

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Marks Start of COVID-19 Vaccination Effort for Sworn Law Enforcement and Fire Professionals

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Morris County Regional Vaccination Center Now Open to Frontline Health Care Workers, Police and Fire First Responders

ROCKAWAY – Governor Phil Murphy, joined by New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, Superintendent of the State Police Colonel Patrick Callahan, Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, Morris County Commissioner Director Stephen Shaw, and labor officials, today visited the Morris County Regional Vaccination Center to highlight the beginning of New Jersey's vaccination effort for sworn law enforcement and fire professionals.

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All sworn law enforcement and fire professionals in New Jersey are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine which is estimated to include about 55,000 individuals. These first responders are the first individuals in Phase 1A to become eligible for vaccination. EMS professionals, also considered first responders, are already eligible for the vaccine under Phase 1A as health care workers.

"Throughout this pandemic, our first responders have continued to save lives and protect our communities, and I am proud today that we are able to provide them with this added level of protection as they continue to do their jobs," **said Governor Murphy**. "When we're ready to move forward, this site will serve as one of six megasites for the general public to receive their vaccinations. With hundreds of thousands of preregistrations already received, we know there will be a strong demand when that day arrives."

"We're all used to charging head-on into potentially dangerous situations, but COVID-19 has added a whole new layer of uncertainty and change for all of us," **said John Alderton, a career firefighter and EMT with the Morris Township Fire Department**. "This vaccine is the first step of us moving in the right direction. Thank you Governor Murphy for bringing this vaccine to not only first responders, but hopefully in the near future, to every New Jersey resident."

"These megasites will be able to handle a large volume of individuals as we continue to move through eligible phases of vaccination toward the general public," **said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "The sites are part of a growing network of community-based sites that will help ensure fair and equitable access and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines."

"I'm grateful that Governor Murphy, Commissioner Persichilli, and the Department of Health have opened these mega-sites, and have made vaccinations for COVID-19 available for police and fire professionals across the state," **said Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal**. "Our first responders have demonstrated extraordinary heroism, dedication, and resilience in answering the call to serve during this pandemic, and routinely put themselves in harm's way. I strongly encourage all law enforcement who live or work in the state to get vaccinated and help stop the spread of this virus."

"We memorialized a lot of New Jerseyans over the past several months," **said Colonel Patrick Callahan, Superintendent of the State Police**. "This vaccine will save lives. The fact that this megasite and sites like it around New Jersey are up and running is a testament to this collective team effort."

"This vaccine megasite in Morris County marks a monumental step for New Jersey residents, particularly our healthcare providers and first responders who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic," **said Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill**. "The collaboration across state, county, local levels alongside the incredible team at Atlantic Health puts all of us on the path to greater safety and well-being. I fought for vaccine distribution funding in the latest coronavirus package and I'll continue to fight to get the resources necessary from the federal government."

"This is a tremendous logistical undertaking by Morris County in partnership with Atlantic Health System and the State of New Jersey," **said Stephen H. Shaw, Director of the Morris County Board of Commissioners**. "Our Offices of Public Health and Emergency Management worked tirelessly through the holiday season with Atlantic Health to identify and transform an empty retail space into a large scale, safe, secure regional vaccination facility. Morris County remains steadfast in its commitment to allocate the resources necessary to protect the public health. We anticipate being able to inoculate as many as 2,400 individuals daily at this facility. Our thanks go out to Atlantic Health for its contributions of staff and assets, Governor Murphy for his support, everyone in our Offices of Public Health and Emergency Management, the National Guard, our Sheriff and all the healthcare workers who have made this possible."

"The arrival of safe and effective vaccines represents a landmark moment in our fight against COVID-19, making this center a place of hope and healing for our entire region," **said Brian Gragnolati, President and CEO, Atlantic Health System**. "On behalf of patients and caregivers across New Jersey, I want to thank Governor Murphy and Morris County leaders for their tremendous support and partnership. Together, we are taking the next big step forward in protecting our friends, neighbors and communities. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to receive their vaccinations as soon as they are eligible."

"We are happy to see that Governor Murphy is moving forward quickly to make Covid-19 vaccines available to law enforcement and firefighters," **said Bob Fox, President of the New Jersey Fraternal Order of Police**. "His immediate response is greatly appreciated by law enforcement."

"PFANJ fire fighters & EMT's serve as the first link in the COVID-19 response," **said Steve McConlogue, President, Professional Firefighters Association of New Jersey**. "These environments are unstructured, unprotected and place our members near COVID-19 patients, causing increased exposure for the responder. Many COVID-19 patients are treated by a fire fighter or EMT before they are transported to a hospital for further care. Additionally, fire fighters and EMTs often respond to emergencies unrelated to whether a caller has COVID-19 only to later learn that






“We are very proud to announce that due to the support of Governor Murphy, along with the clinical guidance of New Jersey’s top medical professionals, we have completed one of our first mega sites located in Morris County for administering vaccines to New Jersey’s citizens,” **said Pete J. Stilianessis, President, State Troopers NCO Association.** “We’re very proud to have played our part in this very important milestone to recovery for New Jersey and the citizens that we have served throughout this pandemic. We are appreciative to have one of our NCOs take the lead on being the first Trooper to receive this life changing breakthrough vaccine. We look forward to working with our Governor and other branches in government for further successes until we can finally return to normalcy.”

“Our members battled through this pandemic since last March and we have shared in the struggle and pain with the residents we protect,” **said Wayne Wolk, Executive Vice President, New Jersey Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association.** “We are grateful to have worked with Governor Murphy and his administration to be sure NJ first responders had the tools to safely provide the front line protection day in and day out. Being moved up in the queue to receive the COVID-19 vaccination is another testament to that support.”

“I would like to thank the Governor and the Health Departments decision to listen to our pleas and move our states brave law enforcement and firefighters up on the vaccine list,” **said Pat Colligan, President of the New Jersey State Police Benevolent Association.** “Our law enforcement officers, whether they were working on a cell block or responding to calls for service were truly “first responders” from the very beginning of this pandemic and continue to be the first on the scene on virtually every call for service. We are looking forward to putting this pandemic in the rear view mirror and we are sure this will help expedite that.”

“The State Troopers Fraternal Association applauds Governor Murphy and his entire team for their aggressive, swift and committed response to the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Wayne Blanchard, President, State Troopers Fraternal Association.** “Since March, Governor Murphy has had to make many difficult decisions in order to keep the best possible containment of the COVID-19 virus. The arrival of the vaccines has given us new hope in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor and his administration have been on the front lines and have been efficiently distributing the vaccines since their arrival. Today marks a special place in the history in the fight against COVID-19 as Governor Murphy has recognized the significant challenges and risks the STFA members face daily in the performance of their duties during the pandemic. To date, over 150 STFA members have contracted the COVID-19 virus and the safety of the citizens of the State of New Jersey depends on their health. We are truly grateful to Governor Murphy for streamlining the vaccination process for our men and women who must respond when called upon even during the perils of the pandemic. In addition, we laud the Governor and his team for the coordination of many vaccination sites but in particular sites such as the Morris County Mega Vaccination site, which has tremendous capabilities for safe, orderly, and large-scale vaccinations.”

Biographies and headshots of the vaccine recipients can be found here (/governor/news/news/562021/docs/20210108_MorrisCountyMegasiteVaccineRecipients_final.pdf).

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Governor Phil Murphy

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Office of Governor Phil Murphy

Trenton, NJ 08625

609.749.7000



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