

Dear Quogue Residents,

Who would have thought that the topics of the coronavirus and vaccines would be moved completely off of the front page? Such is the nature of yesterday's depressing events in Washington D.C.

To bring you up to date on vaccines in New York, however, here is where things stand currently. Obviously, the process of getting needles into arms is going more slowly than hoped, which the Governor attributes to insufficient doses being shipped to New York by the Federal government. He says that New York will have vaccinated more than 900,000 people by the end of this week. We are still in phase 1A, however, which includes residents and staff of nursing homes and other congregate care facilities as well as doctors, nurses, and all health care workers that come into contact with the public. After vaccinating health care workers, New York moves into Phase 1B, which will include teachers and education workers, first responders (police, firefighters), public safety workers, public transit workers, and people ages 75 and older. I don't see a date when Phase 1B is anticipated to commence, but it is estimated to include 2.5 million people in New York, and so the rest of us have a while to wait. Information on the vaccine distribution can be found at <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/phased-distribution-vaccine>.

The State is in the process of lining up many locations where the vaccine can be administered. There are reportedly 713 sites lined up on Long Island, of which 105 are currently active. You will find out where they are closer to the time when you become eligible. In that connection, the State has launched an on-line means to help people determine their eligibility, connect them with administration centers, and schedule appointments. To access this tool, as well as find the latest information concerning the vaccine and its administration, visit: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>. I registered and found out that I am not eligible, which I already knew, of course. I did not get a lot of confidence that I would be notified when I am, but we'll see. It seems to me like the tool needs some work, and so I would not rely on it exclusively.

I think that most people in Quogue believe that getting the vaccine as soon as possible is a good idea. I hope so. New York has launched an education campaign, however, that you can access at <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/education>. To me the most important points to stress are that the vaccine is free for all New Yorkers and that the vaccines cannot give a person Covid-19 because they are not made with the live virus or other materials that can cause disease.

Suffolk County continues to trend upward in reported Covid-19 cases—over 2,000 new ones on January 5 with a positivity rate of 11%. This is no time to let your guard down. Cumulative cases in Quogue have bumped up by three in the past week or so to 34.

On a relatively more minor topic, dogwalkers on the beach are reminded that the obligation to pick up after your pet extends all the way to the water. Please do so even though it is winter.

Peter Sartorius
Mayor