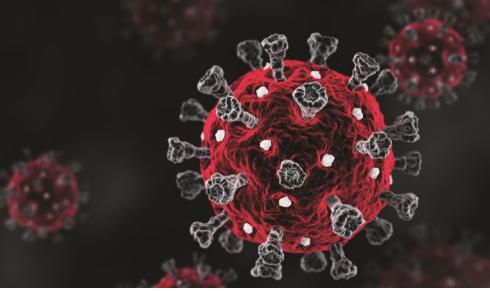


Vax Matters



December 18, 2020



News

FDA: Pfizer vaccine doses may include extra supply

Some vials containing the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine have been found to contain additional doses. [In a tweet, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) said](#) it was "aware that some vials of the Pfizer-BioNTech #COVID19 Vaccine have contained extra product after five doses are obtained. While the FDA advised that is "acceptable to use every full dose obtainable (the sixth, or possibly even a seventh) from each vial, pending resolution of the issue," it stressed that anything less than a full dose should not mixed with material from other vials. All doses administered must be reported in the New Jersey Immunization Information System.

CDC Division Working to Set Standards for Face Masks

With the wide variety of face masks proliferating in the marketplace, how well do they work in filtering potentially infectious particles? The CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health is developing minimum standards and labels to help inform the public on which masks meet the test, [according to The New York Times](#). Guidelines are expected in January.

CDC Tips On Making Holidays Safer

The CDC has shared an infographic on the safest ways to celebrate the winter holidays including limited travel and gatherings. This same message has been reinforced on the state level in holiday guidance as well as reminders to wear a mask, social distance and wash your hands. More on New Jersey's holiday guidance can be [found here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccinations Begin in NJ; Moderna Vaccine Pending

Acute care hospitals across the state began rolling out the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine this week to healthcare workers as a second vaccine – this one by Moderna – is poised to receive Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA.

The first person vaccinated in New Jersey was University Hospital nurse Maritza Beniquez.

"As a woman of color and a Latina, I know that we are three time more than likely to suffer the catastrophic effects of this disease," said Beniquez, whose historic vaccine coincided with her birthday. "For me, it has been important to receive this vaccine, not just for me but for all of those that I love."

As of Friday morning, 2,149 health-care workers had been vaccinated.

New Jersey received 76,050 doses of the Pfizer vaccine in this first round. By the end of this week, an additional 47 acute care hospitals were expected to receive the Pfizer vaccine. Additional doses of the Pfizer vaccine are expected next week, with actual doses to be confirmed weekly.

"The availability of this vaccine within a year is nothing short of a scientific achievement that we have never seen in our lifetimes," said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.

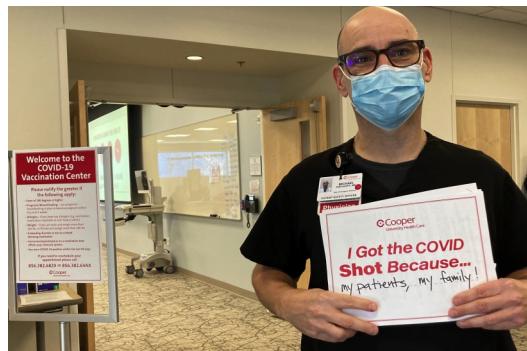
New Jersey could receive 154,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine in its first shipment. Because this vaccine, also a two-dose regimen, does not require ultra-cold storage, there is more flexibility on the types of sites that can receive and provide the doses. The initial vaccination partners receiving Moderna will be the remaining 18 hospitals and community-based providers.

Vaccinations began Tuesday with a half-dozen regional hospitals including: AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center, Cooper University Hospital, Hackensack University Medical Center, Morristown Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and University Hospital. Vaccinations of long-term care residents and staff are expected to begin Dec. 28 under the federal partnership with Walgreens and CVS.

NJDOH is also finalizing a public dashboard which will show doses administered and some demographic information.



University Hospital nurse Maritza Beniquez, center; Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli, Governor Murphy, First Lady Tammy Murphy and Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. Tuesday.



Cooper University Hospital's Dr. Michael Kirchoff received the vaccine.



RWJ University Hospital's frontline healthcare worker COVID-19 vaccine clinic.

NJDOH Announces Mega Sites To Support Statewide COVID-19 Vaccine Planning Effort

Six mega sites throughout New Jersey will serve as vaccination hubs for phased priority groups, part of a critical network of over 200 sites tasked with carrying out the state's COVID-19 vaccination plan fairly and equitably.

The state-coordinated sites are expected to begin opening in early January and will immediately be in position to vaccinate front-line healthcare workers and then continue in a phased approach depending on the supply of vaccine to New Jersey. After these phases are complete, then the general public will be eligible for vaccination. The timing of the progression among the groups depends on the supply of vaccine to the state.

"Building out a core infrastructure of vaccination sites is a critical component of our strategic and efficient deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine and is a key element of New Jersey's recovery," said Governor Murphy. "These statewide sites will be in position to vaccinate front line healthcare workers who are part of the 1a category and will continue for each successive group of New Jerseyans that becomes eligible for vaccination."

The sites include:

- Atlantic County: Atlantic City Convention Center
- Bergen County: Racetrack at Meadowlands, East Rutherford
- Burlington County: Moorestown Mall
- Gloucester County: Rowan College of South Jersey, Sewell
- Middlesex County: New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center, Edison
- Morris County: Rockaway Townsquare

"New Jersey will roll out COVID-19 vaccines step-by-step to serve all who live, work or study in the state," said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. "New Jersey's phasing will ensure that limited vaccines are distributed in a fair and equitable manner. With each successive wave, we will get closer to being able to open our vaccination sites to the general public."

The goal is to vaccinate up to 2,400 people per day through the mega sites. The mega sites are one of several types of sites -- including micro, medium and large -- that will be utilized in the COVID-19 vaccination plan, classified by the number of people that can be vaccinated per day.

These community-based sites are being established in various settings and locations throughout the state. The sites also will include: county sites, and county and local health departments; urgent care centers; the federally qualified health centers; select retail pharmacies; and primary care providers as the state moves through the vaccination phases and toward availability to the general public. Additional sites will be added as the phases progress.

The Health Department will announce an online portal to enable the various groups in the initial phases and eventually the general public to find a vaccination site and register and schedule an appointment.

The mega sites are a collaborative partnership with the NJDOH, New Jersey All-Hazards Incident Management Team (NJ-AHIMT), New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, healthcare providers, local/county health officials, local/county health departments and local/county emergency management.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Are staff in substance use disorder clinics and home health workers included in Phase 1A?

Yes. Vaccination plans are being finalized with more details to be released. For more, see Section 3 of the state's [COVID-19 Vaccination Plan](#).

What is the Health Department doing to address vaccine hesitancy?

NJDOH has been conducting a series of surveys and listening sessions (virtual focus groups) with healthcare providers, community-based organization leaders, and the public to learn about the challenges and barriers to vaccine acceptance. The information gathered is being used to guide messaging in the public awareness campaign. Additionally, the Department will be supporting healthcare providers through education and information resources to enhance their confidence in the vaccine.

A healthcare provider recommendation is one of the strongest predictors of whether a patient will get vaccinated, so by providing healthcare providers with the information they need, it will translate into addressing hesitancy on the part of the patient. The Department's [COVID-19 vaccination website](#) will continue to be updated with new information and resources for the public as it becomes available.

Resources

[NJDOH COVID-19 Vaccination Page](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination Plan at a Glance](#)

[Understanding COVID-19 Vaccine: Information for Health Care Workers](#)

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