

Thedacare prepares to offer COVID-19 vaccine to adults 65 and older

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NEENAH, Wis. – This week marks another promising milestone in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced adults over the age of 65, in addition to some other groups still being determined, will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine on Monday, January 25, which will mark the beginning of Phase 1B.

“Team members will be vaccinating larger groups while continuing to administer vaccines to ThedaCare team members and affiliate providers, as well as police and fire personnel,” explained Mark Cockley, MD, ThedaCare Chief Clinical Officer and President of Clinically Integrated Network. “We understand that older adults are more likely to experience severe illness from COVID-19. Prioritizing this population will help protect more people from serious illness and death.”

Health systems across Wisconsin are working through the logistics to provide vaccines for those who will be eligible in the next phase. While our state receives around 70,000 first-dose vaccines per week, there are approximately 700,000 Wisconsinites who are 65 and older, including roughly 120,000 in our region. The amount of vaccine health systems receive from the federal and state government will determine how

quickly we can vaccinate these groups of people, according to DHS.

“ThedaCare looks forward to administering the vaccine to people throughout the communities we serve,” said Dr. Cockley. “We will seek to prioritize vaccine access for this group of those individuals most at risk, people over 65 and others to be designated in the Phase 1B beginning with people of higher risk.”

ThedaCare will manage COVID-19 vaccine scheduling for people in Phase 1B primarily through MyThedaCare/My Chart. This process ensures a single channel of coordination of the vaccine and that the vaccine becomes part of patients’ electronic medical records. Once individuals have created a MyThedaCare account, specific details on how and when to schedule vaccine appointments will follow in a communication to the MyThedaCare-specified email address.

We’re asking community members to follow these four simple steps to create a MyThedaCare account if they do not yet have one:

- Visit ThedaCare.org
- Click “MyThedaCare” at the top of the page
- Click “Sign Up Now”
- Follow the prompts

For convenience, ThedaCare will have multiple sites providing the vaccine, with plans to open more in the weeks to come. People receiving the vaccine from ThedaCare are able to choose the location that is the most convenient for them, keeping in mind the second dose must be administered at the same location as the first as the state will only ship doses to the original location of immunization.

“While we understand many have the desire to receive a vaccine as soon as possible, we will follow federal and state guidelines to continue our long history of delivering vaccines safely and effectively,” said Dr. Cockley. “We are building this system in real time. No health system has prepared to vaccinate entire communities in this scale ever before. Our goal is to ensure a smooth, easy process for all who choose to receive their vaccine. At this time, we are asking for patience from the community. Our teams are working diligently to prepare for this important vaccine milestone.”

ThedaCare has been working with area health care systems and public health departments to discuss plans for coordination to offer the vaccine to our community members.

At this time, ThedaCare is asking that patients do not call their health care providers to schedule a vaccination, and there are no wait lists for the vaccine. However, as with all health issues, patients are encouraged to contact their provider to discuss their decision. We understand that support of vaccination plans will require timely and accurate information to be readily available. We remain committed to sharing information regularly as we learn more.

Please visit the following channels for continued updates:

- Our homepage, ThedaCare.org, and our COVID-19 site, ThedaCareCOVID-19.org
- ThedaCare social channels (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube)
- Be Safe Wisconsin

“These are exciting milestones and we all look forward to a healthier, safer future,” said Dr.

Cockley. “As we work through this important vaccine process, we urge all members of our communities to continue safe behaviors to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including masking, staying home when ill and avoiding gatherings with those outside your immediate household.”