

# MABAS DIVISION



January 7, 2021

Dr. Joshi and Dr. Rubin, Attending Physicians  
Cook County Department of Public Health  
7556 Jackson Blvd.  
Forest Park, IL 60130

RE: COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

Dear Dr. Joshi & Dr. Rubin:

First, thank you for your leadership and tireless efforts to help Cook County and its residents navigate this unprecedented pandemic. We truly appreciate the time, compassion, and care that you and your teams have demonstrated since early 2020. As we get ever closer to turning the corner, the speed and efficiency at which we can distribute and administer COVID-19 vaccinations will undoubtedly make a difference in the number of lives that we can save and the number of livelihoods that will be impacted. To that end, the Villages of Northfield, Lincolnwood, Wilmette, and Winnetka and our Fire Departments stand ready to be your partners to get the job done. As is discussed in greater detail below, we propose that Certified Paramedics in municipal fire departments immediately be utilized to administer COVID-19 vaccinations to suburban Cook County residents in Phases 1B, 1C and 2.

The State of Illinois is one of the most prepared States when it comes to handling disasters and the fire service in Illinois is a national model for effective regional emergency response. When Katrina hit New Orleans, the State of Louisiana reached out to Illinois and our fire and police personnel were allocated in short order to meet this disaster. We were able to mobilize a large amount of equipment and personnel within 24 hours to drive almost 1,000 miles and provide aid to New Orleans and the surrounding areas during their time of crisis. Every municipal fire department in Cook County, under the umbrella of MABAS-IL (Mutual-Aid Box Alarm System), trains to deal with disasters and intense incidents. By leveraging this expertise, as well as the command structure and existing resources that we have in place through the fire service, we can assist Cook County in administering vaccines in a safe, fast, and equitable manner.

Though, we cannot speak for the other resource hospitals (that oversees a Cook County fire department), St. Francis Hospital in Evanston provides medical oversight for seven Cook County municipal fire departments and they have already authorized their Paramedics to administer the COVID-19 Vaccines. This authorization could become a model for the entire country by demonstrating how local health departments and first responders can work together to meet this challenge more efficiently, more effectively and less costly than can be accomplished through any public-private partnership.

A vaccination process of 2.5 million individuals is a massive undertaking and we recognize the complexity and challenges associated with this implementation. The residents of Cook County expect and deserve the full utilization of all available resources to provide vaccines in a safe and efficient manner. In the Municipal Conference Briefing this week, one of the participants asked if it is a matter of

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vaccine availability or the logistical process of getting the vaccine into the arms of Cook County residents. His response was a logistical process. One lesson we should remember from the onset of the pandemic was that the process of establishing testing for COVID-19 was a disaster at a very critical juncture of the pandemic. Residents waited hours and could not get tested. Those who were finally able to be tested learned that their test results were delayed by many days and weeks, very much mitigating the benefit of testing. In hindsight, we were not prepared for the vast number of people needing to be tested. Thus, it is important to utilize all the resources available in Cook County to avoid a similar outcome with the vaccination.

Unfortunately, relying solely on commercial pharmacies, private physicians and other commercial venues will overwhelm the system, cause unnecessary delays, and likely lead to many individuals not even realizing they are eligible for the vaccine and how they should go about obtaining one. As of now, the onus has been placed on individuals in Phases 1B and 1C to seek out the vaccine themselves; we are volunteering to take on that responsibility as best we can to directly reach our most vulnerable residents and ensure as many individuals as possible in Phases 1B and 1C are vaccinated.

