



January 28, 2021

Email to Oregon Health Authority VAC Leadership

Good Morning –

While I am a member of the Vaccine Advisory Committee (VAC), I am reaching to you separately rather than the full VAC. My understanding is that the charge of the VAC is to make recommendations for sequencing of group 1b beyond the 65+ population that has already been prioritized by the Governor. And my comments concern this group.

As has been noted, navigating the system, technology and transportation issues related to obtaining a vaccine for seniors 65+ living outside settings covered by the federal long term care partnership will be cumbersome and difficult, particularly for the oldest cohort that is to begin Feb 8. The fear is that many could be left out due to difficulty navigating the system or of even knowing about it. We offer the following recommendations to help alleviate this potential.

First, for those living in a stand-alone independent congregate care setting that is not included in Phase 1a, we advocate for taking the vaccine to the setting to facilitate vaccinating all seniors desiring the vaccine at one time; thereby preventing them all from having to navigate obtaining a vaccine on their own.

Second, for seniors 65+ residing in their own homes outside of a congregate setting, we advocate that flexibility be given to the weekly age eligibility bands so that a spouse/partner/caregiver that is not yet age eligible but lives with one who is be allowed to receive the vaccine. For example, Mr. A is 80 years old and his wife is 74. If Mrs. A (74) takes Mr. A (80) to a vaccine clinic during the week of February 8th, it would be optimal for Mrs. A to be vaccinated at the same time as Mr. A.

LeadingAge Oregon has been regularly meeting with OHA, ODHS, the CRRU, the LTC federal partnership pharmacies and the Oregon Health Care Association on the roll-out of Phase 1a and greatly appreciate the collaboration and coordination. While our meetings are focused on completion of Phase 1a these considerations were shared with this group at the end of a meeting we had yesterday.

Thank you for your consideration my comments. We look forward to continued collaboration.

Ruth Gulyas, CEO
LeadingAge Oregon