

January 8, 2021

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REGARDING: COVID-19 Vaccination Update for Northeastern Washington

In Ferry, Pend Oreille, and Stevens Counties, local healthcare providers have worked diligently over the past three weeks to vaccinate personnel who work in medical settings and first responders who have volunteered to receive the vaccination under [Phase 1a](#). The process to provide these individuals their second “booster” dose is underway and will continue through next week.

Since beginning to administer vaccinations in mid-December, Washington State has distributed 425,900 doses out of the 522,550 doses received from federal shipments. Of those doses that have been delivered throughout the state, 110,225 have been administered.

In NE Washington, local hospitals and clinics have scheduled or completed most (if not all) vaccinations of individuals who want the vaccine and work in medical settings or as first responders. If there are still any individuals that meet these criteria and have not been scheduled or already received a vaccination, we are advising they contact their local medical facility or Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) for assistance. Progressing through Phase 1a distribution, local vaccine supplies have currently been adequate to meet initial demands for Phase 1a individuals. There has been some limited availability to vaccinate individuals at greatest risk of exposure (because of their occupation) or potential complications from COVID-19 (based on age or pre-existing conditions.) Our goal at NETCHD is to support efforts to vaccinate interested local residents as quickly as possible while still taking a phased approach towards allocation.

On Wednesday, January 6th, Washington State Department of Health (DOH) released guidance for the next group eligible to receive vaccinations. [This graphic](#) shows the groups and the estimated timeline for phase 1B. Broadly, groups eligible for vaccination in phase 1B include:

Phase 1B1 - (Tier 1)

- All people 70 years and older
- People 50 years and older who live in multigenerational households

Phase 1B2 - (Tier 2)

- High risk critical workers 50 years and older who work in certain congregate settings: Agriculture; food processing; grocery stores; K-12 (teachers and school staff); childcare; corrections, prisons, jails

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or detention facilities (staff); public transit; fire; law enforcement

Phase 1B3 - (Tier 3)

- People 16 years or older with two or more co-morbidities or underlying conditions

Phase 1B4 - (Tier 4)

- High-risk critical workers in certain congregate settings under 50 years
- People, staff and volunteers all ages in congregate living settings:
 - Correctional facilities; group homes for people with disabilities; people experiencing homelessness that live in or access services in congregate settings

As options to schedule vaccinations become more broadly available, information will be shared about how individuals who meet Phase 1b Tier 1 criteria can connect with their local providers to obtain their vaccination. Some area hospitals and clinics are currently scheduling individuals within Phase 1b Tier 1, however within NE Washington, phone lines at local hospitals and clinics have been flooded with calls about how to receive the vaccination. While this enthusiasm speaks well to our local citizens desire to use this effective tool to prevent illness, please hold off calling local hospitals and clinics until you fit the eligibility requirements for the next group to be vaccinated. At this time, only call your local hospital or clinic for scheduling if you are 70 years and older or if you are 50 years and older living in a multigenerational household. Please visit your providers websites or social media pages for additional information.

An additional resource, available January 18th, is the [Phase Finder](#), this online tool will allow individuals to assess their eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine.

While vaccines are a crucial tool in limiting the spread of the virus, they can't be used alone at this time. Even as we begin to vaccinate people in our communities, it is still imperative to [maintain the infection control measures](#) that have become part of our daily lives. We will all need to keep wearing masks and taking precautions for many more months. For now, we should all continue limiting our social interactions with people who don't live with us and staying at home as much as possible.

More information about COVID-19 Vaccine can be found at the Washington State Department of Health [website](#) and at the fact sheet [Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19](#).

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