

DHS: 65 and older adults eligible for COVID-19 vaccine beginning January 25

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Today the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced that adults over the age of 65 will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine beginning January 25th. Currently, frontline health care workers, residents in long term care facilities (nursing homes and assisted living facilities), and police and fire personnel are eligible. There are approximately 700,000 Wisconsinites who are 65 and older and Wisconsin currently receives around 70,000 first-dose vaccines per week from the federal government. It will take time to vaccinate this population in Wisconsin.

“Older adults have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and prioritizing this population will help save lives,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “Wisconsin systems and operations are ready to vaccinate more people. The amount of vaccine we get from the federal government will determine how quickly we can get these groups vaccinated. Our partners in health care, pharmacies and local public health are ready and up to the task.”

Adults 65 and older have been recommended by the federal government and discussed by the Wisconsin State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC). COVID-19 has more severe consequences in older adults and prioritizing this population will help protect more Wisconsinites from serious illness and death. The full recommendations from SDMAC on the rest of 1B eligibility will be voted on later this week.