

# Disability Rights CT files federal complaint over age-based vaccine rollout

- [COVID-19](#)
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In the first formal challenge to Gov. Ned Lamont's age-based vaccine distribution plan, Disability Rights Connecticut has filed a complaint with the U.S. Office for Civil Rights against the state and the governor "for discriminating against persons with disabilities" by not prioritizing them over the general population.

The complaint, which was filed Wednesday, calls on the agency, which is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to "immediately investigate and issue findings on an expedited basis" that Connecticut's age-based policy for vaccinating state residents [unveiled this week](#) "constitutes disability discrimination" that violates federal law.

***[\[Breaking with national recommendations, Lamont says Connecticut's vaccine rollout will now be prioritized by age\]](#)***

The advocacy group's complaint also asks the federal agency to direct Connecticut to "immediately revise" its vaccine policy to include prioritization for individuals with medical conditions, regardless of age, and to advise the state that it must have a process for people with disabilities to obtain a modification for its vaccine policy.

The administration declined to comment on the complaint.

The six-page complaint alleges that the rollout violates the Americans with Disabilities Act because, among other reasons, it imposes eligibility criteria for the vaccine that "discriminates against and unfairly burdens individuals with disabilities." Ultimately, it accuses the state of "perpetuating discrimination against people with disabilities."

Lamont said Monday he is shifting the state's COVID-19 vaccine distribution program to one strictly based on age for everyone other than school employees and child care workers, leaving many younger people with chronic medical conditions [feeling left behind](#). Under the previous plan, those age 16 and over with certain chronic medical conditions were next in line to get the vaccine.

The complaint notes that the new policy does not allow for exceptions for qualified individuals with disabilities.

***[\[People with disabilities were next in line for COVID vaccine. Then the plan changed.\]](#)***

"Connecticut has adopted this policy even though it is well-established that people with disabilities are disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19 and more likely to contract the virus and experience severe, often life-threatening, and prolonged systems," the complaint reads.

Under the age-based rollout, individuals between the ages of 55 and 64 will be eligible for inoculation on March 1. Those between 45 and 64 are eligible on March 22. People age 35 to 44 are eligible for vaccination beginning April 12. And those age 16 to 34 are eligible May 3.

