News Release

Gov. Ricketts, DHHS Provide Updates On Nebraska's Coronavirus Vaccination Plan

For Immediate Release: 12/9/2020

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Governor's Media Release:

LINCOLN – This morning, Governor Pete Ricketts hosted a press conference at the State Capitol to discuss the State's response to the coronavirus pandemic. The Governor reported that coronavirus hospitalizations are now below 20% of staffed hospital beds in Nebraska. The State continues to be in the "orange" phase of its coronavirus response plan. If coronavirus hospitalizations are below the 20% threshold for seven days (rolling average), Nebraska will move to the "yellow" phase and loosen restrictions in the State's Directed Health Measures.

The Governor also announced that the State has updated its coronavirus vaccination plan to clarify the groups prioritized for immunization. Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Incident Commander Angie

Ling joined the Governor to overview the latest version of the plan. She also called on Nebraskans to get their annual flu shot as a way to help hospitals preserve capacity to care for coronavirus patients.

Gov. Ricketts: Test Nebraska

- All Nebraskans are eligible for testing through Test Nebraska.
- I encourage Nebraskans to sign up, take the short health assessment, and schedule a time to get tested.
- We have now delivered over a half-million (505,000) test results through Test Nebraska.
- We continue to work to efficiently turn around test results. Recently, Test Nebraska has been turning around tests between 24-48 hours from swab to patient result.
- The Test Nebraska site in Lincoln is expanding capacity from 1,100 tests per day to 1,500 tests a day.
- Check out TestNebraska.com for the latest schedule and locations.

Angie Ling: Flu Vaccination

- This week is National Influenza Vaccination Week. It's a nationwide call to action to encourage those who have not already done so to get their annual flu shot.
- Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older and is an effective was to decrease flu illness, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- A flu vaccination this season can also help reduce the burden on healthcare systems as they continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Wearing a mask, social distancing, and hand hygiene will also help protect you from respiratory illness, flu, and COVID-19. However, the best way to prevent flu illness is getting your annual flu vaccine.

- There are multiple locations to receive your flu vaccine each year including your doctor's office, local health departments, and pharmacies. If you are having a hard time finding a location, please visit vaccinefinder.org.

Angie Ling: Coronavirus Vaccination

- We have made changes to the State of Nebraska's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan to ensure we follow recommendations from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- The updated vaccination plan is posted on the DHHS website and is available by clicking here. Phases will look like this:
  - 1A: Healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents and staff.
  - 1B: First responders; staff at correctional facilities; and key personnel working in education, food/agriculture, utilities, and transportation.
  - 1C: Those 65 years and older, vulnerable populations, and persons in congregate living settings.
- We submitted orders last week for the first allocation of the Pfizer vaccine, and we anticipate receiving them next week.
- Due to security considerations, we will not give out the specific locations of the allocations.
- The Pfizer vaccine doses will go to 8 hospitals, who will support an additional 9 hospital systems with this initial product.
- We have asked the hospitals to prioritize within their systems to vaccinate those caring for coronavirus patients day in and day out. Examples would include those persons working in emergency departments, COVID care units, and local EMS.
- We will also activate the long-term care federal pharmacy program. This program has allowed long-term care facilities to align with a pharmacy who will complete their staff and resident vaccinations. There are over 400 long-term care facilities using this program.

- Facilities that did not select a pharmacy will work with local health departments to get their vaccinations.

Video from today's press conference is available by clicking here.

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