COVID-19 Vaccine (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp) – Find out when, where, and how to get your shot.

Vaccine Rewards (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine-rewards/index.jsp) – Your shot to a safe summer. Claim your reward by June 30.

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As Governor Walz Calls for Further Supply from Federal Government, Minnesota Launches COVID-19 Vaccine Pilot Program

Pilot program with limited vaccine doses targets adults 65 years of age and older, prekindergarten through grade 12 educators, and child care workers are eligible to receive shots

January 18, 2021

[ST. PAUL, MN] – Minnesota is launching a COVID-19 vaccine pilot program, partnering with local public health and school districts, Governor Tim Walz announced on Monday. These sites will initially serve adults 65 years of age or older, as well as prekindergarten through grade 12 educators, school staff, and child care workers. The community vaccination pilot program will be the foundation for mass vaccination clinics in Minnesota communities once the federal government increases vaccine supply. The nine pilot sites will launch this week with a small number of doses for eligible Minnesotans.

There is a very limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in Minnesota, and despite promises from the Trump administration of additional allocations, Minnesota has not yet received an increase in weekly doses. Governor Walz has repeatedly called on the federal government to purchase more vaccine. He sent a letter with other governors (https://mn.gov/governor/covid-19/news/?id=463340) last week expressing frustration with the current administration's botched COVID-19 vaccine distribution and urged the federal government to purchase as many doses of the safe and effective vaccine as possible so states can get more shots in arms in the coming weeks. All Minnesotans are encouraged to remain patient as more vaccine arrives in the weeks and months ahead.

"We are building for the future and doing what we can to get more shots to Minnesotans right now," said Governor Tim Walz. **"By beginning to serve those age 65 and older, educators and child care workers, we are immunizing for impact. It's a step in the right direction on this long road to recovery. The federal government has been giving mixed messages on vaccine availability and guidance, and we need them to step up and get more vaccine to the state. When they do, we will be ready. The end of this pandemic is closer today than it was yesterday."**

Today's announcement expands the priority populations eligible for a vaccine right now. Additional details on Phase 1b are dependent on decisions to be made by the federal government and will be available in the weeks ahead.

Healthcare workers and long-term care residents and staff can still receive the vaccine through their workplace, care facility, or local public health. To help ensure equitable distribution to communities that need it most, in addition to these nine pilot sites, the Administration is working strategically with community clinics and other federally qualified heath centers who are well versed on how to serve Minnesota's Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color, as well as the uninsured. Healthcare providers are also encouraged to vaccinate these populations as quickly as is safe. Minnesota remains on pace to offer at least first doses of vaccine to all in this group by the end of January.

"Educators and childcare workers care for the mental and emotional well-being of our children, and we know that childcare workers are disproportionately women of color, who have been some of the hardest hit by the pandemic. We owe it to them to support their health and safety," said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. "COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. By making them available to our teachers, school personnel, and childcare providers, we will provide peace of mind as they do their vital jobs."

Vaccine-eligible Minnesotans can get a shot as supplies allow through either their healthcare provider or the pilot community vaccination sites. Regardless of location, Minnesotans are required to have an appointment to get a shot.

In consultation with state officials, healthcare providers are developing systems to let their 65-or-older patients know when they can start making appointments for a vaccine. Providers will contact patients with this information – Minnesotans should not contact their providers directly right now.

Eligible Minnesotans will be able to schedule an appointment at one of the nine pilot sites launching around the state. Sites will begin offering vaccines on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of this week. MDH will provide more information and will make appointment scheduling available on mn.gov/vaccine (http://mn.gov/vaccine) at approximately noon on Tuesday, January 19.

"These new state sites will immediately provide more vaccines to some Minnesotans who are eligible for their shot," said Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm. **"More importantly, this pilot program will help Minnesota continue to build up a broad and multi-channel vaccine distribution system with our local public health, healthcare, and pharmacy partners for vaccine access once the federal government begins shipping a higher volume of doses. Not every Minnesotan can get the vaccine right now, but we will be ready to give a shot to everyone who needs one once we have more doses on hand."**

School districts, charter schools, tribal schools and nonpublic school organizations will work directly with employees to secure an appointment through the state-sponsored pilot sites. Child care programs are randomly selected and will be notified if vaccines are available. Due to limited supplies, the state has recommended that schools prioritize their vaccine allotment, which is based on workforce proportion in their region.

"Beginning to vaccinate educators, including all school staff, as well as our partners in the child care industry through the pilot sites is exciting," said Deputy Education Commissioner Heather Mueller. **"While we do not have enough doses for everyone who wants a vaccine to receive one right away, we are building the system and structure so that once we receive those additional doses from the federal government, we can move quickly to support our school staff and bring even more students back into our classrooms."**

There are a very small number of doses and appointments available at these pilot sites. Minnesotans should not visit a healthcare provider or pilot site unless they have an appointment.

After Governor Walz and eight other governors sent a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar requesting that the federal government distribute the millions of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine doses that are currently being held back by the Trump administration, the administration announced that they will release the available vaccine doses. But according to multiple reports, federal officials backtracked and are now claiming that the reserve has already been exhausted, despite the fact that we have not seen an increase in our allocations and despite Pfizer's recent announcement that they currently have millions of doses of the vaccine on hand and are waiting on addresses from the Trump administration so they can deliver the vaccine to states.

Minnesotans can find more vaccine information on the state's COVID-19 Response website (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/index.jsp) .

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