February 8, 2021

Via E-Mail

Kelly McDonald, President
Board of Governors
Maine State Bar Association
P.O. Box 788
Augusta, ME 04332-0788

Dear Mr. McDonald:

Thank you for your letter in which you requested priority COVID-19 vaccination status for certain front-line attorneys who provide essential services to indigent and other Mainers, and who must come into direct contact with clients and government employees as part of their regular jobs. We value input in all forms as we work to vaccinate every Maine resident who wants and needs it in the coming months.

Currently, the Federal government purchases doses of COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration directly from manufacturers. It then allocates to each state a share of that vaccine supply on a weekly basis. The federal government has informed states that allocations are in proportion to each state’s share of the U.S. population.

Because it will take months for enough vaccine to be produced for all people for whom it is recommended in the United States, a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has set priorities for vaccination. As it explained recently, “ACIP considered scientific evidence regarding COVID-19 epidemiology, ethical principles, and vaccination program implementation considerations.”

States may choose to adopt, amend, or use their own prioritization for COVID-19 vaccination. In Maine, our extremely limited number of vaccine doses have been directed to health care workers and people caring for those with COVID-19 to maintain Maine residents’ access to critical health care. Similarly, we are working our way through Maine’s Emergency Medical Services personnel, emergency room clinical staff, and others on the health care front line, as well as public safety personnel. Now that the majority of these individuals have received their first dose, we are expanding those eligible to receive the vaccine to individuals 70 years of age and older. Some of Maine’s allotment is also dedicated to a program for vaccinating long-term care facility residents and staff, which is run by the U.S. CDC and retail pharmacies.
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The projections of how much vaccine will be available and when and how it will be most efficiently and equitably distributed has evolved and will continue to do so. This experience will help inform decisions on what comes next in Maine – as will your input. You can find information on Maine’s COVID-19 vaccination effort at: www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines.

Thank you, again, for your input.

Sincerely,

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner

JML/klv