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COVID-19 Vaccine Supply in Will County does not meet needs of population
*Nearly 100,000 seniors anxious to receive the vaccine, county only
receiving shipments in 2,000 doses increments.*

WILL COUNTY – Calls to the Will County Health Department COVID-19 hotline are topping more than 800 per day, some days reaching 1,000 calls per day, which is overwhelming the current system as residents in the 1b category, 65+, are trying to schedule appointments for the vaccines. The current infrastructure cannot keep up with this demand. Today, in a special meeting called by County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, the County Board unanimously approved allocating \$2 million of CARES Act funding to remedy this issue.

The call center will have 25 operators working 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. and 25 percent, or five operators, will be bilingual in Spanish. The call center is anticipated to be live within the next two weeks. And while this call center will help alleviate issues with scheduling vaccines, the actual distribution of this vaccine is still dependent upon supply.

Health Department officials in Will County have been receiving a scant more than 2,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine incrementally which is making vaccinating its nearly 700,000 residents a great challenge. Currently the health department is working to schedule approximately 100,000 residents 65+ for first and second doses of the life-saving vaccine and with consistently limited supply deliveries, many residents are scared and frustrated with the delay in receiving the vaccines.

“The first phase of the vaccine process was for health care workers, who are on the front lines of this virus on a daily basis,” said County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant. “To date in Will County, we have vaccinated 51,932 of our residents, with 14,145 of our residents fully vaccinated with both doses. We are now focused on vaccinating our seniors, as well as our educators, frontline workers, and anyone who works in a high exposure occupation.”

Bertino-Tarrant said the Illinois Department of Public Health is also working with some local pharmacies such as Walgreen’s, CVS, Meijers, and Jewel/Osco. The Executive’s office is working with the Health Department and the Emergency Management Agency to be prepared

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with mass vaccination sites to immediately start when the supply of vaccines become more available.

“Please understand patience is needed as the supply currently does not meet the demand,” she said. “We want to be fully staffed and ready to get as many shots in arms as possible when we receive larger shipments of the vaccine. It seems like a race against time. We want to protect as many of our residents as possible as quickly as we can.”

In the meantime, residents are still encouraged to visit the website and register for the vaccine at www.willcountyhealth.org or call (815) 740-8977.

