

NEWS RELEASE

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First phase COVID-19 vaccination continues expanding around state

With about 80,000 vaccinated so far, pace is set to increase

PHOENIX – In the second full week of COVID-19 vaccination, Arizona has taken significant steps forward in getting available doses into the arms of healthcare workers and residents and staff at long-term care facilities.

These and other factors help position local health departments, in partnership with the state, to vaccinate much larger groups prioritized for upcoming phases of distribution, as more doses of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are made available through the federal government:

- Through today, approximately 80,000 doses of vaccine have been administered. With over 70 vaccination sites operating, and more planned for the next week across the state, the pace will continue to increase.
- Rural counties and tribal governments receiving their allocations through the state have ramped up vaccination efforts coming out of a shortened holiday week.
- A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) partnership with pharmacies, including CVS and Walgreens, began vaccinating residents and staff in skilled nursing facilities this week, with 24 locations served to date. This initiative received nearly 40,000 doses from the state's allocation last week to vaccinate in these facilities over the next three weeks.
- An [Executive Order](#) from Governor Ducey will help expand access to vaccine, increase the rate of the vaccination, and streamline communication about how Arizonans can access vaccination.

“Our partners operating vaccine administration sites and programs statewide have done a fantastic job,” said Dr. Cara Christ, director of the Arizona Department of Health Services, “But, we can’t be satisfied when any dose of COVID-19 vaccine is in a freezer rather than protecting Arizonans. ADHS and local partners are continuously working to increase access to vaccine and get more and more people vaccinated.”

Arizona’s percentage of population vaccinated and number of doses administered to date rank favorably among states in [Bloomberg’s national COVID-19 vaccine tracker](#).

Phase 1B of vaccine distribution, with teachers, childcare staff, protective services workers, and individuals 75 and older prioritized for the first doses, is expected to begin in most counties by late January.

As more vaccine is made available to larger groups, distribution will be expanded to hundreds of vaccination providers registered by ADHS, with many more in the pipeline.

The Governor's executive order will make this even more efficient by empowering ADHS to manage allocation to large pharmacy chains and other statewide provider groups rather than this process being managed on a county-by-county basis.

"Turning an old phrase on its head, this is a sprint, not a marathon," Dr. Christ said. "The state and local partners are making solid progress, but there is considerable work ahead. We will continue identifying and surmounting challenges because there is too great a cost for every minute that any dose of vaccine isn't used."

For more information, please visit azhealth.gov/COVID19vaccine.