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PODs, or points of dispensing, are community locations in which state and local agencies dispense medical countermeasures, such as vaccine, to the entire affected population during a public health emergency. To aid in rapidly dispensing these medical countermeasures, local public health departments use two types of PODs: open and closed.

Open PODs are run by public health officials and located at large public locations such as arenas or schools. In Nassau County, DOH-Nassau uses 60% of the county’s weekly “first-dose” allocation from the state to provide initial doses of vaccine to the targeted population (i.e. aged 65 years and over) in open PODs. In order to ensure vaccine distribution is equitable among this population, no one is disadvantaged by location or access to technology, and no one has to stand in long lines in inclement weather, random numbers are generated to select registrants from the OneNassau Vaccine Waitlist to make appointments. The Nassau County CoViD-19 Vaccination Plan, posted on the County’s official website, documents this process in detail.

To increase the number of individuals that can physically be vaccinated each week and ensure members of the target population in underserved areas are reached, the remaining 40% of each week’s allocation of vaccine is used in closed PODs. Closed PODs are sites staffed and managed by partner organizations to dispense the medical countermeasures to discrete populations. These partners have entered into formal agreements with the Florida Department of Health to guarantee all storage, handling, security, paperwork, and reporting requirements are met while providing their own licensed medical professionals to administer the vaccine. DOH-Nassau will continue to partner with medical professionals, non-governmental organizations, civic and faith-based entities that can help identify and reach our underserved, targeted population during this public health emergency.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have long recommended that open and closed PODs can and should be used simultaneously to distribute critical medical countermeasures as rapidly and efficiently as possible during a public health emergency.

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