We appreciate the County's commitment to an equitable distribution of the vaccine and if afforded the opportunity, we will vaccinate members of our communities and essential workers in accordance with the County's plan. A hyper-local approach using Paramedics to vaccinate may in fact be the most equitable approach. In Phases 1B and 1C, we can:

1. Develop "restricted" PODS by municipality or fire district area
  - a. Use fire stations or other municipal buildings as "restricted" PODS to vaccinate only police officers, essential workers, educators, and others who qualify (under CDC guidelines) in each municipality or district.
  - b. Go directly to our local schools and vaccinate teachers onsite.
  - c. High risk individuals
    - i. Go directly to the homes of individuals we identify as the most vulnerable seniors with pre-existing conditions and persons with disabilities.
    - ii. Set up vaccination clinics in multi-family buildings that are identified as affordable housing eliminating the need for individuals to take public transportation to a Jewel/Osco that may be miles away.
    - iii. Set up vaccination clinics in multi-family buildings that are predominantly comprised of senior citizens, many of which may not be able to drive to one of the eight Jewel/Osco sites.



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We are suggesting that we immediately begin joint planning efforts for Phase 2 mass vaccinations. Such planning efforts should include the following actionable items to make the vaccination process more efficient:

## 2. Mass Vaccination Process

- a. Work with Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security to identify public POD sites for the mass vaccination process.
- b. Utilize the Pharmaceutical Planning Process that already exists that incorporates:
  - i. Security issues
  - ii. Traffic planning
  - iii. Patient flow
- c. Use authorized paramedics to increase the vaccine administration capacity.
- d. Using Paramedics also provides emergency trained personnel on site at all times.

We understand that distribution of the vaccine is complex due to the ultra-cold storage requirements. This obstacle can be overcome by utilizing the resource hospitals that provide medical direction for the municipal fire departments in Cook County. Resource hospitals are responsible for the training and delivery of emergency medical services in their respective geographical areas. If the resource hospital structure was utilized, each hospital could serve as the daily distribution point for all municipalities in Cook County. It is our understanding that once the current vaccine is removed from ultra-cold storage, it has a four-to-five-day shelf life while in normal refrigeration. This would provide ample time (for the municipality) to utilize all the vaccine provided by the resource hospital. While working under the direction of the Project Medical Director (ER Doctor) from each of the resource hospitals, together we can mobilize an army of authorized Paramedics to assist with the vaccination process substantially accelerating the rollout of the vaccination plan.

Municipal fire departments are in fact medical providers, with paramedics that are certified to administer life-saving drugs on a daily basis. In fact, should an individual experience an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine at a pharmacy, the first agency to be called will be the local fire department. Certified Paramedics are authorized by the State of Illinois to administer the vaccine, are able to provide life-saving support if needed and have experience with HIPPA requirements and completing complex medical paperwork.

We implore Cook County Public Health to take advantage of the outstanding resources that are available in suburban Cook County. We have the ability to partner with you to implement a mass vaccination plan that minimizes delays, directly reaches our most vulnerable residents, and provides a clear, equitable and efficient process for every resident of Cook County. Our municipal fire departments are ready to respond and assist you in any way we can.

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Respectfully,

*at Burkowski*  
Village of Winnetka

*[Signature]*  
Village of Northfield

*[Signature]*  
Village of Wilmette

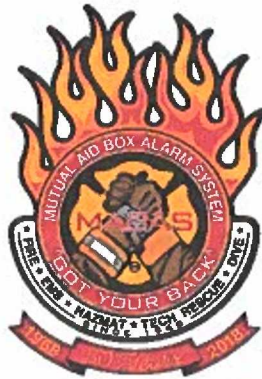
*[Signature]*  
MABAS-IL CEO

*Mike Hanrahan T.B.*  
Village of Lincolnwood

*[Signature]*  
MABAS Division 3 President

- Cc: Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners  
Larry Suffredin, Cook County Commissioners  
Mark L. Fowler, NWMC, Executive Director  
Robert Bahan, Winnetka Village Manager  
Michael Braiman, Wilmette Village Manager  
Anne Marie Gaura, Lincolnwood Village Manager  
Stacy Sigman, Northfield Village Manager

## MABAS Response to the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency



The Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS) represents over 1,100 fire departments and districts in 69 Divisions in every county in Illinois. MABAS provides organizational and logistical support to stricken communities for all-hazards along with over 400 deployed vehicles and equipment trailers. In suburban Cook County there are 8 MABAS Divisions which encompass:

- ✓ 120 Individual Fire Departments and Districts
- ✓ 222 Fire Stations
- ✓ 5,468 EMS Trained Fire Personnel
- ✓ 289 EMS Ambulances

MABAS staff monitored the impact COVID 19 quarantines had on the ability of fire agencies to maintain effective service levels and provided guidance to those impacted agencies.

