

*“Never halloo till you are out of the woods.”*

Attributed to Benjamin Franklin

News of the historic creation and release of the Coronavirus vaccines has brought with it thoughts of the end of this pandemic. Thoughts of casual kisses, hugs and parties. Thoughts of parades, concerts, and Sunday services. Thoughts of a return to normal. That is all coming, but we must keep in mind the enormity of the task at hand, the ethical distribution of this vaccine to millions of people just here in Connecticut. We are not there yet, but we are on the road, steadily moving forward. Hold tight!

Sometimes in our efforts to disseminate information we rush to print. In the instance of COVID 19 vaccinations it has been difficult to keep up, what with headlines and news reports changing hourly. The best place to find current information is at CT.gov, but at times even that site struggles to stay current. The State of Connecticut is now in Phase 1b of the COVID 19 Vaccination Plan. Eligibility for Phase 1a was Healthcare Personnel, Long-term Care Facility Residents, and Medical First Responders. Vaccine access in Phase 1b will be phased in, with scheduling for individuals **75 years of age and older** currently under way. Individuals 65 years of age and up will follow, likely sometime in February, and frontline essential workers and individuals with underlying medical conditions will be phased in next, hopefully sometime in March.

The Department of Public Health issued the following statement late Tuesday regarding any confusion or misunderstanding of eligibility:

*“We know that several employers, including towns and school districts, got an early jump on access to vaccine on Phase 1b based on prior assumptions about Phase 1b eligibility and miscommunication. This is regrettable, but we know that mistakes are made when we are collectively working to move quickly. We are asking that all individuals who are not Phase 1a-eligible (healthcare personnel, medical first responders, and LTCF staff & residents) or 75-years or older cancel any appointments they have on Friday or later. We have communicated this message to our employer coordinators for implementation and to convey to their members.”*

While there are several ways to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated, it is best to go through VAMS or through a Health Care Provider. If you are **75 years of age or older** and cannot make an appointment using a computer you may do so by telephone. Please call 877-918-2224. This option is available Monday - Friday from 8am – 4pm.

- **VAMS** stands for Vaccine Administration Management System.
- This is the government’s preferred method for you to schedule an appointment.
- To use this method, you **MUST** create a VAMS Account to get vaccinated.
- Click this link to create a VAMS Account, then follow the instructions provided:

<https://dphsubmissions.ct.gov/OnlineVaccine>

- A unique email account for each person registering is required to use the VAMS System
- VAMS appointments are only being provided to those 75 and older.
- When searching for an appointment on VAMS try searching Old Saybrook (06475) – There might be open appointments! (Again these appointments are currently only for anyone **75 or older**).
- It is my understanding that you **MUST** be registered in VAMS to schedule an appointment at CRAHD’s Vaccination Clinic!

## **SOME VAMS TIPS:**

- Registering through VAMS is a multi-step process.
- There will be up to a 12 hour delay between account verification emails.
- This process can be frustrating and difficult. Be calm, ask for help, or offer to help that special 75+ person in your life.
- If you are registering for a loved one or a friend, do **NOT** use your own email address! Instead, create a unique email address for them. You will need your email address when it is time for you to register yourself for a vaccine!

**Use the following links to search and schedule an appointment through Health Care Providers around the state:**

**Yale New Haven Health** - <https://covidvaccine.ynhh.org/>

**UCONN Health** - <https://health.uconn.edu/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/>

**Hartford Health Care** - <https://hartfordhealthcare.org/health-wellness/coronavirus/vaccine>

Here is the link to the State's COVID-19 Vaccination Website for additional information:  
<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---75-and-older>

Please remember that this is a huge undertaking, and the people involved in managing this are working as hard as they can to ensure our safety. We have the strength to carry on, and while our patience has been stretched, seemingly, to its limits, those limits will be tested even further during the coming months. We will endure the hardships yet to come just as we have during the months thus far, but every day brings us just a bit more sunlight. We will carry on because we must. We bear that responsibility to ourselves—as well as to our friends and neighbors. It is the combined strength of our Community that will bring us through this pandemic together. Wear your mask, keep your distance, check in on your friends, neighbors, and family.

Be safe, be well, be kind  
Peace  
Angus

*“Now the darkness only stays at night time  
In the morning it will fade away  
Daylight is good  
At arriving at the right time  
But it's not always going  
To be this grey*

*All things must pass  
All things must pass away”*  
George Harrison – All Things Must Pass