News Release

Gov. Ricketts, DHHS Leaders Provide Update On Vaccine Prioritization

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Governor's Media Release:

LINCOLN – This morning, Governor Pete Ricketts held a press conference at the State Capitol to provide an update on coronavirus vaccination efforts in Nebraska. The State is currently in Phase 1B of its vaccination plan, with the majority of vaccines being administered to Nebraskans age 65 and older.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Incident Commander Angie Ling reported on the State's recent and upcoming vaccine allocations. DHHS Deputy Director of Public Health, Felicia Quintana-Zinn, shared an update to the State's vaccination plan. Once Phase 1B has been completed, the State will prioritize Nebraskans age 50-64 for vaccination.

Gov. Ricketts: Vaccination

- Age is the single biggest factor in determining who is most likely to be severely impacted by the coronavirus.
- That's why we've been focusing on vaccinating Nebraskans in the 65+ age category.
- Our local health departments are focusing at least 90% of their efforts on this age group right now.
- As we look forward to vaccinating the general population, we'll continue to prioritize vaccinations based on age.

Angie Ling: Coronavirus Vaccine Allocation

- Starting next week, we'll be counting the extra doses in the Pfizer vial. Each vial will now count as having six doses instead of five doses.
- Our Pfizer allocation for next week will increase to 18,720 primary doses, and our Moderna allocation will increase to 18,400 primary doses.
- We're adjusting our second dose ordering schedule. Instead of having these doses arrive 7-10 days before we can use them, we'll have them arrive within the window of time when we can use them.
- The majority of vaccines have not arrived to Nebraska this week due to issues at distribution sites and inclement weather. We did receive two shipments of Pfizer vaccine on Monday, and these doses will be used in our scheduled clinics.
- The supply issues are occurring nationwide; they're not unique to Nebraska. Every effort will be made to catch up as soon as possible, while safely delivering the vaccines.

Felicia Quintana-Zinn: Vaccine Plan

- Nebraska is updating its Vaccine Phasing guidance to provide further information and expectations as to when the general population will be

eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

- Health departments are currently in Phase 1B, vaccinating those over 65 years old or working in critical infrastructure. Comorbidity categories are not included in Phase 1B. As Phase 1B continues, Nebraska is finalizing plans to vaccinate the general population.
- With the increasing amount of vaccine supply, Nebraska is expecting to be able to move to the general population in April or May.
- Preliminary Nebraska residents' mortality data shows that COVID-19 caused or was a main contributing factor in 1,801 Nebraskan deaths, with approximately 97% of those deaths occurring in those over 50 years of age.
- After Phase 1B is complete, Nebraska will begin to vaccinate the general population. To continue to ensure that our population is protected, we'll prioritize 50-64 year olds prior to vaccinating the remainder of the population (those 16-49 years old).
    - Currently, the Pfizer vaccine is approved for use among those age 16 and older, while Moderna's vaccine is approved for those 18 and older.
- This week, the State launched our official COVID-19 vaccination campaign: Finish Strong Nebraska! For more information and to register on our vaccine portal, you can visit finishstrong.ne.gov.

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

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