MABAS has responded to 290 separate mission taskings to date from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency in between March and December 2020. Each of the 69 MABAS Divisions statewide have provided support/resources/personnel in this effort.

### **Equipment items such as.**

- ✓ Western Shelter Systems at hospitals, testing sites and correctional facilities.
- ✓ Generator Light Tower trailers.
- ✓ Crews to deliver, set-up, operate, support, and demobilize resources.
- ✓ Divisional vehicles to move resources.
- ✓ Ambulances to standby at COVID 19 testing sites.
- ✓ Mission Support Vehicles at the State and Cook County Emergency Operations Centers and at COVID 19 testing sites.
- ✓ Mobile Morgue transport vehicle.

### **MABAS deployed the following resources.**

- ✓ 63 – Divisional Western Shelters
- ✓ 28 – MABAS centralized Western Shelters
- ✓ 45 - Divisional Generator Light Towers
- ✓ 2 – MABAS centralized Generator Light Towers
- ✓ 2 – Decontamination Vehicles
- ✓ 1 – Mobile Ventilation Vehicle
- ✓ 3 – Mission Support Vehicles
- ✓ 7 – MABAS Transportation Vehicles from the MABAS readiness Center



- ✓ 1 – EMS Mobile Morgue Vehicle
- ✓ Starcom Radio Cache
- ✓ Mission Support:
  - Logistics
    - Cook County based IL-TF 1 (US&R Task Force) members
    - Cook County based IL-WR 1 (Swiftwater Rescue Team) members
  - Communications
    - Cook County based IL-TF 1 (US&R Task Force) members
- ✓ 1,020 – Body Bags from the 7 Warehouse Trailers and the MABAS Headquarters
- ✓ PPE from the 7 Warehouse Trailers and MABAS directly to IEMA

**MABAS Operations Staff collaboration and support efforts with:**

- ✓ IEMA State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) – Level 1 Activation
- ✓ Cook County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) – Level 1 Activation
- ✓ Office of Emergency Management and Communications (OEMC) – Level 1 Activation
- ✓ County EOC's and Unified Area Command Centers (UAC's)
- ✓ MABAS Mobility Control Center (MCC) – Level 1 Activation
- ✓ IEMA/SEOC Fatality Management
- ✓ IEMA/SEOC Alternate Care Facility Transportation
- ✓ IEMA/SEOC Community Based Testing Sites (CBTS)
  - Illinois National Guard Command & Control Unit based at the MRC
- ✓ IEMA/SEOC Alternate Care Facility Communications (McCormick Place)
- ✓ IEMA/SEOC Alternate Housing
- ✓ Illinois Department of Public Health,
- ✓ Illinois Department of Corrections,
- ✓ Illinois National Guard,
- ✓ Illinois Department of Transportation,
- ✓ Illinois State Police,
- ✓ Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS)
- ✓ Cook County Department of Emergency Management & Regional Security (DEMRS)
- ✓ Cook County Sheriff's Department
- ✓ Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM)

**MABAS Additional Background:**

The MABAS Readiness Center (Headquarters) is located at 233 West Hintz Road, Wheeling, IL. The facility houses much of the specialized response equipment, vehicles, and trailers necessary to respond to all types of emergencies. MABAS has a signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security to provide joint efforts to respond to notable events to protect life and property.

