



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Patience

Sterling, Colo. – December 31, 2020: The COVID-19 vaccine has been long-awaited, and now that it is here a lot of people are excited to get it. At the Northeast Colorado Health Department (NCHD), we are just as excited to administer the vaccine to help end the pandemic. However, in order to utilize our limited doses in as thoughtful a way as possible, we must work through the phases and protocols outlined by state health officials.

The state announced yesterday that the vaccine phase chart was being modified to allow more people to get the vaccine soon. The new update changed phase 1B to include people over 70 years of age to the top tier, and other categories of people as more vaccine becomes available over the next few weeks. Phases 2 and 3 have not changed. Currently, NCHD is still administering vaccine to those people identified as phase 1A and phase 1B essential workers. These include the highest-risk health care providers and emergency responders. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has contracted with Walgreens and CVS pharmacies to provide on-site vaccine inoculation for staff

and residents at all long term care facilities which will help vaccinate a majority of the older population.

National supplies of the vaccine are limited. Overall, the state is only receiving an average of 65,000 doses of the vaccine weekly, which must be allocated to providers in all 64 counties. Because NCHD and our hospitals are allotted only small amounts of vaccine each week by the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment, only a limited number of people in our health district are able to receive the vaccination from each shipment, but we are better off than some areas of the state. To bring things into perspective, northeast Colorado has been able to get through much of Phase 1A and part of 1B, while areas of Denver and the Front Range are still working on highest-risk health care workers and haven't started with their other first responders.

The update of including those over 70 years of age, who are most affected by this virus, to Phase 1B is good news, but we are asking people to please be patient. All 1A and 1B personnel are a priority to receive vaccine, because we must ensure that healthcare workers and first responders are protected and able to care for them and the rest of our community. More vaccine will become accessible in the coming weeks and as supplies increase nationally, NCHD will be scheduling more clinics as quickly as we possibly can.

We want everyone to know that as we move through the phases, we will provide an abundance of information on when and how to sign up for vaccination clinics that NCHD will be holding in Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties. Again, we just ask everyone to have patience, as we work hard get the vaccine to everyone who wants it as soon as we can.

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