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COVID-19 reminders

COVID-19 has been at the forefront of everyone's mind since the start of the global pandemic at the beginning of this year. Now, a solution to help minimize spread is here. Recently, the FDA approved two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use.

At WeCare tlc, we're proud to be your healthcare partners and want to ensure you're informed about the vaccines. See below for a full break down about what you need to know and answers to frequently asked questions.

What we know:

- Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines have received FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) after determining the known and potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccines.
- Nearly 3 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine have been delivered to 636 locations over the first few days after approval, mostly health-care systems. The vaccine is heading to hospitals, retail pharmacies, and other sites that can store it at extremely low temperatures — about 94 degrees below zero.
- Currently, there are 5.9 million doses of the Moderna vaccine slated for distribution starting this week. A benefit of this vaccine is it can be stored at the temperature of a normal freezer, making it easier to transport.
- Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine currently requires 2 doses, with a second dose 3 weeks after the first dose to get the most protection the vaccine has to offer against this serious disease, which is reportedly 95% effective in preventing the virus.
- Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, one month apart. The vaccine was 94.1% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease among clinical trial participants.
- The first round of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine doses should be delivered to all vaccination sites identified by states within three weeks. An additional three million doses are held for subsequent delivery to ensure enough vaccine for the two doses needed for full protection against COVID-19.
- Local public health organizations and state health officials in collaboration with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) make the determination on how to plan and operationalize a vaccination response to COVID-19 within their jurisdictions.
- Once the vaccines are widely available, plans will expand to COVID-19 vaccines in doctors' offices, local pharmacies, and federally qualified health centers.

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Who is receiving the first doses of available vaccines?

- The vaccine will be rolled out in phases.
- There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States. As such, initial supplies of COVID-19 vaccine be allocated to front-line healthcare personnel, primarily in hospital settings, and long-term care facility residents.
- State health departments are still finalizing plans, but hospitals and large pharmacy chains, such as CVS and Walgreens, are expected to be among those administering the early vaccines.
- As vaccine supply increases in the weeks and months to come, availability will be expanded to other groups including essential workers.

When will the COVID-19 vaccine be available in the health centers for distribution to patients?

- The CDC is working with state and local partners to prioritize the allocation of vaccine distribution.
- Current projections are availability of COVID-19 vaccines by spring for independent pharmacies, local health clinics and doctors' offices for administration.
- WeCare tlc will ensure health centers serving essential workers are reported to local health departments and/or designated state agencies to ensure availability as soon as the essential worker vaccination phases begin.

How do we prepare for vaccine availability in the health centers?

- WeCare tlc clinical operations leadership is working across states to contact state or local health department systems to confirm qualifications to enroll as vaccine providers for those served by WeCare tlc health centers.
- As specific temperature settings are required for vaccine storage, we are evaluating cold-storage capacity needs and options to meet the requirements to store the vaccines on site. This may require purchase or rental of appropriate freezers.
- While awaiting rollout at the health center level, we are developing plans to ensure vaccination processes that maintain proper physical distancing and adequate safety measures.
- In addition to plans for health center vaccinations, WeCare tlc is evaluating local health system processes to determine more immediate availability of vaccines for health center staff as front-line health care professionals.

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