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Craven County COVID-19 Vaccination Supply Drives Appointment Availability

(New Bern, NC) – The Craven County Board of Commissioners has received a tremendous number of contacts from citizens concerned about when they will receive a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. Craven County and its medical community partners are fully prepared and capable to administer just as many doses of COVID-19 vaccine as it receives, and it is administering all doses received. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) determines which counties and medical providers receive each quantity of vaccine and that distribution may not reflect the population of each county. What that means is, at different points, residents of Craven County may see residents of other counties having more vaccine available to them than what Craven County has.

The Craven County Board of Commissioners, the Craven County Health Department and its medical partners that include CarolinaEast Medical Center (CarolinaEast) and Coastal Carolina Health Care (CCHC), have done everything asked of them by NCDHHS to ensure all possible doses of COVID-19 vaccination possible will come to Craven County. Unfortunately, those efforts have not yet resulted in Craven County being allocated a larger vaccine supply. The Craven County Board of Commissioners wants to assure its citizens that its medical community is capable and prepared to administer every dose of COVID-19 vaccine it receives; the supply has just not made its way here yet.

To ensure maximum vaccine distribution the Craven County Health Department has established a mass vaccination clinic at the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center along with having vaccination sites at Carolina East and CCHC. The plan that has been developed and followed has allowed for around 4,000 people a week to receive either their first or second dose of the vaccine. This past week the Craven County Health Department averaged over 300 vaccines a day over a three-day period and they are prepared to give even more vaccinations, when an adequate supply is available.

“The Craven County Board of Commissioners has heard the frustration of many citizens who have not been able to receive their COVID-19 shot. Please know we all are frustrated. The problem we face is our local medical community has been informed by NCDHHS that they will decrease the first dose vaccine supply for Craven County for this upcoming week. These are doses that our local vaccinators were prepared to give to Craven County that now will not come,” stated Jason R. Jones, Chairman of the Craven County Board of Commissioners.

“Our health care workers here in Craven County are the best in the nation, and we appreciate them and their hard work. The partnership of CarolinaEast, CCHC and the Craven County Health Department is working. I am confident our health care system in Craven County can vaccinate every citizen in this county if we receive the vaccine as promised,” Jones stated.

The COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for Craven County was amended on January 14, 2021 after the CDC and NCDHHS updated their guidance for the vaccination priority to include those 65 years of age and older. The

updated plan that was sent to counties by NCDHHS changed priority populations into groups which has allowed for more people to receive a vaccine.

Residents in Craven County who have a vaccination appointment already scheduled, have a vaccination dosage available for them. This announcement is related to the number of vaccination appointments that will be available in the upcoming weeks, unless something changes with the COVID-19 vaccination supply sent to Craven County. Craven County has over 20,000 residents over the age of 65 as well as some unvaccinated health care workers in Priority Groups 1 and 2.

Residents are urged to routinely watch the Craven County COVID-19 Vaccine Information webpage <https://www.cravencountync.gov/2160/Vaccine-Information> and the Craven County Health Department facebook page @cravencountyhealth for more information.

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