



GRANVILLE VANCE

public health

MEDIA RELEASE

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UPDATE: Granville Vance Public Health is thrilled to announce a momentous occasion in our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic – we received our initial shipment of Moderna vaccine doses in Granville on Monday, December 21st. We received a total of 700 doses across our Granville and Vance locations combined. On Tuesday, December 22nd, we administered our first few doses to some of our clinical staff at the health department who qualify for Phase 1A. Our team is taking inventory, preparing the ancillary supplies, training on computer systems and vaccine handling, and preparing to vaccinate others. This hallmark in the pandemic experience marks the beginning of the end! So much good public health work lies ahead.

Everyone who wants a vaccine will have the opportunity to be vaccinated, but it will take time and vaccine will not be immediately available to the general public. In accordance with federal and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) guidance, early shipments of vaccines will be provided to individuals in Phase 1A of the COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout Plan. Phase 1A includes health care workers, including doctors, nurses and those who care for coronavirus-infected patients, as well as staff and residents at long-term care facilities.

GVPH will continue to follow the COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan throughout 2021 until all residents have had the opportunity to be vaccinated, though a timeline is not certain at this time. Phase 1B, of a similar priority, will be individuals with two or more chronic health conditions that put them at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and essential frontline workers who face high risk of exposure, including police, teachers, and health care workers not in Phase 1A. The Centers for Disease Control list adults with conditions like cancer, sickle cell disease, Type 2 diabetes and serious heart conditions as fitting this priority scale. Phase 2 will focus on adults at high risk for exposure to the coronavirus, like essential workers who did not qualify in Phase 1, and adults 65 and older. Phase 3 will be students and critical industry workers. Those in the final stage of distribution, Phase 4, will be anyone who wants a vaccination but did not qualify for the previous phases.

We want to answer everyone's questions and continue to ensure the safety, efficacy, and equity of vaccine administration. Although the vaccines were developed quickly, they were built upon years of work in developing vaccines for similar viruses. More than 70,000 people volunteered in clinical trials for the two vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna to ensure they are safe and effectively prevent COVID illness. The clinical trials indicated the vaccines are 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 with no serious safety concerns. Like all drugs, vaccine safety will continue to be monitored after they are in use.

People getting vaccinated must register in an immunization registry system, COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS), to ensure that they receive the right vaccine both times and are given a card with their vaccine information to present at each vaccination event. GVPH will reach out directly to agencies eligible to have staff vaccinated to get their employees registered in CVMS and schedule vaccination for employees. Community members should not visit GVPH to be vaccinated at this time unless their employer has been contacted by the health department and has specifically scheduled employee vaccination. We appreciate your patience with this process as we all navigate the new vaccine management system together.

It's an exciting time and we are so grateful to have this new tool to fight COVID-19. We are hopeful that you will be encouraged by the news of the vaccine and will strongly consider getting immunized when it is available to you. Our goal is to ensure that vaccine administration is safe, efficient and equitable in all our populations. In the meantime, it is important to keep doing the 3 Ws – wearing a mask, waiting 6 feet apart, and washing your hands. This is especially important with the upcoming holiday – **please be critically careful about gatherings this Christmas**. One of the most high-risk activities for spreading COVID-19 is gathering in groups and singing together. Some of the largest super-spreader events and outbreaks of COVID-19 across our state and country have been gatherings of large groups of people singing without masks. Avoid these types of events as well as holiday travel and limit physical contact with people who do not live with you. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been a contact to someone who is positive, you should get tested. GVPH continues to offer testing at no cost to community members every day at both clinic locations. We must all work together to protect the sanctity of life and extend the spirit of Christmas to keeping our loved ones safe.

Our staff continue to also focus on outbreak response, case investigation, contact tracing and data management. We will continue to share information about COVID-19 vaccination on our website, through our Facebook, and in partnership with the local media. To learn more, visit our website at www.gvph.org/covid-19-vaccines or the NCDHHS website at <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>.