

Arizona Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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Pima County COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution for Healthcare Workers

Dear AzAAP Members:

AzAAP is sharing this information regarding the process for healthcare workers in Pima County to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. We will share information from other public health departments and tribal entities as it becomes available.

From Pima County Health Department:

Pima County has been diligently working on a comprehensive plan for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. In collaboration with local hospitals and community partners, we are committed to the equitable and efficient distribution of the vaccine.

As you are aware, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for distribution and use in the United States. Starting December 17, 2020, approximately 11,700 doses of the vaccine will be available within Pima County. Pima County Health Department should also receive about 17,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine for distribution starting December 21. The Moderna vaccine will be distributed to community hospitals and health care organizations starting December 21st through December 23rd.

As healthcare workers continue to be on the frontline in our fight against COVID-19, these employees are prioritized to be the first vaccinated so they can continue providing care or services. Early vaccine access for this group includes the doctors and nurses who work directly with infected patients and other occupational groups, such as environmental services and administrative staff, who work in high-risk settings where they have prolonged duration of contact and repeat exposures.

The initial distribution of these vaccines will be based on a prioritization process informed by AZDHS and CDC. Due to the high demand for the vaccine, there will be limited availability for some time and, therefore, it is necessary to establish priority groups within each subcategory, to achieve three things:

1. Help decrease the overall number of deaths;
2. Preserve the functioning of society; and
3. Reduce the risk of those at higher risk for complications due to age or underlying medical conditions.

The groupings for prioritization recommended by the CDC and ADHS and reviewed by the Pima County Health Department Ethics Committee are as follows:

- 1A1 - Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations and other healthcare workers at high risk for exposure to COVID-19
- 1A - Healthcare support occupations
- 1A - Skilled nursing facility, assisted living facility, independent living, and HUD senior living residents
- 1B - Essential workers*
- 1B - Adults living in shelters or other congregate living settings with vulnerable populations
- 1C - People at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease

Prioritized populations will receive initial doses of the vaccine at two Points of Dispensing (POD's) developed in partnership with the Pima County Health Department, Banner Health, and Tucson Medical Center. These POD's will dispense the vaccine as determined by the prioritization process. As the vaccine becomes more available, additional distribution sites will be identified.

Allocations of the Moderna vaccine will be sent to additional agencies to help expedite the process of getting the vaccine out. We are working with other facilities to support their application to be vaccinator facilities.

Skilled-nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, independent living facilities, and HUD senior living residents will receive immunizations coordinated by Walgreens or CVS as contracted by the federal government. Pima County Health Department has been working to ensure that these facilities have signed up to receive this support. In certain cases, PCHD will be providing direct vaccination.

Local healthcare providers will be notified as they become eligible as vaccination sites. Pima County encourages these practitioners to plan for the vaccination of their staff. Additional planning information will be forthcoming, including appropriate scheduling information within the next few weeks.

By following the four fundamental public health ethical principles of maximizing benefit and minimizing harm, promoting justice, mitigating health inequities, and promoting transparency, our vaccine distribution program is designed to help control the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure continued access to necessary healthcare services.

Due to the limited quantities available during the first month we ask your help in prioritizing those most at risk and who are working directly with COVID positive patients on a daily basis. Additionally, the new nature of the vaccine we strongly advise that staff from same agencies stagger the registration process over several weeks.

The following question should be answered honestly to proceed with registration.

- Do you work in a facility where direct in-person care is provided to patients with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 while contagious? In these settings, do you interact with patients indoors or in enclosed spaces for longer than 15 minutes at a time?

If you or your staff fill these criteria, please proceed to registration. As the vaccine becomes more widely available we will open the process to all health care support.

Vaccination will begin 12/17/2020. Your designated PoD locations are Banner Cancer Center and Tucson Medical Center. We are geographically splitting the county into an east (TMC) and west section (BANNER); using Country Club road as the split. Registration can be completed here:

<https://www.bannerhealth.com/staying-well/health-and-wellness/wellness/covid/pima-countyvaccine>

<https://www.tmcaz.com/vaccine>

Thank you for your patience, cooperation, and support. In continuing to work together, we can stop COVID-19.

Information on the COVID-19 vaccine can be found on pima.gov/covid19vaccine

Information specific to the Pfizer vaccine for healthcare workers is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/pfizer-biontech-vaccine-what-Clinicians-need-to-know.pdf>

Additional information can be found on the the [v-safe app](#) that was put together by the CDC to report on vaccine reactions.

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