VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNICATION

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VA administers over 146,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to date

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today it has administered initial COVID-19 vaccine doses to more than 14,000 Veterans at high risk of getting COVID-19 infection, and more than 132,000 health care employees as of Jan. 4.

In accordance with VA's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan, the department started vaccination efforts at 37 initial VA medical centers, following the Food and Drug Administration's Dec. 11 decision to issue an Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine.

The 37 initial sites to first receive the vaccine were selected based on several factors, including having the capacity to store the vaccine at extremely cold temperatures and the ability to offer high-throughput vaccination. Shortly after, VA included 128 additional sites to the original list. To date, the list of sites has grown to 195 VA facilities spread out across the country with more being added.

"This is a massive undertaking that is happening at rapid pace," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "This week, the initial 37 sites that received the first limited Pfizer-BioNTech allocations are beginning to administer the second dose."

The second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine should be administered 21-days after the first vaccination while the second Moderna dose should be administered 28-days after the first. VA began administering Moderna the week of Dec. 21, 2020. Both vaccines require two doses for maximum efficacy. VA's ultimate goal is to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated. As vaccine supplies increase, VA care teams will reach out to eligible Veterans to schedule vaccinations. Veterans can get up-to-date information and sign up to receive updates on VA's **COVID Vaccine webpage.**

COVID-19 Vaccines at VA

Basic information about getting your vaccine at VA

Eligibility

When more vaccines become available, we plan to offer a free COVID-19 vaccine to all Veterans receiving VA health care who want one.

Your team will contact you when a vaccine is available to you. If you decide to get the vaccine, your team will help you schedule your appointments.

If you're not currently receiving health care through VA, [find out if you're eligible and how to apply now](#).

Safety

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Safety is a top priority as federal partners work to make COVID-19 vaccines available.

Before the FDA authorizes a vaccine for use, they carefully review the available safety data and clinical trial results for that vaccine. To learn more about the safety of the 2 authorized COVID-19 vaccines, read the FDA fact sheets:

- [FDA Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine fact sheet (PDF)](#)
- [FDA Moderna COVID-19 vaccine fact sheet (PDF)](#)

We'll closely monitor everyone who gets a COVID-19 vaccine for reactions, side effects, or adverse events. An adverse event is an injury or harm that happens to someone after they receive a vaccine, which may or may not have been caused by the vaccine.

We'll report this information in our vaccine monitoring and tracking system. This is the same system we use to monitor reactions to all vaccines, including those for the flu and shingles.

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccine safety, [go to the CDC website](#)