

COVID-19 vaccine eligibility expands to 16 and over in NY

6 April 2021



A nurse fills a syringe with a dose of the Johnson & Johnson's one-dose COVID-19 vaccine at the Vaxmobile, at the Uniondale Hempstead Senior Center, Wednesday, March 31, 2021, in Uniondale, N.Y. The Vaxmobile, is a COVID-19 mobile vaccination unit, sponsored by a partnership between Mount Sinai South Nassau and Town of Hempstead to bring the one-dose vaccine directly to hard-hit communities in the area. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

New Yorkers over 16 years old can sign up for COVID-19 vaccinations starting Tuesday, a major expansion of eligibility as the state seeks to immunize as many people as possible.

The State University of New York also announced plans to offer vaccines to tens of thousands of college students before they head home for the summer.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo expanded eligibility to 30 and over [last week](#) and announced that people aged 16 to 29 would be eligible starting April 6.

Teens aged 16 and 17 will be limited to receiving the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, since that is the only one that has been authorized for use by

people under 18. Parental consent will be required for vaccinations of 16- and 17-year-olds at state-run sites, with certain exceptions including for teens who are married or are parents.

None of the available vaccines have yet been approved for people under 16.

New York state health officials hope that increased eligibility will help cut down COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations—particularly among millennials and Generation Xers.

The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients is down in New York to 4,400, down from about 8,600 in early January.

But since mid-March, the number of new COVID-19 cases has ticked up and hospitalizations have plateaued. And more young people with COVID-19 are now landing in New York hospitals, according to state Department of Health data provided to The Associated Press: 1,146 patients with COVID-19 as of Sunday were between the ages of 20 to 54, up from 986—a 16% increase—in early March.



In this Feb. 24, 2021 file photo, Pastor Darryl Frazier, left, and State Sen. Leroy Comrie get a COVID-19 vaccine before the opening of a mass vaccination site in the

Queens borough of New York. New Yorkers over 16 years old can sign up for COVID-19 vaccinations starting Tuesday, April 6 a major expansion of eligibility as the state seeks to immunize as many people as possible. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig, Pool, File)

About half of COVID-19 patients in New York hospitals are below the age of 65, a contrast from January and February, when that age group represented one-third of patients. New Yorkers between the ages of 20 to 44 alone represent 13% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients in the state, up from 7% as of early January.

SUNY students will receive the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which because it requires only one dose will allow them to be fully vaccinated by the time they finish the semester in early May.

Although some colleges, including Rutgers University and Cornell University, have announced they will require COVID-19 vaccinations for students returning in the fall, SUNY has not yet said whether the vaccinations will be mandatory.

Chancellor Jim Malatras said the public college system has secured its first shipment of vaccines and is working with the state to reserve additional doses for students. About 18,600 vaccines were being distributed to 34 campuses Tuesday.

More than 350,000 students were receiving email messages urging them to make an appointment, according to SUNY.

About one in five New York state residents were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of Monday, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A little more than one-third of the state's residents had received at least one vaccine dose.

The new vaccination rules add 1.7 million people to the list of eligible New Yorkers, for a total of 15.9 million individuals, state Health Department officials said.

Malatras said the campus vaccine distribution plan has been months in the making.

"Giving residential students the one-shot option helps clear a crucial logistical hurdle in the race to get people fully vaccinated before they leave campus and return to their hometown communities," he said.

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APA citation: COVID-19 vaccine eligibility expands to 16 and over in NY (2021, April 6) retrieved 10 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-covid-vaccine-eligibility-ny.html>

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