks, and other medical equipment needed for the pandemic that come from overseas suppliers.

"Our president Harold Daggett has been communicating with Governor Murphy for months now," said McNamara. "Without the longshore workers, a lot of these industries wouldn't have had the supplies they needed."

Gov. Murphy said vaccine rollouts are still dependent on how much is being allotted from manufacturers and the need to vaccinate other vulnerable populations and workers.

"It took us a little longer to get set up, but we're rolling this out in different communities," Governor Murphy said. "It's been a real partnership with NYSA and the ILA. I take my hat off to everybody involved."

Michael Angell Reporter JOC

PHOTOS

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0313dyosetv5gmz/AABiGnPp3CLaRZ6A9LGrXTG-a?dl=0 (https://www.dropbox.com/sh/0313dyosetv5gmz/AABiGnPp3CLaRZ6A9LGrXTG-a?dl=0)

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VIDEO

Link (https://latako.com/-/view/8267860/38387e9c56498439c4db239893850055?shared_code=eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiIsInR5cCI6IkpXVCJ9eyJleHAiOiE2MTc3NzUzMTY5ImlkIjoiaz130S1slm9iamVjdERhdGEiOncic2hhcmVklp0cnVlfsSwi2pZW50jp7mFwcCl6IndYlslnc2lcnNpb24iOm51bGwslm9r2gDFj-Pvg)

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Statewide

Table with 4 columns: Home (/governor/), Key Initiatives, Social, and NJ Home. Rows include Administration, Governor Phil Murphy, Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, First Lady Tammy Snyder, Cabinet, Office of Health Care, Transparency, Boards, Commissions & Authorities, Internship Opportunities, Governor's Residence, Drumthwacket, and various news and contact links.



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