

PRESS RELEASE

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Vaccine Rollout

Over 500 doses of the COVID vaccine have been provided to the personnel on the first priority lists. These include healthcare workers who have close contact with potentially ill clients, first responders, in home care providers, law enforcement and more. The list of priority personnel is available at <http://www.parkcounty.us/CoronaVirus.html> and at the Wyoming Department of Health website, <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/>.

Park County Public Health, Cody Regional Health, Powell Valley Health Care have all been working to vaccinate as many people in the high priority categories as want the COVID vaccine. There has been no waiting for personnel to decide. There is also every opportunity for personnel who decide later they want the vaccine to get it. All agencies providing the COVID vaccine will always allow personnel to make appointments to get vaccinated.

Park County has both the Pfizer vaccine and the Moderna vaccine. Every agency providing the COVID vaccine is committed to using every dose available and not to waste any dose. Each has its own special handling characteristics. The Pfizer vaccine requires ultra-cold storage. The only freezer required has to hold the vaccine at -70 C is at Cody Regional Health. Once the vaccine is removed from that freezer it must be used within 6 days. This vaccine requires reconstitution, meaning normal saline is mixed to create the appropriate doses. Once that process occurs now the agency has 6 hours to use that vial. So planning requires that we have that number of people available to give the COVID vaccine to. This vaccine also requires a second dose in 21 days. That is another separate clinic to do.

The Moderna vaccine is somewhat easier to manage. It can be out of our standard freezer for 30 days and stored in our vaccine refrigerators. It requires no dilution and once the vial is punctured we have 12 hours to provide it to the appropriate clients or waste it. And the second dose is needed to be given at 28 days.

As you can see there are many things to take into account when giving these COVID vaccines. Everyone will have an opportunity to get the COVID vaccine if they want it. If someone decides later that they want it and avoided their first opportunity, that is not a problem. Everyone who wants to be vaccinated with the two appropriate doses will have that opportunity at any time once vaccine becomes more available. No agency providing vaccine wants to waste any.

Future planning for Park County Public Health includes doing 4 hour clinics for specific populations. Powell will start those this Thursday afternoon and Friday morning at the Fairgrounds. If you go to the County website, <http://www.parkcounty.us/CoronaVirus.html>, you will see a form or survey. Fill this out, submit it and it will place you in one of those 4 hour blocks. The age groupings we are doing at this time are 70 and older. In Cody, Public Health will be conducting these at the Auditorium starting the afternoon of January 19 and the morning of January 20. Again 4 hours each. The process will be the same.

Park County Public Health requests that if you here of a vaccine clinic anywhere, if you haven't signed up please don't arrive unannounced. The vaccines available on those days are for the people who have signed up. If we have extra doses at the end of a particular day and you walk in we will be glad to vaccinate you. But with small dose amounts and over 8,000 people in Park County, who according to Health and Human Services receive Medicare, we want the priority, at risk folks to get the vaccine first. As more doses become available we will be doing larger clinics for more residents in Park County. It will take time. Please be patient.

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