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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Some Alaskans age 50 and above, many educators and those living and working in congregate settings will soon be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine

February 10, 2021 ANCHORAGE – Tomorrow, Feb. 11, the State of Alaska Vaccine Task Force will open state-allocated COVID-19 vaccine appointments to the next group of Alaskans.

Those previously eligible – people 65 years and above and most health care workers (**Phase 1a and Phase 1b Tier 1**) – will still be able to get vaccinated if they have not already done so. The newly eligible group (**Phase 1b Tier 2**) can make appointments to receive vaccine starting tomorrow.

This new group includes Alaskans who are age 50 and above and who have a high-risk medical condition OR work in an essential job around others, plus many education workers regardless of age, some COVID-19 response workers and anyone who lives or works in certain congregate settings.

The State of Alaska’s allocation guidelines that detail this eligibility criteria [can be found on the vaccine eligibility webpage](#).

“Our Elders are our most vulnerable population, and it was important to allow them time to get vaccinated these past few weeks. Many of the seniors who wanted to get vaccinated have done so, and now it’s time to open up vaccinations to a new group of Alaskans,” said Governor Mike Dunleavy.

“As we get vaccine out quickly, efficiently, and equitably across the state, we are constantly balancing supply and demand,” added Alaska’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. “Given some additional vaccine that will be coming soon into the state, the remaining February allocation and an estimation of March’s vaccine allocation, we have decided to move forward with this large tier. While we know this next group is large, and there will be more demand than supply at first, this gives communities more flexibility to move quickly. The demand will be met over time as more vaccine becomes available.”

The Vaccine Task Force is using a phased approach to allocate the limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine to Alaskans. The task force is co-led by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). Allocation recommendations are made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) and the State’s [Alaska Vaccine Allocation Advisory Committee \(AVAAC\)](#).

DHSS officials followed those recommendations with some slight modifications, such as including all educators in Phase 1b, Tier 2.

Starting Feb. 11, people eligible for state-supplied vaccine, Phase 1b, Tier 2 will be limited to these groups:

- **People age 50 years and above** who have any of the following high-risk medical conditions: cancer; chronic kidney disease; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD); Down syndrome; heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies; immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant; obesity; severe obesity; sickle cell disease; smoking; Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes mellitus; and pregnancy. For more information, visit this [CDC webpage](#).
- **Education staff**, regardless of age, limited to pre-K-12 educators and support staff (e.g. custodial, food service, transportation); child care workers and support staff; and indigenous language and culture bearers.
- **Limited pandemic response staff** who may come into contact with the SARS-CoV-2 virus during outbreak response activities.
- **Frontline essential workers 50 years and above who work within six feet of others**. This includes law enforcement, public safety, first responders, food and agriculture workers, transportation and logistics workers, water, wastewater and utility workers and more. For a complete list, please visit the [vaccine eligibility webpage](#) and also refer to federal guidance provided by [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#).
- **People living or working in other congregate settings** not covered in Phase 1a, limited to:
 - Acute psychiatric facilities;
 - Correctional settings;
 - Group homes for individuals with disabilities or mental and behavioral health conditions;
 - Homeless and domestic violence shelters;
 - Substance misuse and treatment residential facilities; and
 - Transitional living homes.

Alaskans are being asked to screen themselves for eligibility prior to making an appointment. Visit covidvax.alaska.gov to check eligibility, use the [Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility Checker](#) and then look for an open appointment if you are eligible. Please call 907-646-3322 if you need assistance. The helpline is staffed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. and 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on weekends.

The Vaccine Task Force also released information this week about who will be eligible next through Phase 1c. For detailed information about who will be eligible in future phases and tiers once demand in the current group wanes, please visit the [vaccine eligibility webpage](#).

Alaskans may also qualify for vaccine distributed and managed by Alaska's Tribal health system, or from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or the Department of Defense (DOD). If you receive services through these providers, contact your local organization to learn more about COVID-19 vaccine eligibility.

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