Should further dialog be desired to better understand the role of MABAS in assisting local fire agencies in responding to large scale or unique emergency situations please contact:

Glenn Ericksen, Chief Executive Officer

[ericksen@mabas-il.org](mailto:ericksen@mabas-il.org)

847-403-0510



**Western Shelter Tent Systems**



**Generator Light Tower Trailers**



**Mobile Emergency Room Vehicle**



**Mission Support Command Vehicles**

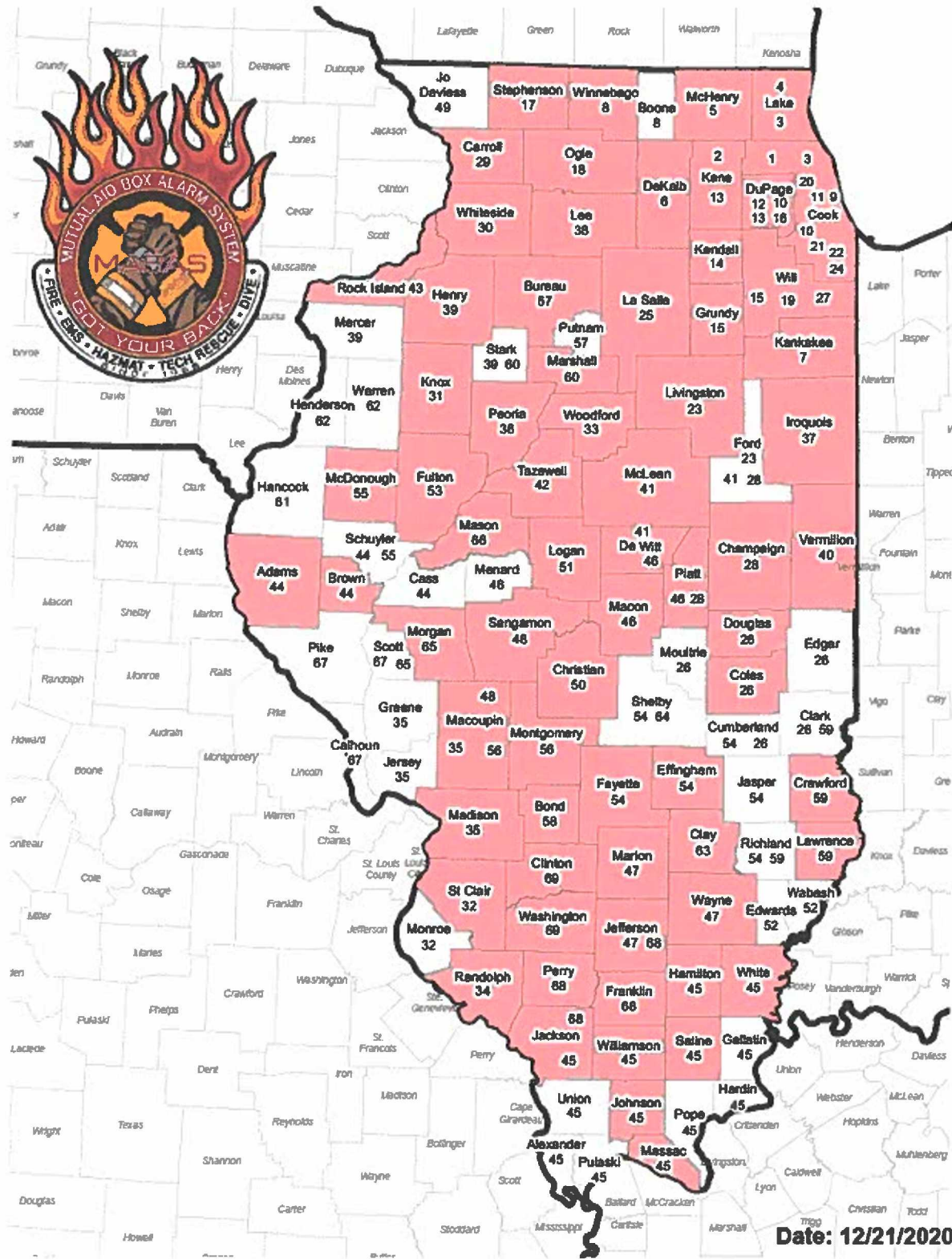


**Decontamination Vehicles**



**Mobile Morgue Vehicle**





**Counties where MABAS provided COVID 19 pandemic response support or equipment are shaded in pink. All 69 MABAS Divisions provided support.**