**Summary of Governor Northam’s Briefing on COVID-19**

**01-14-2021**

**FORWARD VIRGINIA:**

* Despite the increasing distribution of the vaccine, Governor Northam stresses that all social distancing, hand washing, and face covering guidelines remain in place.

**VACCINE**

* **Following CDC vaccination guidelines, people age 65 and over, and those with co-morbid conditions, will be moved into Phase 1B.**
	+ Many health districts have already begun administering vaccines to group 1B, but all districts are expected to be there by the end of January.
	+ This means that over half of Virginians are currently eligible to receive the vaccine.
* The number of vaccines being administered per day is steadily increasing throughout the entire state.
* Pharmacies, high schools, and universities are partnering with the VDH to become vaccination clinics.
* In order to reach Virginia’s goal of 50,000 shots per day, we need more infrastructure in the form of mass vaccination clinics.
	+ Adequate numbers of trained staff will be essential to the function of these clinics.
		- The goal is for these clinics to be staffed by the National Guard, VMRC volunteers, and other “contracted vaccinators”.
	+ Members of the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps are already volunteering at existing sites, and Governor Northam encourages anyone with previous medical experience to sign up.

**SCHOOL RE-OPENINGS**

* The Department of Education is today changing its guidelines for local schools, to create a pathway for re-opening.
	+ This decision comes from the conclusion that all mitigation strategies (social distancing, mask wearing, and cleaning) can be done successfully in the school setting.
* New guidelines will provide specific guidelines and data for mitigation strategies, as well as prioritization levels for in-person instruction.
* The Virginia Education Association recommends that learning remain virtual until all teachers have been vaccinated.
	+ This is an essential step in safely bringing students and teachers back to the classroom.

**COVID-19 CASES, STATISTICS AND MODELING**

* **Total cases: 417,839**
	+ New in the last 24 hours: 5,294
* **Total deaths: 5,626**

**Next briefing: To be announced.**

*NOTE: This is an informal and timely summary of the Governor’s live press briefing. To access recordings of the briefings, visit* *https://www.facebook.com/GovernorVA/**. To access the Governor’s official news releases, visit* *https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/news-releases/**.*