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CTDPH STATEMENT ON PAUSE IN THE USE OF J&J VACCINE

The following is a statement from the Connecticut Department of Public Health on this morning's announcement from the CDC and FDA that it is recommending that all states pause administering the J&J COVID-19 vaccine after six reports of an extremely rare adverse reaction to the vaccine:

Early this morning, the U.S. FDA and CDC issued a joint statement recommending a pause on the use of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine following six reported US cases of a rare blood clotting event. Although these events are rare, and none have occurred in Connecticut, the Connecticut Department of Public Health recommends that COVID vaccine providers pause on administration of J&J vaccine for the time being while the FDA and CDC complete their review.

Of 6.8 million individuals who have received the J&J vaccine nationally, six individuals have developed a rare and severe type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) within two weeks of receiving their vaccine. All six cases occurred among women between age 18–48 years. Roughly 100,000 Connecticut residents have received the J&J vaccine with no reported serious adverse events.

The CDC, FDA and Connecticut DPH all take vaccine safety extremely seriously. Although the reported complications are extremely rare, we will await the results of the investigation before proceeding with further use of the J&J vaccine.

DPH has informed vaccine providers that were planning to hold clinics using J&J today and in the coming days to delay these clinics or offer an alternative vaccine if they have alternative vaccines available. DPH will work with providers to minimize the disruptions from this announcement in the near-term to the extent possible, but we anticipate that some cancellations will occur.

DPH has also encouraged providers to reach out to all individuals who were scheduled to come to a J&J clinic and let them know that their appointment will need to be rescheduled once the FDA and CDC have recommend resuming administration of the J&J vaccine.

The FEMA mobile unit, which is currently in New Britain, is working to further modify its schedule. It will be offering an mRNA vaccine instead of J&J vaccine when it resumes. The Griffin vaccine vans, which currently administer J&J vaccine, have suspended their clinics for today. More information on the FEMA mobile unit and the Griffin vans will be forthcoming.

Although these side effects are extremely rare, the FDA and CDC recommend that people who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider.

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