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Coconino County Prepares to Receive COVID-19 Vaccine

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — The Coconino County COVID-19 Response Team is planning for the arrival of the first COVID-19 vaccine shipment, expected to be delivered in late December. The vaccine roll out in Coconino County is anticipated to begin in early January.

On December 11, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued the first emergency use authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. The Moderna application for EUA for its COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be reviewed soon.

The vaccine will be distributed following a prioritization process established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

Because initial vaccine supplies will be limited, the CDC and ADHS has determined that vaccine will be provided to specifically defined groups in Phases. The first phase (Phase 1) will have three components (a, b, c). Phase 1a will be the first group of individuals vaccinated, which includes healthcare personnel and long term care facility residents.

Healthcare Personnel is defined as those working in the following healthcare settings:

- Hospitals
- Long Term Care Facilities
- Homes for adults with developmental disabilities
- Outpatient
- Home Health Care
- Pharmacies
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Laboratories
- Public Health

Healthcare workers include physicians, nurses, emergency medical personnel, dental professionals and students, medical and nursing students, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, hospital volunteers, administrative and support staff. EMS workers includes those who provide pre-hospital emergency care in the normal course of their work or their volunteer work.

Phase 1a vaccine eligibility information will be sent directly to employers in the defined groups. During Phase 1, the Coconino County vaccination site is not open to the public. Coordination through qualifying organizations is required. Coconino County Health and Human Services (CCHHS) is working with employers to schedule vaccination appointments for Phase 1a recipients. Employers with qualifying Phase 1a employees can email covidvaccination@coconino.az.gov with questions.

Additional federal guidance for prioritization for vaccination beyond Phase 1a is anticipated in the coming weeks. Phase 1b is expected to include essential workers defined as employees in transportation, education and childcare providers, energy, water and wastewater, law enforcement, food and agriculture. Phase 1c is anticipated to include adults older than 65 and adults of any age who have high-risk medical conditions. While the outlined groups are anticipated to include these individuals mentioned, subsequent priority phases are not official until the CDC adopts the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) recommendation.

“The FDA’s approval of the COVID-19 vaccine for adults 16 and older is a major milestone toward ending the pandemic. It is important for everyone to continue using all the tools available to us to help stop COVID-19, like covering your mouth and nose with a mask, washing hands often, and staying at least 6 feet away from others. The combination of getting vaccinated and following CDC’s recommendations to protect yourself and others will offer the best protection from COVID-19,” said Kim Musselman, Coconino County Health and Human Services Interim Director.

More information is available at www.coconino.az.gov/covid19vaccine.

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