

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Phases for COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is following the rollout plan for COVID vaccinations as directed by Nebraska's governor and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The rollout plan is divided into phases, and the first phase has 3 sections called 1A, 1B, and 1C. Within each of the phases, the categories are prioritized and broken down even further into tiers. Tier 1 has priority over Tier 2, and so on. Vaccinations must be given to specific occupations or age groups as dictated by the rollout plan; SWNPHD is not able to change when people in any occupation or other categories receive the vaccine. Changes may happen at the state or federal level.

Everyone in each phase can be vaccinated as soon as there are enough vaccines available.

- Phase 1A is for healthcare occupations in hospitals, clinics, home health, pharmacies, emergency medical services, dentists, optometrists, behavioral health, veterinarians, and long-term care facility residents and staff.
- Phase 1B is for the most elderly and essential occupations.
 - Tier 1 – 75 years of age and older.
 - Tier 2 – First responders, utilities, corrections, and education.
 - Tier 3 – Funeral homes or mortuaries, grocery employees, and food/agriculture production such as meat packing plants, food processing and co-ops.
 - Tier 4 – Transportation occupations, US Postal Service, and public transit.
- Phase 1C is for other high-risk categories – People 65 to 74, people with high-risk medical conditions, vulnerable populations, and group living settings like colleges and universities.
- Phase 2 will be for the general population and is estimated to happen from May to October.

Beginning in mid-December, SWNPHD and the six hospitals in the health district started Phase 1A vaccinations for healthcare workers. SWNPHD has started Phase 1B vaccinations and is continuing to finish Phase 1A, prioritizing those individuals as they are found. This will include long term care or senior housing if it is discovered that they are not being covered by another provider. As of January 8, 2021, SWNPHD had given 425 COVID vaccine shots across the health district.

The waiting list for 1A and 1B in southwest Nebraska is located at www.swhealth.ne.gov/featured/1. Those without a computer or internet access are encouraged to reach out to a friend or family member for assistance. State public health officials are working on an online registration system for the general public, which will be made available soon.

The COVID-19 Community Risk Dial now follows the State of Nebraska's risk dial which is being used

to determine the Directed Health Measures, based on the amount of hospital capacity used for COVID patients. Currently all of Nebraska is in the blue level, between yellow and green. Recommendations include wearing a mask in public, washing hands and surfaces often, and avoiding the 3 C's: crowded spaces, close contact, and confined spaces.

SWNPHD had 193 new cases of COVID-19 reported January 5th to January 11th. A breakout by county includes: Chase – 27; Dundy – 14; Frontier – 3; Furnas – 17; Hayes – 0; Hitchcock – 8; Keith – 35; Perkins – 13; Red Willow – 72. This brings the totals for the health district to 3211 cases. A breakout of total cases by county is available on SWNPHD's website.

COVID-19 information can be found at dhhs.ne.gov and at swhealth.ne.gov. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook.

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COVID-19 VACCINATION TIMELINE

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department
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PHASE 1A: DECEMBER TO JANUARY

- Healthcare personnel**
 - Employees at hospitals, home health care, pharmacies, EMS, outpatient care, dentists, optometrists, behavioral health, veterinarians
- Long-term care facility residents and staff**

PHASE 1B: MID-JANUARY TO MID-MARCH

TIER 1

- People 75 and older

TIER 2

- First responders: Fire, police, dispatch, FBI, adult/child welfare
- Utilities: Power, water, gas and sanitation
- Homeless shelter staff
- Corrections staff
- Educators: Teachers, higher education, support staff
- Child care providers

TIER 3

- Funeral homes, coroners
- Grocery employees
- Food/Agriculture: Meat packing plants, food processing, co-ops

TIER 4

- Transportation: Trucking, railroad, gas stations
- U.S. Postal Service
- Public transit: Bus, air

PHASE 1C: MARCH TO APRIL

- People 65-74 years old
- People with high-risk medical conditions
- Congregate settings: Incarcerated individuals, colleges/universities

PHASE 2: MAY TO OCTOBER

General Population

NOTE: Phases are subject to change by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services; timelines are estimates.