



## **MAYOR BARAKA STATEMENT REGARDING VACCINE COMING TO NEWARK**

“With New Jersey’s first COVID-19 vaccines administered to University Hospital medical staff in Newark yesterday morning, there has been a rush of optimism that our battle with this deadly pandemic is drawing to a close.

“Since last March, we have had 19,572 Newark residents test positive and 737 of them have lost their lives from COVID-19.

“The message is clear. This is not over. Millions of doses of vaccine will eventually deliver widespread immunity and put this dreadful era behind us, but for the foreseeable future, the virus continues to present a grave danger especially to Black and brown communities in cities like Newark.

“Next week, Essex County will open five vaccination facilities, including Essex County College gymnasium and the Donald M. Payne Sr. School of Technology in Newark, to front-line workers and people with medical vulnerabilities.

“My administration is also hard at work developing protocols and three additional sites to supplement the County locations, for when the vaccine becomes available to the City in the coming days.

“In the meantime, we implore people to remain steadfast and continue to adhere to the policies proven to control the spread of the disease. Continue to wear masks, maintain social distance, and wash your hands frequently. It is especially critical to follow the executive orders and holiday season guidelines to protect our families and community.

“Finally, remain attuned to credible information that comes from official sources. Contrary to some false social media claims, you will not be forced to take the vaccine nor have to pay for it nor be paid to take it. The vaccine will be free, and while the decision to take it rests with each individual, I urge you to become informed from credible sources.

“Please remain safe and vigilant as we continue to battle this pandemic.”

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