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Coconino County Sees High Demand for COVID-19 Vaccine

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Approximately six hours after Coconino County moved to allowing priority populations within Phase 1b to make COVID-19 vaccination appointments at its Fort Tuthill vaccination site on Jan. 8, all 1,600 available appointments were booked. Coconino County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) and vaccination partner organizations are working to ensure the swift administration of the available COVID-19 vaccine. The community continues to demonstrate a high level of interest in getting vaccinated; however, the available supply of COVID-19 vaccine remains limited.

“After allowing Phase 1a eligible individuals to schedule their vaccination appointments, more than 1,500 slots remained available for first doses. Coconino County made the strategic decision to move to priority populations within Phase 1b to ensure vaccine is being used rather than allowing precious doses to wait in a freezer. While I know it is frustrating for those who want a vaccine but were unable to book an appointment, there will be additional opportunities to receive a vaccination soon when more supplies become available,” said Interim Director of Health and Human Services Kim Musselman.

Individuals who qualify for the current Phase 1a and priority populations within Phase 1b eligibility are encouraged to check the County’s COVID-19 vaccine webpage at coconino.az.gov/covid19vaccine frequently as appointments could become available if cancellations occur. Links to partner COVID-19 vaccination sites are included and may have appointment availability.

Individuals within Phase 1a including healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents and staff continue to be eligible to receive vaccinations. Additionally, through the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program, CDC has engaged retail pharmacy partners (CVS and Walgreens) to secure vaccine and provide on-site vaccination of residents and staff at no cost to the facility. Skilled Nursing Facilities residents and staff will receive the vaccine first, followed by Assisted Living and other adult congregate settings. This program’s process and allocation is separate and outside of Coconino County’s jurisdiction and is operating on a different timeline than the County at-large.

CCHHS is working to add partner vaccine sites and to plan specific vaccination events for persons 75 years or older. Information will be provided as it becomes available. As vaccine availability increases and the current priority groups have received vaccine doses, vaccination recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will expand to include more groups.

Definitions of priority populations within Phase 1b are:

- Education and childcare workers, teachers and staff. This includes all school and higher education staff who normally interact with other staff and students, and bus drivers, cafeteria workers, facilities staff etc.
- Law enforcement and protective services (corrections, other emergency response staff).
- Individuals aged 75 and older.

Vaccinations for other essential workers and adults with high-risk conditions in congregate settings are also in Phase 1b, but are not included in one of the three priority populations mentioned above due to limited vaccine supply. Eligibility for those groups will open at a later time.

The Arizona Department of Health Services announced the opening of a vaccination site at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, AZ. All eligible Arizona Phase 1a and 1b priority individuals can schedule an appointment at the Statewide Vaccination Site at the State Farm Stadium in Glendale, regardless of county of residence. Registration is available at <https://podvaccine.azdhs.gov/>.

Vaccine supplies are being allocated to ensure availability of second doses. Those seeking second doses of COVID-19 vaccine should seek vaccination at the same site where they received the first dose. Instructions for registering for second dose appointments are provided during an individual's first vaccine appointment.

Individuals without internet access and those age 75 years and older who require assistance with registration can call the COVID-19 Information Line at 928-679-7300.

For current information on the COVID-19 vaccine in Coconino County, the phases of vaccine distribution and locations as well as frequently asked questions, please visit www.coconino.az.gov/covid19vaccine.

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