Department of Health announces update to COVID-19 vaccine priority groups

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BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) provided an update Thursday regarding COVID-19 vaccine priority groups.

"Vaccine distribution in North Dakota has gone well the first three weeks," said Molly Howell, NDDoH Immunization Director. "Although vaccine supply continues to be very limited, North Dakotans should monitor messaging from their local health departments and health care providers for more information on when they are able to be vaccinated."

The North Dakota COVID-19 Vaccination Ethics Committee, which includes a physician, ethicist, local public health representative, representative of the Department of Human Services and a representative of the Department of Health, has recommended who should receive the still-limited supply of the vaccine.

Though health care providers are still working through Phase 1A—comprised of frontline health care workers, first responders and long-term care residents and staff—the ethics committee has prioritized who will qualify for Phases 1B and 1C.

Phase 1B (in order of priority):

- Persons age 75 and older
- Persons age 65 – 74 with two or more high-risk medical conditions
- Staff and persons living in other congregate settings (i.e., corrections, group homes, treatment centers, homeless shelters, etc.)
- Persons age 65 and older with one or more high-risk medical conditions
- Persons age 65 and older with or without high-risk medical conditions

- Persons with two or more high-risk medical conditions regardless of age
- Child care workers
- Workers employed by preschools or Kindergarten through 12th grade:
    - Teachers, nutritional services, aides, bus drivers, principals, administrative staff, custodians, etc.

Phase 1C (in order of priority):

- North Dakota National Guard, not previously covered
- Grocery Workers
- Public safety answering points (911)
- Manufacturing related to the development or supply of COVID-19 vaccine
- Other health care/public health workers not included in phase 1A
- Free standing clinical laundries
- Public transit, including bus, taxi, ride-share
- Persons age 16 – 64 with one or more high-risk medical conditions
- Blood bank workers not previously vaccinated
- Information technology
- All other essential workers per Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

NDDoH will announce when the state will move on to Phase 1B. It is anticipated that this may occur in mid-January. Depending on local vaccine acceptance and supply, it is possible that different areas of the state may be vaccinating within different priority levels.

In the future, vaccinefinder.org will be populated with more information about vaccine availability in different areas across North Dakota. Following Phase 1C, the state will move to Phase 2, which includes the general public.

Citizens wishing to be vaccinated during their phase can call their health care provider or local public health department to determine when they can receive their vaccination.

To date, 19,097 health care workers and long-term care residents in North Dakota have received their COVID-19 vaccination. More than 2.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in the United States. For more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and phases of vaccination, visit health.nd.gov/covidvaccine.

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