

## **Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution**

### **When will UW Medicine hospitals and clinics receive the vaccine?**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is expected to decide about authorizing emergency use of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine on December 10, 2020. All indications are that the federal government will distribute the vaccines to each state soon after that. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) will receive the vaccines (62,500 doses expected initially with the anticipation of over 400,000 doses by the end of December) and disperse them to 26 sites across the state with the expectation that they partner with community providers. Once we receive our doses, we will begin vaccinating high-risk employees and community healthcare providers. We could begin vaccinating as early as December 17.

### **Is UW Medicine developing a priority list for receiving vaccinations?**

Yes. Our priority list is based on the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations. The recommendation is that healthcare workers who are most at risk for becoming infected, such as those working in units that care for people with COVID-19, Airlift Northwest and Emergency Departments, along with residents of Long-Term Care Facilities (LTC) and LTC employees, be offered the first available doses of the vaccine. UW Medicine has created a multi-disciplinary Vaccine Task Force to work through all the necessary logistics, including identifying those healthcare workers who are at highest risk so they can be prioritized to receive the vaccine at the earliest possible time.

The first group of UW Medicine community members eligible based on prioritization are employees in the following areas:

#### **Priority Group 1**

- Units that provide care for patients with COVID-19 (nurses, environmental services, providers, therapists, other staff)
- Emergency departments (RNs, providers, environmental services, therapists, flight crew, other staff)
- COVID-19 testing sites, labs and vaccination staff
- COVID-19 screeners and safety officers

In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Washington State Department of Health, this first group will be quickly followed by UW Medicine employees in the following areas:

#### **Priority Group 2**

- Acute care or ICUs
- Outpatient and specialty clinics
- Other patient facing roles such as lab and radiology
- Facilities/engineering in hospitals and clinics
- UW professional students who work in the hospitals and clinics in patient facing jobs

As a UW Medicine community member, if you do not fall into the above categories, you will still have an opportunity for vaccination in the coming months. Additional groups will be outlined in detail as the vaccination process continues.

### **How will you distribute the vaccines?**

At the system level, we are working with managers and physician leadership to identify how we will stage vaccinations **at each hospital campus and for each group** based on the UW Medicine approved priority groups. We expect first-dose vaccinations for the first group to be completed by the end of December.

### **How will employees be notified when they can receive the vaccine?**

Employees in the first two priority groups will hear directly from their managers with detailed instructions on how to schedule their vaccination. We will be using technology as much as possible and working to develop ways to manage notification, registration and scheduling.

Group 1 will be notified the week of December 14, if not sooner. Depending on the number of individuals who are interested in the vaccine, we expect to notify Group 2 shortly after the first group has been notified and scheduled. Timing will depend on the number of doses we receive from the state. We will provide regular updates to employees through Dr. John Lynch's messages, The Huddle and Town Halls.

We have also created an email address that employees can use to ask questions that we will address through our various communication channels: [uwm-eoc-vaccines@uw.edu](mailto:uwm-eoc-vaccines@uw.edu)

### **Will employees be required to be vaccinated?**

When staff in the first two priority groups receive an email alerting them to their vaccination opportunity, it is mandatory that each person responds with their level of interest. All staff are strongly encouraged to get the vaccine. Getting vaccinated will help maintain a safe work environment, allow our healthcare workers to continue to safely care for patients during this surge and decrease your risk of getting COVID-19 or potentially exposing others to it, including your family, friends and the community. Getting a vaccine will help us end this pandemic.

While declination is an option, our goal is 100% compliance with this COVID-19 prevention campaign as it is with the influenza prevention program. Staff can choose to schedule, postpone or decline. Choosing to decline or postpone will not prevent staff members from scheduling in the future. If a staff member changes their mind, we would be happy to schedule them for a vaccination.

### **What vaccine are we getting and how many doses?**

We will be getting the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine that is administered in two doses 21 days apart. UW Medicine will receive 3,900 doses of the approximately 62,500 doses that will be delivered initially to the state of Washington soon after the FDA approves the vaccine on December 10.

The Washington State Department of Health is charged with distributing the initial vaccine to 26 sites throughout the state.

Additional doses and sites will become available throughout the month of December and into 2021.

**Will there be a cost for employees to get the vaccine?**

No, vaccines will be free to all employees.

