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State Superintendent of Schools

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State Superintendent Requests Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccines for Teachers, School Staff, Child Care Workers

'A First Priority' in the COVID-19 Vaccination Essential Plan Tier

BALTIMORE, MD - (December 15, 2020) – Maryland Schools Superintendent Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. requested that the Maryland Department of Health include teachers, school staff and early child care professionals as the first priority in the plan to start COVID-19 vaccinations for essential employees in Maryland.

Acknowledging many factors influencing the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines, “the safety and education of our children demand immediate attention,” said State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. in a letter addressed to Dr. Jinlene Chan, Maryland Department of Health Acting Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services.

“It is essential that we return to full or hybrid instructional models for the overall wellbeing and success of our prekindergarten through grade 12 students. Prolonged school closures have resulted in our children experiencing diminished academic achievement and social-emotional distress,” said State Superintendent Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D. “We care about all of our education and child care professionals, many of whom have continued to work on the frontline throughout the pandemic, and we are requesting that they be prioritized for the COVID-19 vaccine in the earliest stages of distribution to essential employees.”

“Continued school closings impact all of our children, especially those in underserved communities and vulnerable to abuse,” said Clarence C. Crawford, President of the Maryland State Board of Education. “Prioritizing distribution of this vaccine to our teachers and school staff will help expedite the return of full in-person instruction for our students.”

The request includes early child care workers who are providing critical education and care services. “Child care professionals have played a crucial role in the State’s frontline pandemic response and recovery efforts,” said Dr. Salmon. “The safety of these programs must be maintained to protect child care staff and the families they serve.”

Dr. Salmon praised Dr. Chan and the Maryland Department of Health for “tireless efforts in securing the public health and safety of our schools and child care facilities. “Our partnership is especially invaluable now,” said Dr. Salmon, “as we redefine education and child care environments as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Maryland Department of Health submitted its COVID-19 Vaccination Plan to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on October 16, 2020. The plan includes workers deemed essential in critical industries, including education.

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