

# NEWS

January 28, 2021

## **COVID-19 vaccine appointments begin opening for residents 65 years and older in Central District Health, Southwest District Health jurisdictions**

*Vaccine providers may use prioritization efforts to serve those more vulnerable, first*

Idaho's next Subgroup eligible for COVID-19 vaccine will start Monday, February 1, and includes adults 65 years of age and older. Enrolled vaccine providers across Central District Health (CDH) and Southwest District Health's (SWDH) combined 10 counties are beginning to accept appointments given Governor Little's announcement, today, announcing movement to Subgroup 2.2 of the state's prioritization plan.

"What we know is this is a large and motivated group of residents. They are eager, and we are equally interested in seeing them gain protection from this vaccine. But we want to set realistic expectations and remind our residents who are 65 and older that this will be a multi-week process, likely longer, given the estimated 80,000 people in CDH's jurisdiction and approximately 6,000-7,000 vaccines a week coming into our area," said Russ Duke, District Director for Central District Health. CDH's district includes Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties.

In SWDH's six-county region of Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington Counties, an estimated 45,000 people qualify for vaccine in Subgroup 2.2. The district is receiving around 3,000 vaccines a week for the counties it serves.

### **Public health encourages focus on those with serious health conditions, first**

Because of the limited vaccine doses and no significant increase anticipated, the two neighboring health districts are encouraging and supporting vaccine providers in using a priority system to focus on those most vulnerable in the early part of serving this Subgroup. Prioritization may include screenings to determine if a person has serious health conditions that put them at higher risk for severe impacts from COVID-19. Other vaccine providers may initially focus on the upper age segment of the 65 and older population, such as those in the 80-plus age group.

"The data clearly show that our 65 and older populations have the highest rate of hospitalization and death, and often times with pre-existing conditions. While age alone puts us at higher risk, other health conditions increase the potential for negative outcomes if a person becomes infected. Allowing community members at an elevated risk to go first will begin to offer some of our most vulnerable residents a chance at protection, just a bit sooner," said Nikki Zogg, District Director for Southwest District Health.

## **Where to get vaccinated**

Currently, weekly vaccine allotments are going to major health systems and pharmacies in CDH and SWDH regions. Both health districts maintain a list of enrolled vaccine providers with instructions on how to make an appointment. This information can be found on the districts' websites ([CDH](#) | [SWDH](#)). For those without internet access, health district information call centers are a good resource (see *More Information* section below). "If you know someone – a neighbor or loved one who may need help with making an appointment or getting to an appointment, please help make this a priority for them right now and connect them to vaccine through the lists of providers in our regions," said Zogg.

Although the two health districts share county borders, residents are strongly encouraged to seek vaccine within the county they live in. Vaccine doses are allotted by health districts and must remain and be offered within that district.

Public health emphasizes the importance of honoring your vaccine appointment and asks that people not double-book appointments with multiple providers. Limited doses and prep work that must go into a vaccine before an appointment, places that dose at risk of being wasted, and takes away another person's chance to be vaccinated when people hold appointment times and do not show up.

## **Previous Groups still eligible**

Public health reminds people that those within Group 1 and Subgroup 2.1 are still eligible for a vaccine and are encouraged to seek an appointment. To view a list of who is eligible in these Groups, visit <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/covid-19-vaccine/>

## **How vaccine gets to our communities**

Each week, typically Wednesday or Thursday, local public health districts receive the number of vaccine doses their district has been allotted for the upcoming week by state public health. Districts work with enrolled vaccine providers throughout the counties they serve to determine need, and begin deciding who will get how many doses. Considerations must also include storage capacity and can be impacted by the way vaccines are packaged and shipped by the company (e.g. Pfizer vaccine ships in trays of 975 that cannot be broken up between providers.)

In CDH's jurisdiction, enrolled providers receive direct shipments of vaccine to their facilities; in SWDH's jurisdiction, some vaccine is shipped directly to providers, and some is received by the health district and distributed per a plan. Enrolled providers work through their scheduling platforms to schedule appointments with eligible groups. Currently in Idaho, vaccines are not transferred between health districts; doses stay within the health district they are assigned to.

## **More Information**

*Central District Health serves Ada, Boise, Elmore, and Valley Counties*

- Call Center: 208-321-2222 – Open M-F, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Vaccine webpage: [cdh.idaho.gov/covid-vaccine](https://cdh.idaho.gov/covid-vaccine)
  - Sign up for vaccine updates: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/8DO2cZ9/vaccine>
- Enrolled vaccine provider list:  
<https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/pdfs/cd/Coronavirus/Resource%20Docs/vaccine/enrolled-COVID19-vaccine-providers.pdf>

*Southwest District Health serves Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington Counties*

- Call Center: 208-455-5411 – Open M-F, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Vaccine web page: [phd3.idaho.gov/covid19/#Vaccine](https://phd3.idaho.gov/covid19/#Vaccine)
- Enrolled vaccine provider list:  
<https://phd3.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/COVID-19-Vaccine-Location-R3-List-01262021.pdf>

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