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December 28, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUMBOLDT COUNTY PREPARES FOR COMMUNITY WIDE COVID-19 VACCINATION

WINNEMUCCA, Nev.— Local officials have begun rolling out a comprehensive vaccination plan this month with the arrival of the first COVID-19 vaccines in Humboldt County.

Under a priority system developed by the state based on federal guidance, and adopted by Humboldt County, the first doses of the vaccine—about 300 in all—have been made available to healthcare workers at Humboldt General Hospital as part of a Tier 1 distribution.

Nursing home facilities also are at the top of the first tier for receiving the vaccine. Deaths among residents at skilled-nursing and assisted-living facilities account for about 18 percent of COVID-19 fatalities in Nevada, according to state data.

Humboldt County Emergency Manager Captain Sean Wilkin said December 28-29, the county will distribute its next allotment of 100 vaccines to more Tier 1 residents, including emergency medical services personnel, law enforcement and public safety personnel, and Department of Corrections staff, among others.

Starting in January and continuing in February, the second group to receive the vaccine will include teachers and child care staff, higher education faculty members, essential public transportation workers, essential retail workers and prison inmates.

Captain Wilkin said Tier 2 incorporates people who live in communal settings, who are particularly vulnerable to the virus. "These are people who live together, who work closely together, who find it difficult if not impossible to socially distance given their circumstances," he said.

Based on guidance earlier this month from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Captain Wilkin said the county also will incorporate residents over age 75 into Tier 2.

Humboldt County residents over age 75 who wish to be notified once Tier 2 vaccines become available may place their name on a registry by calling the Pleasant Senior Center at (775) 623-6211 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, not including holidays.

The Tier 3 group includes, among others, those over 65, and people with underlying health conditions. Healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 64 also are included in this group.

An FDA advisory panel has recommended the addition of 16- and 17-year-olds to Tier 3. However, children younger than 16 are not expected to be approved to receive the vaccine before there is further study of the effects on them.

Pregnant and lactating women also are cautioned to discuss the vaccination with their healthcare provider before being inoculated. People with a history of severe allergic reactions from previous immunizations that required hospitalization should also avoid the COVID-19 vaccines for the time being.

Captain Wilkin said tiered groups will be notified as vaccine reserves arrive. Public groups in Tier 2 and Tier 3 will be notified of available vaccination opportunities via the community's communication and media channels, healthcare offices, local business and more.

Captain Wilkin said the vaccine is currently in short supply: the state's expected allocation was recently reduced by 42 percent. "But much more will be available by the spring," he said, "especially since Pfizer and Moderna are both approved to move forward."

In the meantime, Captain Wilkin said local residents should continue to guard against the virus by wearing a mask, distancing socially and practicing good hand hygiene.

"When it's your turn to get the vaccine, do not hesitate," urged Captain Wilkin. "This vaccination is a step towards normalcy; if enough Nevadans are vaccinated, it will enable our hospitals to remain resilient and schools and businesses to remain open."

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