

## GET THE FACTS

- **Why should I get a COVID19 vaccine?**
  - Vaccination is a safe, effective and reliable way to prevent getting infected with COVID-19 and the best tool we have to help us end the COVID-19 pandemic in Oregon. By getting vaccinated, wearing masks, washing our hands, staying physically distant and avoiding large indoor gatherings we can help stop the spread. If enough of us get vaccinated, we can achieve community immunity and the virus will not spread quickly.
- **Is the vaccine safe?**
  - Thanks to advances in medicine, scientists were able to create and test a vaccine quickly. The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) requires rigorous safety testing before it will approve any vaccine. Tens of thousands of people from many backgrounds and ages, including Oregonians, participated in vaccine testing.
- **Will I still need to wear a mask after getting the vaccine?**
  - The vaccine will keep you from getting sick, but it still may be possible to get, carry and transmit the virus. Preventing illness and severe illness is certainly a reason to get vaccinated. It will also take time for us to get everyone vaccinated. We don't yet know when we'll be able to stop wearing masks and maintaining physical distance, but OHA will continue to watch the spread of the disease in Oregon. When the spread of disease is low enough, these additional protective measures can be stopped.
- **Who decides which workers get the vaccine first?**
  - OHA is committed to an equitable distribution of the vaccine. OHA's community engagement team is assembling a COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee to listen to community members and provide input on how to prioritize vaccine distribution. This committee will identify and prioritize which critical workers will receive the vaccine first, knowing that, in time, there will be enough vaccine for everyone who wants one.
- **When will the vaccine be available for me?**
  - Phase 1A began on December 16th, 2020 in Oregon with health care workers who are exposed to COVID19 through their work receiving the first vaccines. This includes people who work in hospitals, EMS staff and people who live and work in long-term care facilities.
  - The following are future phase proposals by the Oregon Health Authority
    - Phase 1B - Other essential workers and people at higher risk of severe COVID19 illness including people 65 years of age and older
    - Phase 2 - Critical populations
      - Long-term care facility residents (e.g., nursing home and assisted living facility residents)
      - People with underlying medical conditions that are risk factors for severe COVID-19 illness
      - People 65 years of age and older
      - People from racial and ethnic minoritized groups
      - People from tribal communities
      - People who are incarcerated/detained in correctional facilities
      - People experiencing homelessness/living in shelters
      - People attending colleges/universities
      - People living and working in other congregate settings
      - People living in rural communities
      - People living with intellectual, developmental, and other disabilities
      - People who are under or uninsured
    - The general population

- **Where do I get the vaccine when it's my turn?**
  - The Oregon Health Authority is working on building partnerships across Oregon to ensure everyone can access the vaccine in their communities via healthcare settings (doctors' offices, clinics), commercial settings (retail pharmacies) and public health venues (public health clinics, mobile clinics, federally qualified health centers)
- **Can I be forced to get the vaccine by my employer?**
  - This is not something we are hearing from employers.
  - Private-sector employers, particularly private-sector employers in health care, will likely have the right to mandate vaccination. Many private hospitals have mandated flu shots for years.
  - In the public sector, we believe that a policy requiring vaccinations is a mandatory subject of bargaining. Therefore, public-sector employers will need to negotiate policies to mandate vaccinations with your union. Stay tuned.
- **If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when it's available?**
  - According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccination should be offered to persons regardless of a history of COVID-19 infection, with or without symptoms. They don't recommend testing to check for prior infection when deciding to get the vaccine.
- **Is the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) planning on making COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory?**
  - There are no plans for OHA to require the COVID-19 vaccination, but OHA strongly recommends vaccination for the safety and health of the entire community.
- **Are mental health residential, substance use disorders residential, detox and children's residential included in the behavioral health residential programs of Phase 1A?**
  - Yes, these facilities and programs are included in Phase 1A, Group 2. This includes all residents who meet the age eligibility for vaccines per the FDA, plus all paid and unpaid health care personnel or direct care personnel serving in these settings.
- **Are dentists included in Group 1 of Phase 1A?**
  - Dentists working in hospitals or urgent care settings are included in Group 1 of Phase 1A, but dentists working in a dental office are not, even if they are performing urgent procedures. Dentists in dental offices are included in Group 4 of Phase 1A.
- **Are staff who work in county juvenile detention centers included in Phase 1A?**
  - Yes, personnel serving in county juvenile detention centers are included in Phase 1A, Group 2.
- **Are staff working in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) child welfare group homes in Phase 1A?**
  - Yes, personnel working in ODHS child welfare group homes are included in Phase 1A, Group 2 as they would be considered a type of congregate care setting.