

VITEMA To Launch Hotline For Vaccine Appointments

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V.I. Territorial Emergency Management Agency Director Daryl Jaschen announced Monday that VITEMA will start assisting the Department of Health's vaccination initiative by scheduling appointments with a hotline that opens today.

The hotline will be staffed Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m - 3:00 p.m. with English and Spanish speakers, Mr. Jaschen made known during the Bryan administration's weekly Covid-19 press briefing. The hotline number is 340-777-8227 (VACS). Interested persons also have the option of filling out a form on the VITEMA website if they decide to forego the hotline option.

There will also be an automated after-hours message where people can leave their name, island of residency and a contact number. VITEMA says individuals who leave the aforementioned information will receive a return call.

Once VITEMA receives a person's information, the agency can begin scheduling an appointment. Once the appointment is scheduled, VITEMA said it will reach out to inform the individual of the appointment time.

Mr. Jaschen encouraged those not eligible under the current phase of the vaccine rollout to still call and be placed in queue to be ahead when the phase of eligibility arrives.

Both insured and uninsured individuals are eligible to be vaccinated. "No provider is permitted to request out-of-pocket costs or ask for individual reimbursement," Mr. Jaschen said.

V.I. Dept. of Health Commissioner, Justa Encarnacion, said, "According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), vaccine doses purchased by United States taxpayer dollars will be given to the American people at no cost. However, vaccination providers can charge an administration fee for giving someone the shot. Vaccination providers can be reimbursed for this by the patient's public or private insurance company or for uninsured patients by the Health, Resources and Services Administrator Provider Relief Fund. No one can be denied a vaccine if they're unable to pay the vaccine administration fee."

Once the first vaccine dose is administered, the second shot will be scheduled immediately.