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NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Prisons' First Vaccine Allocation Arrives and Inoculations Have Begun

RALEIGH

The North Carolina prison system has received its first allocation of coronavirus vaccine, and inoculations began Wednesday morning.

"I urge everyone to get vaccinated," said Todd Ishee, Commissioner of Prisons. "This is our best shot to protect the health and safety of our colleagues and their families as well as the men and women in our custody. Science has thrown us a lifeline. Everyone should grab ahold."

Around 1,000 of the 1,300 vaccines allocated for the prison system this week have arrived, and the rest of the week's allocation is expected to arrive and be distributed within days. This week's

allocation is the Moderna vaccine.

These will be the first vaccinations performed by prisons' staff. Over the past two weeks, many of the eligible prisons' healthcare staff have been vaccinated through their local health departments.

Due to the current limited supply of the vaccine, this week's vaccinations will be available for both staff and offenders in Groups 1 and 2, as discussed with North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

This week's vaccinations will be offered to (based on supply):

- Prisons healthcare staff including those administering vaccine.
- Staff who work in COVID-positive housing units or who work directly with COVID-positive offenders.
- Staff and offenders age 75 or older. Vaccination opportunity will expand to age 65 or older based on vaccine availability.

Vaccination is currently voluntary. Around 14,000 staff work in the prison system, and the offender population is 29,000.

Four prisons have been identified as regional hubs for vaccine deliveries throughout the prison system as vaccine supplies are made available from the federal government.

Prisons receives direct allocations of vaccine from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, although the type and quantity of vaccines Prisons receives depends on the type and quantity the state receives from the federal government each week. Prisons has been approved for enrollment in the COVID Vaccine Management System (CVMS) to manage vaccine supply and

track vaccine administration.

Personal protective equipment, ancillary supplies and other equipment necessary for providing vaccinations have been obtained and staged at the four vaccine distribution hubs: Central Prison, Maury, Alexander and Scotland.

This week's inoculations will be performed by the healthcare staff at individual prisons. The North Carolina National Guard is assisting in vaccinating staff from the region at Central Prison at least through Friday.

Upon receipt of vaccine in future weeks, prisons vaccine strike teams with possible assistance from the NCNG will deploy to prison facilities across the state to administer the vaccinations. Details include:

- Prisons has formed two, six-member vaccine strike teams in each of the four prisons regions to deliver the vaccinations.
- These teams consist of nursing and logistical support staff who when the time comes will have been vaccinated for COVID-19.
- Teams will be scaled up or down based on the number of vaccines to be administered at each facility.

The vaccine strike teams will administer the vaccines and handle the necessary paperwork, including a schedule of who is vaccinated and when the second booster shots can be administered.

Additional qualified personnel, for example those who have EMS experience, have been identified to help administer the vaccines if necessary.

"The staff have worked so hard for so long with hope and prayer for a better day down the road," said Ishee. "Now the vaccine is arriving at our prisons, and we can see a way to a future without this awful virus controlling so much of our lives. This is an important step."

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This press release is related to:

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