

WEMSA: works with DHS to identify locations for nearly 7,000 members to receive Covid-19

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Madison, WI – Wisconsin DHS Assistant Deputy Secretary Lisa Olson along with officials from Wisconsin's Division of Emergency Management briefed members of the Wisconsin EMS Association (WEMSA) Thursday morning on where to get access to the COVID vaccine.

"EMS providers are at higher risk of death from COVID-19 than other healthcare providers," said WEMSA Executive Director Alan DeYoung.

"EMS provider COVID-19 related deaths are about three times greater than nurses, five times greater than physicians and 20% greater than police and firefighters." This unique combination of vulnerability and risk is why EMS providers in Wisconsin are included in Phase 1A, and why WEMSA is working to make sure our members are at the front of the line for COVID-19 vaccination.

"The biggest thing we learned is that as an association we need to work with our members to make sure they have the right local contacts to get access to the vaccine – which may be a hospital, county health department or even a pharmacy."

The numbers Wisconsin DHS Assistant Deputy Secretary Lisa Olson shared this morning indicate that in Wisconsin, officials have successfully begun to vaccinate 110,000 of the 450,000 individuals in Phase 1A.

"Because we have fielded questions from our members about where to get vaccinated, our plan this morning was to push officials for the exact names and locations in each of the state's 72 counties where WEMSA members can go, to get vaccinated."

For security reasons, state officials said they haven't shared all the locations but assured WEMSA that they have identified locations in each county and are in the process of expanding the number of locations to administer the vaccine.

According to DHS they designated local health departments as the "boots on the

ground” officials to direct the execution and coordination of vaccination outreach. A complete listing of those agencies and appropriate contacts can be found on the WEMSA website. www.wisconsinems.com

“We’re focused on making sure all EMS providers in Wisconsin have access to the vaccine as soon as it arrives in the state. We would certainly like to see our members vaccinated quicker and remain optimistic that we’re going to be at the front of the line given our designation in the Phase 1A group.”