12/21/20

In an email forwarded this morning from the AR State Board of Dental Examiners to all licensed dentists, hygienists and assistants, Dr. Jennifer Dillaha of the AR Department of Health provides an update on the COVID-19 Vaccination Phased Plan.

To address some of the questions that callers to ASDA have expressed, here is a quick Q&A for your benefit:

**How can I be sure that dentists are included in the top tier for vaccinations?**
Dentists and staff can be assured that you are in Phase 1-A of the roll out. Dr. Dillaha’s letter is addressed to health care workers (HCW) in the "medical or dental fields" in the first sentence. Further, the 2nd bullet point of the letter states, "If you work in a clinic, pharmacy, or any other health care organization...." The word clinic here describes a dental office or clinic.

**Why can I not get my vaccination right now?**
The only HCW scheduled to receive the vaccine ahead of dentists are hospital workers and long term care workers and residents. To date, the state has not received enough doses to cover these two groups. Our best information suggests that adequate doses to cover dentists and their teams could be made available after December 28 and possibly before January 15.

**Why is it taking so long to get the vaccines for dentists?**
As seen in the national news recently, Operation Warp Speed leader Gen. Gustave Perna admitted that a mistake had been made concerning the availability of vaccines. Arkansas was one of many states that received fewer doses than expected. That being said, the vaccine is strictly dose dependent, and ADH cannot guarantee that the delivery to pharmacies will be the same for all areas of the state.

**I have heard that dentists in other areas of the state have already received their vaccinations.**
Although some dentists have received vaccinations from hospitals where they have staff privileges, these instances are anomalous and strictly local. There is no statewide plan other than the plan mentioned above.

**How do I know which pharmacy to contact to schedule vaccinations for me and my staff?**

ADH has prepared a [list of pharmacies](AR Pharmacy Association website) that have or will receive the vaccine. Some will receive the Pfizer vaccine but others may receive the Moderna. The coordination of shipments is apparently still in the early phases, but ultimately the nationwide goal is to provide enough vaccine to meet the published objectives in the phased plan.

**ADH COVID-19 Vaccination Phased Plan**

**Dr. Jennifer Dillaha’s Letter to Health Care Workers**