**Will other vaccines become available?**

The Moderna vaccine will be evaluated by the FDA for emergency use authorization for its two-dose vaccine on December 17. We also expect additional vaccine manufacturers to apply for approval in early 2021.

**If Moderna has a two-dose vaccine available, can staff mix the doses and get a Pfizer vaccine first followed by the Moderna vaccine?**

No, you must receive your second dose from the same manufacturer. Pfizer's vaccine is given in two-doses, 21 days apart, while Moderna's vaccine is given in two doses, 28 days apart.

**How will people be sure to get their second dose? Is timing essential?**

We will send reminders electronically and work with managers for those employees who do not regularly use computers. The timeline for the second dosing is a minimum interval, and we will schedule follow-up doses when you receive your first dose to align with the second-dosing recommendations. It is important that everyone receive their second dose.

**If I am a healthcare worker and am in a medically high-risk group, what should I do when I am offered the vaccine?**

Many people in a high-risk group with co-morbidities are likely to benefit from the vaccine and are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated. If you have questions, you should contact your primary care provider to determine the best course of action.

**Can I choose which vaccine I want to receive?**

We encourage everyone to take the vaccine that is available at the time the person is eligible.

**If I tested positive for COVID-19, do I still need to get the vaccine?**

Yes, you should still get a vaccine; however, if you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days, you may defer your vaccine to allow vaccination of other healthcare workers who remain susceptible to infection as current evidence suggests reinfection is uncommon during the 90 days after initial infection.

**What are the side effects of the vaccine?**

Vaccine side effects are variable. Some individuals participating in the trials have reported no side effects, while others have reported soreness and inflammation at the site of the injection.

Others have developed symptoms similar to COVID-19 that may include fever, headache, or muscle aches.

**What if I have an adverse reaction to the vaccine that is more serious than the side effects?**

If you have an adverse reaction, such as swelling of the face, mouth, difficulty swallowing or breathing, you should call 911 immediately.

**What can I expect once I schedule my appointment?**

Because our system is experiencing a surge in COVID-19 patients, it is critical that we have a sufficient workforce. Please schedule your vaccination appointment on the last day of work prior to taking scheduled days off in case you are not feeling well after you receive the vaccine. Only a few team members from the same unit will be vaccinated at the same time.

Vaccination sites will be available at the UW Medical Center – Montlake and Northwest campuses, Harborview Medical Center, and Valley Medical Center. Our hospitals are identifying where they will stage vaccination stations. If you work in a clinic not attached to a hospital, you should select the vaccine site that is the most convenient for you. Airlift Northwest employees will be vaccinated at the two Airlift Northwest bases. All vaccination sites will be listed when you register online.

You will be scheduled in a 30-minute window in which to receive your vaccination. Because we are still social distancing, it is important that you arrive for your vaccine as close to the time of your appointment as possible. You should bring your employee badge, and you will be asked to verify the information you had previously filled out online. After you receive your vaccination, you will be asked to remain at the vaccination station for a 15-minute observation period before leaving. We will provide you with an FAQ and information on side effects.

**Will the fact that I received a vaccine go into my medical records?**

No. Employee Health will document that you received a vaccination just as they do with flu vaccines. If you wish to share this information with your healthcare provider, you should do that. We will provide you with proof-of-vaccination documentation.

**What if I decline to take the vaccine and then change my mind?**

If you decline a vaccine and then at a later date decide you would like it, you will be able to schedule. More information on this process will be shared soon.

**What if I am pregnant or breast-feeding? Can I still get the vaccine?**

Yes, pregnant and breast-feeding women can get the vaccine; however, we encourage you to contact your healthcare provider before getting the vaccine. None of the clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccine included pregnant or breast-feeding women.

**If I am at high-risk for COVID-19, will my family be prioritized to receive the vaccine when I do?**

We are following CDC guidelines and at this time will focus on our healthcare workers. Your family members should check with their Primary Care Physician to find out when they will offer vaccines.

**Can I get COVID-19 from the vaccine?**

No. This is not a live vaccine and you cannot get COVID-19. Some of the vaccine side effects are very similar to symptoms of COVID-19, but they should be mild.

**Once I am vaccinated, do I still need to mask and physical distance?**

Yes, vaccinated individuals will need to continue to follow our infection prevention practices, including masking and physical distancing. It is important for all of us to continue to practice these measures when at work and out in the community until we learn more about the impact of vaccination on the transmission of COVID-19 and have a large enough portion of our community that is vaccinated.

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