TEXAS Health and Human Services | Texas Department of State Health Services

# People 50 and older eligible to be vaccinated beginning March 15

## News Release

## March 10, 2021

Texas will continue to protect those at the greatest risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19 by expanding vaccination to people 50 to 64 years of age on March 15. More than 93 percent of the Texas fatalities directly caused by the coronavirus have been in people 50 and older, with those ages 50 to 64 accounting for 20 percent of all fatalities. By including this next most vulnerable group, Texas will continue to reduce the number of people who are hospitalized and die from the disease across all races, ethnicities and occupations.

“We’ve seen a remarkable decrease in the number of hospitalizations and deaths since people 65 and older started becoming fully vaccinated in January,” said Imelda Garcia, DSHS associate commissioner for laboratory and infectious disease services and chair of the Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel. “Expanding to ages 50 to 64 will continue the state’s priorities of protecting those at the greatest risk of severe outcomes and preserving the state’s health care system.”

More than half of all Texas seniors have gotten at least one dose of vaccine, and 30 percent are now fully vaccinated. The number of COVID-19 positive patients in Texas hospitals has fallen by two-thirds from its peak in mid-January. There are about 5 million Texans between the ages of 50 and 64; more than 1 million of them are already vaccinated.

The state’s COVID-19 vaccination program began with Phase 1A in December with health care workers and long-term care facility residents and staff. Later that month, Phase 1B began to vaccinate people 65 and older and others with medical conditions that put them at a greater hospitalization and death from COVID-19. Texas last week **added school and child care workers** to the eligible population following a directive from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel will continue to meet and make recommendations about the further allocation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine. Overall, more than 7 million doses have been administered in Texas. About 4.7 million people have received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and 2.5 million are fully vaccinated.

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