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1A+ Encouraged to Schedule Appointments Now *Wait Times Will Increase After March 8 Vaccine Expansion*

Governor Brian Kemp announced February 25 that COVID-19 vaccination eligibility will expand March 8 to include educators and staff (Pre-K, K-12, DECAL licensed or exempt childcare programs), adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their caregivers, and parents of children with complex medical conditions. South Health District will begin scheduling appointments for those within the expansion on Friday, March 5.

Prior to scheduling for the expansion, the Georgia Department of Public Health's South Health District wants to take the opportunity to encourage anyone in Tier 1A+ who has not yet scheduled their vaccination to do so as soon as possible.

"Because we schedule based on the limited vaccine supply, our health departments are already booked for weeks. We know that once this expansion goes into effect the demand will be much higher," said William R. Grow, MD, FACP, district health director. "People who have not yet scheduled their appointments should take this opportunity to do so. Those who don't schedule before the expansion, understand wait times may increase dramatically."

Groups that are currently being vaccinated are: healthcare workers (physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, EMS personnel, environmental services, etc.), residents and staff of long-term care facilities, adults aged 65+ and their primary caregiver, law enforcement, firefighters, first responders and funeral home workers who come into direct contact with the deceased.

Appointments through a local health department can be scheduled by calling our COVID-19 hotline at 844-955-1499. The COVID-19 hotline is open Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.- 5p.m. Appointments are also available through many area hospitals and pharmacies. To find a location near you visit the DPH Vaccine Locator at dph.georgia.gov/covid-vaccine.

Governor Kemp recently announced four mass vaccination sites, operated by the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency, in Hapeville, Albany, Clarkesville, and Macon. The drive-through sites have the capacity to vaccinate 1,100 people per day, per site for a total of 22,000 people a week between each of the four sites. If eligible, the public can visit myvaccinegeorgia.com to register for a vaccine appointment at one of these sites.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 vaccination and public health's response within our district, visit www.southhealthdistrict.com. We will also post all updates to our social media accounts and we encourage everyone to like and/or follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.