Washington State Department of Health

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News Release

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Spanish

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Vaccines arrive in Washington State, people in Phase 1a will begin to receive vaccinations this week

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) is happy to announce that COVID-19 vaccines are on the ground in Washington state , and this week, the first doses will be administered to high-risk health workers, as well as patients and residents of long-term care facilities.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is a two-dose vaccine, given 21 days apart. Clinical trial data show the vaccine is 95% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection starting 7 days after the second dose. Individuals will not be considered fully protected until 1 to 2 weeks after they receive the second dose. The clinical trials revealed no major unanticipated adverse events.

“This vaccine is a sign of hope that the pandemic is something we can overcome,” says Secretary of Health John Wiesman. “We still have a long way to go to beat COVID-19, but this is the tool that will start saving lives immediately.”

“We believe that if everything goes according to plan, we’ll have most people in Washington vaccinated by mid-summer,” says Michele Roberts, one of the leaders of the DOH COVID-19 vaccine planning group. “The rapid development of these vaccines, with such a high rate of efficacy, is a historic achievement, and will help us defeat COVID-19.”

First distribution

We expect to receive 62,400 doses of vaccine this week. The first distribution will go to 17 sites across 13 counties. The first doses of vaccine will go to people in Phase 1a. This phase includes high-risk workers in health care settings, high-risk first responders, and patients and staff of long-term care facilities. We estimate around 500,000 people in Washington will be eligible for the vaccine in phase 1a. Read more details about phase 1a here.

In this first phase of vaccination, we will only be sharing the names of counties receiving vaccine, and the number of doses each county will receive. As we expand to vaccinating broader groups in future phases, we will share details about where vaccine is located and let communities know how and where to get it.

Additional shipments

The federal government has given us an estimated total distribution of 222,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine by the end of December. Regular weekly shipments should begin in January.

A second pharmaceutical company, Moderna, submitted an EUA application November 30. This application will be reviewed December 17. If the EUA is granted and the Moderna vaccine approved by the Scientific Safety Review Workgroup, we should get about 183,800 doses by the end of December as well.

Allocation plan

We'll know more about who will be vaccinated in later phases from guidance made by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. You can view the interim plan on our coronavirus vaccine webpage, www.CovidVaccineWA.org .

We will share the allocation and prioritization guides for future vaccine phases in the coming weeks.

Emergency Use Authorization issued for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine

On Friday, December 12th, the FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in people aged 16 and older on Friday. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) also voted to recommend this vaccine for use in persons aged 16 and older for the prevention of COVID-19.

The Scientific Safety Review Workgroup - which includes Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Colorado and California - met December 10th and 11th to review the safety and efficacy data for the vaccine. The 17-member workgroup voted unanimously to recommend the vaccine for immediate use.

Media Pool

Still photography and video of the vaccine's arrival in Washington State will be available via media pool, provided jointly the Seattle Times and KIRO 7 TV. Location for the pool will be a UW Medical Center in the Seattle area, one of the initial distribution sites for vaccine. A live feed, provided by KIRO 7 TV, will be available for broadcasters in the 9am hour (PST), with downloadable video & stills to follow.

The DOH website is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter . Sign up for the DOH blog, Public Health Connection .

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