Vaccinations Begin At Oklahoma Nursing Homes

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Tuesday, December 22, 2020

OKLAHOMA CITY (Dec. 22, 2020) – Governor Kevin Stitt joined State Commissioner of Health Dr. Lance Frye and other officials today to celebrate the start of nursing home COVID-19 vaccinations at The Lodge at Brookline as part of a partnership between the federal government and CVS and Walgreens.

Gov. Stitt and Commissioner Frye oversaw the first vaccinations, which were given to Frances Wantland, an 89-year-old resident, and Pam Byers, who has been a nurse for 19 years, along with Scott Pilgrim, the chief executive officer of the Diakonos Group, which operates The Lodge.

"Getting vaccines into nursing home and long-term care facilities is a major step forward in our fight against COVID-19," said Gov. Stitt. **"This year has been particularly hard for Oklahomans who live or work in long term care facilities, which is why I prioritized them, along with our frontline health care workers, to receive the vaccine. I'm grateful for all of our health care partners who have made today possible."**

"This marks the beginning of a new trajectory in our fight against COVID-19," said Commissioner Frye. **"This year has been especially hard for those living and isolating in long-term care, and we are grateful for our federal pharmacy partners at CVS and Walgreen who have been critical in this effort. We're hopeful that the effectiveness of this vaccine, paired with other preventative measures, will save lives and eventually allow long-term care facilities to resume regular visitations for family and loved ones."**

As part of Operation Warp Speed, the federal government will ship 44,000 vaccine doses to Oklahoma for use in inoculating residents and staff in Long Term Care (LTC) settings. The doses are being transported to LTC facilities across the state and administered by CVS and Walgreens staff. All LTC residents and staff are included in the initial phase of the Oklahoma's vaccination plan, making them an ongoing priority.

"This has always been a 50/50 partnership," said Scott Pilgrim. **"We will beat this virus together and we will recover together. I'm so proud of our staff and our residents for everything they have done to limit the spread of COVID and to get us to this point. These are real heroes, and I am thrilled the governor was here today to recognize their work and to celebrate this hopeful occasion."**

In the first week since vaccines arrived in Oklahoma, 21,000 healthcare workers and first responders in all 77 counties have been vaccinated.

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