



## COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation Phase 1B Definition

### Background

Mortality and morbidity data collected over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic clearly demonstrates that COVID-19 has the most severe effects on people who are 65 years and older and individuals with comorbidities. Protecting these higher-risk individuals is of the utmost concern in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Texas death certificate data, more than 70 percent of the deaths directly caused by COVID-19 are among people 65 years and older. Additionally, a [growing body of scientific evidence](#) shows that adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions have an increased risk of severe disease, defined as hospitalization, admission to the intensive care unit, mechanical ventilation or death.

In Texas, Phase 1B of vaccination will focus on people for whom there is strong and consistent evidence that COVID-19 makes them more likely to become very sick or die. Preventing the disease among people who have these risk factors will dramatically reduce the number of Texans who die from the disease and relieve pressure on the healthcare system by reducing hospital and ICU admissions. Vaccination will also reduce absenteeism among the front-line workers at the greatest risk of severe disease and protect individuals at risk for health inequities.

Because Phase 1B provides vaccine to higher-risk people regardless of their work sector or status, it will provide protection for a number of critical populations at an increased risk of getting COVID-19: communities that are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and other chronic diseases; teachers and school staff who ensure that Texas children can learn in a safe environment; social services workers who ensure that those in need receive care and support; workers who maintain critical infrastructure to support the Texas economy; and other front-line workers who are unable to work remotely and so are more likely to be exposed.

As Texas progresses into Phase 1B in the coming weeks, the state will work with vaccine providers and local partners to ensure that people who are 65 and older or have the medical conditions listed below and who also work in front-line and critical industries have access to the vaccine so they will be protected from COVID-19 while on the job. Texas equally will strive to ensure vaccine reaches communities with health disparities in accordance with Texas Vaccine Allocation Guiding Principles. Communication and outreach will encourage vaccine uptake among these populations during Phase 1B.

## Texas Phase 1B Vaccine Priorities

- People 65 years of age and older
- People 16 years of age and older with at least one chronic medical condition that puts them at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, such as but not limited to:
  - Cancer
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
  - Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies
  - Solid organ transplantation
  - Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index of 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher)
  - Pregnancy
  - Sickle cell disease
  - Type 2 diabetes mellitus