

PHMDC: COVID-19 vaccine not likely to be available to the public until Spring 2021 or later

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MADISON, Wis. – Local health organizations are calling on the public to be vigilant over the holidays in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Despite recent positive news about vaccine development, the general public is unlikely to receive vaccines until Spring of 2021 at the earliest.

Rather than calling your healthcare provider, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Wisconsin Department of Health Services websites below for answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccine. This helps reserve healthcare systems' staffed phone lines for those calling with active symptoms and acute care needs.

Recommendations on how the early vaccine dosages are distributed will be developed at the federal level, and the first phase of vaccine distribution is expected to focus on frontline healthcare workers in patient service with the highest risk of exposure. The intent is to keep healthcare workers available to care for patients, and area health systems are planning how to rapidly administer the vaccine to its frontline healthcare workers upon receipt of the dosages.

Because a COVID-19 vaccine is not likely to be available for the public until Spring 2021 or later, it is imperative that the public continue to follow safety measures, especially as the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, to prevent the spread of the virus and avoid further strain on local hospitals.

These preventive measures include:

- Don't gather in the presence of those outside your immediate household, and if you must, wear a mask and stay at least six feet apart.
- Wear a mask when in public, even in outdoor locations.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, scrubbing thoroughly and rinsing completely.
- If you have symptoms stay home.

When federal government regulators determine vaccine production is significant enough to make it available for the public, health systems will make this widely known.

These Dane County healthcare organizations support this urgent public health message:

- Access Community Health Centers
- Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin
- Public Health Madison & Dane County
- SSM Health
- Stoughton Health
- UnityPoint Health – Meriter
- UW Health

For more on the vaccines and answers to frequently asked questions, please visit:

- [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#)