



# PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **COVID-19 Vaccinations Come to Northeast Colorado**

Sterling, Colo. – December 14, 2020: A much needed, long awaited COVID-19 vaccine has arrived. A vaccine that has been in the making since the start of the pandemic, really just a little over 9 months. However, scientists have been puzzling out how to safely and effectively accelerate the development of a vaccine in case of a pandemic since 2017.

Currently, two companies are in the final stages of vaccine approval, Moderna and Pfizer. You may have heard of the two companies because of their effective rate of over 90% in clinical trials. Over the weekend, the Pfizer-BioTech COVID-19 vaccine received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). An EUA is a tool used by the FDA to facilitate the ability to more quickly use medical countermeasures, like vaccines, during public health emergencies such as a pandemic. This allows the vaccine to move through governmental approval processes more quickly but doesn't mean that it was rushed through development and trials.

Because COVID-19 is closely related to other coronaviruses, scientists have utilized knowledge gained through the development of other vaccines that have already been approved and extensively tested in humans to create this new vaccine, therefore taking advantage of the years of research, preclinical trials, and early-phase safety trials that

have already been conducted to move quickly into human trials for this vaccine. The take-away is that any vaccines approved for a EUA must be safe for the public.

Now that Pfizer vaccine has received the EUA, shipments have begun moving to the states. Our district has been allotted 315 doses from this initial shipment, and we expect those to arrive sometime this week. This allotment will go to three local locations where providers will begin administering to healthcare workers most at risk from COVID-19 as part of Phase 1A. Supplies of vaccines will increase exponentially over the next weeks and months as manufacturing increases and other vaccines become available. The allocation for the COVID-19 vaccine will be distributed in three phases: Phase 1: critical workforce, Phase 2: congregate housing & higher-risk individuals, and Phase 3: general public.

*"NCHD has been and will continue to work with our healthcare partners to provide vaccines according to the state's phased structure. Anyone who is directly working or exposed to COVID-19 patients such as medical personnel, first responders, and personnel working with long-term care residents will be offered the vaccine first," said Northeast Colorado Health Department Director Trish McClain. "We will then work our way through the phases, and the number of people eligible for vaccination expands as we move through these phases."*

These vaccines are safe and effective, each having gone through the three phases of clinical trials prior to FDA approval. Pfizer enrolled about 43,000 volunteers and Moderna recruited a sample size of around 30,000 volunteers. In trial one, scientists work to establish the safety and correct dosage for treatment. In trial two, doctors

investigate the efficacy and side effects of the treatment in a patient with COVID-19.

Trial three further investigates the efficiency and monitors the adverse side effects.

We know the vaccine will be here very soon. Northeast Colorado Health Department, in collaboration with our healthcare partners, have been preparing to administer the vaccine as soon as possible. This process will take a while before everyone who wants vaccine, will be able to receive it. In the meantime, it is still critical for us all to continue to make smart choices, follow the Big 3 and do your part to slow the spread. The vaccine provides hope and presents a light at the end of the tunnel, but for now we all need to continue to protect our families, friends, and neighbors.

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