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State Adopts A Unique Hybrid Model For COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization

News Release

March 1, 2021

Vaccine Prioritization to Continue Based On Age To Protect Those Most At Risk

PHOENIX — Governor Doug Ducey and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) announced today a new hybrid approach that provides Arizonans 55 and older eligibility along with frontline essential workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The new approach launches today in the Phoenix Metro Area.

Arizona will continue its age-based approach to administering the vaccine. The new hybrid approach will ensure the distribution of vaccine doses to individuals at high risk of severe outcomes, including hospitalization and death, from COVID-19 due to age while allowing local health departments to prioritize frontline essential workers through employer-based vaccination strategies.

"This critical update provides more clarity for Arizonans and will result in rapid administration of vaccine to our most vulnerable populations," said Governor Ducey. "Continuing to vaccinate older Arizonans against COVID-19 will help protect those at risk and cover a majority of Arizonans with chronic medical conditions. And, this hybrid approach will ensure an equitable distribution of vaccine to our frontline workers who are working with the public every day."

Ninety percent of Arizona's deaths from COVID-19 have been among those 55 and older. Approximately 65 percent of those hospitalized due to COVID-19 are in that age

group. Including adults 55 and older in the vaccine prioritization category will cover between 56 and 66 percent of Arizonans with medical conditions that place them at severe risk for adverse outcomes due to COVID-19. This figure grows to between 68 and 79 percent of Arizonans with high-risk medical conditions being eligible for vaccination when age of vaccine eligibility includes those 45 and older.

To provide Arizonans with clarity, a range for transitioning the age-based eligibility has been established. Local health departments may transition to the next age category when they reach 55 percent of that age category vaccinated OR feel that there is no longer demand for vaccine. ADHS will be adding data to the AZDHS website showing the percent of the population vaccinated in each age category to provide information for when counties may be progressing to the next age category. This strategy allows everyone in the state to know approximately when they will be eligible to receive vaccine. Those with chronic conditions will be included in their respective age categories.

This unanimous recommendation by the Arizona Vaccine and Antiviral Prioritization Advisory Committee (VAPAC), informed by data and strategies from federal and local partners, is intended to protect those who are most at risk for severe outcomes due to COVID-19, such as hospitalization and death. VAPAC includes state, local, and tribal experts, and health care partners.

"As more vaccine reaches Arizona, we will continue refining our plan to maximize the benefits of this still-limited resource," said ADHS Director Dr. Cara Christ. "Moving to a hybrid approach will allow us to rapidly and efficiently administer the vaccine and provide all Arizonans with a clearer estimate of when they will be eligible to be vaccinated."

ADHS will open approximately 50,000 vaccination appointments at State Farm Stadium and Phoenix Municipal Stadium at noon on **Tuesday, March 2**, to those 55 and older for appointments starting March 4. Arizonans 55 and older will also be eligible to schedule appointments at pharmacies and federally qualified health centers participating in the federal vaccination programs.

In order to ensure younger populations at greatest risk of exposure will have access to vaccination as priority populations shift, local jurisdictions are able to prioritize frontline essential workers, based on available vaccine. Information on the phase each county is currently vaccinating, the number of doses ordered by each county, and location of vaccination sites can be found **HERE (azhealth.gov/findvaccine)**.

More than 1.8 million doses of vaccine have been administered to more than 1.2 million Arizonans, including nearly 600,000 who have received both doses.

Information about all vaccination sites across Arizona can be found at **azhealth.gov/findvaccine (https://web.archive.org/web/20210305030817/http://azhealth.gov/f** Those without computer access or needing extra help registering can call 1-844-542-8201 to be connected with someone who can assist. **Note: You can use the patient portal at podvaccine.azdhs.gov (https://web.archive.org/web/20210305030817/https://podvaccine.az make an appointment for a relative in a prioritized group, such as someone 55 and older.**

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