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# Connecticut school districts begin planning vaccine clinics

By SUSAN HAIGH and DAVE COLLINS February 25, 2021

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut school districts around the state have begun organizing their own COVID-19 vaccination clinics, preparing for the official rollout of vaccines for teachers and other school staff on Monday.

Waterbury Mayor Neil O'Leary

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vaccination clinic at Waterbury Arts Magnet School just for those employees.

“We’re going to get you done very, very quickly,” O’Leary said. “We are very excited to get you in, get your your shot, schedule your second shot. Let’s go.”

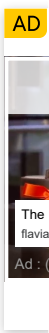
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Waterbury is distributing the hotline number of school employees via email.

Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont, who appeared with the Democratic mayor and local officials at a news conference on Thursday, said Waterbury is the first school district in the state that has said it’s ready to begin vaccinations for teachers and other employees at public and private schools. He said he expects other will soon follow.

“We’ve heard from a number of school districts who are trying

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governor said the goal is to increase the amount of time that students are spending in school. During the week of Feb. 8-12, 56.3% of public school districts in the state were providing in-person learning; 37.6% a hybrid of in-person and online; and 6.1% just online, according to the state Department of Education.

Also Monday, residents who are 55 and older can begin making vaccination appointments. Lamont said Connecticut continues to receive more vaccine from the federal government. He said the state is up to about 100,000 doses a week and has been informed it will receive its first batch of 30,000 doses next week from Johnson & Johnson next week. Federal regulators [confirmed this week](#) that the one-dose vaccine is safe and effective.

In other coronavirus-related news:

#### FEDERAL COMPLAINT FILED

A coalition of advocacy groups for people with disabilities has filed a federal complaint alleging Connecticut's revised age-based policy for coronavirus vaccinations discriminates

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Disability Rights Connecticut announced Thursday that it filed the complaint with the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, asking the agency to order state officials to immediately revise the vaccination policy to include people with underlying medical conditions.

“This policy is not only an outlier nationally, it blatantly disregards CDC policy guidelines, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights of individuals with disabilities,” Deborah Dorfman, executive director of Disability Rights Connecticut, said in a statement.

Lamont announced a major change in the state’s vaccination schedule Monday, saying Connecticut would continue to follow a mostly age-based system after previously saying people with underlying medical conditions would be among the next group eligible for vaccinations. The only exception in the new policy is

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activists' "real frustration" ought to be with the CDC, which doesn't include intellectual and physical disabilities on its lists of comorbidities that either put people at an increased risk or possible an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Lamont said that was "really surprising" to him.

Both Lamont and Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz, who've faced criticism from other groups including grocery store workers and younger people with serious health issues about the revised rollout, repeatedly stressed how most people in the state with a health condition are 55 and older — 75% of the people who have comorbidities and health issues are in that age group, Bysiewicz said.

Under the revised plan unveiled Monday, anyone aged 55-64 will be allowed to get a COVID-19 vaccine beginning March 1, followed by people age 45-54 on March 22, people age 35-44 years on April 12, and everyone else 34 and younger on May 3. Vaccinations were previously allowed for nursing home residents, medical workers and people 65 and older.

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prison population to inch up as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, but are forecasting it will remain relatively level for the next year.

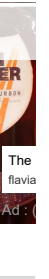
Analysts presented their annual population forecast Thursday to the state's Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission.

Officials said that fewer arrests and prison admissions during the pandemic resulted in a 27% decline in the population over the past year. The population reached its lowest level in more than three decades, with 9,062 inmates in the system on Thursday. That compares to an average annual decline in the prison population of 3.8% between 2008 and 2020.

The number of inmates should hover around 9,000 during 2021, the forecasters said. It is expected to continue to drop during the next few months, but then rise later in the year as COVID-19 vaccinations increase, society reopens and court cases increase.

"I feel comfortable that we will see this trend happen," Correction Commissioner Angel Quiros said. "We will be under 9,000 probably very soon,

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the maximum security Northern Correctional Institution this summer.

Associated Press writer Pat Eaton-Robb contributed to this report.

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