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MEDIA RELEASE

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COVID Positivity Rates and Dial Position

The Kit Carson County two week COVID positivity rate for December 21, 2020 through January 5, 2021 is 14%. There were 228 people tested with 32 positive cases. December 2020 month end report included 628 individuals who were tested and 126 who were positive with a one month positivity rate of 20%. In order to move to the yellow level on the Dial, Kit Carson County must maintain a positivity rate of 10% or less for two consecutive weeks.

The County continues to operate under the Orange Level of the Dial.

Vaccine

The first shipment of 100 doses of Moderna COVID vaccine arrived at the health department on December 22nd and all 100 doses have been administered to Phase 1a and 1b healthcare workers and frontline responders as well as Assisted Living Facility staff and residents at Aspen Leaf in Stratton and Flagler. As a part of the continued prioritization for our highest risk population, KCCDPHE will be providing the vaccine to the Legacy in Burlington on Friday, January 8th. Grace Manor Care Center is slated to receive their vaccine on Saturday, January 9th from a team coming from Walgreens.

An additional 200 doses of vaccine was received on December 29th and the health department continues to prioritize individuals in the Phase 1a and 1b categories.

Mass Immunization Points of Dispensing have been scheduled for individuals age 70 or older, Phase 1a and 1b frontline healthcare workers and responders. These include a wide variety of occupations including pharmacists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, respiratory therapists, registered nurses, emergency managers, funeral home workers, mental health counselors, social workers, dentists, optometrists, physical therapists, audiologists, dental hygienists, radiology workers, EMTs and paramedics, laboratory workers, hearing aid specialists, correctional officers, police and firefighters, jailers, dispatchers, congregate living workers and residents to name a few.

Prioritization for the upcoming Points of Dispensing will only be for those individuals who are in the Phase 1a and 1b criteria (including anyone 70 or older). The Point of Dispensing (POD) will be at the Burlington Community Center on Wednesday, January 20th and Monday, January 25th. Both days will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The goal is to vaccinate 300 people per day. ***You must reserve a spot to***

receive vaccine – no one will receive the vaccine if they have not first received an appointment. No walk-ins will be accepted – no exceptions. If you fit one of the categories listed above, please contact the Health Department at 719-346-7158, ext. 432 to schedule your shot.

In addition to these two Mass Vaccination dates, the Health Department will be hosting COVID Vaccine Clinics on January 11, 13, and 18 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Prioritization will still be given to those people who fit the Phase 1A and 1B populations. **You must reserve a spot for these dates as well – no one will receive the vaccine if they did not schedule an appointment. No walk-ins will be accepted – no exceptions.**

The reason we have to be so strict in scheduling appointments is because our county can only order 200 doses of vaccine every 2 weeks. Not a single dose can be wasted! Also, once a vial of vaccine is thawed out, it has to be used within 12 hours. Once a vial is opened for the first dose, the vial has to be completely distributed in 6 hours or it has to be thrown away. If the plans for distribution go as anticipated, it is likely that 800 doses will have been administered to Kit Carson County residents by the end of January (if enough vaccine supply is available from the State).

In the most recent prioritization schedule that the Governor's office released, it is anticipated that Phase 2 will not be allowed to begin until the middle or end of February. Phase 2 will include essential workers such as grocery workers, people with underlying chronic health conditions such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease, etc. A full list of the Phases and which portion of the population is included in each phase is available at [Vaccine for Coloradans | Colorado COVID-19 Updates](#).

Kit Carson County will follow the Phases as they are outlined, however, if it is apparent that everyone who wants to receive the vaccine in a particular phase is complete, if there is vaccine available, the vaccine will be made available to the next phase without regard to the estimated timing that has been posted to the CDPHE website. The goal is to get the vaccine to those who want it with as little delay as possible.

During Phase 2, people will be asked to make a reservation for the vaccine so none is wasted. Instructions on how to make a reservation will be given to the public. A link to the registration site will be released the week of January 11th. The registration process for Phase 2 **will be done on-line as much as possible. Please do not inquire about Phase 2 at this time. Please wait until the health department announces that they are ready to start that Phase and the on-line reservation system is fully up and running.** The announcement and how to make a reservation will be posted early next week in print media, on local radio stations, on the KCC website and on various Facebook pages.

Information about the vaccine, its development and safety is available at [COVID-19 vaccine | Colorado COVID-19 Updates](#). So far, of the 100 individuals who have received the vaccine in Kit Carson County, there have been no reported serious side effects. The most common side effect reported thus far is a mild headache lasting a day. Vaccine hesitancy is born out of not understanding the science, development, and safety of the vaccine. Millions in the United States have now received the COVID-19 vaccine and its safety and effectiveness continue to be demonstrated as very safe and highly effective (even against the new strain that has been recently detected).

Even if you receive a vaccine, you still need to use caution around others. The first dose of the vaccine provides about 40% protection. After the second dose, an individual has about 95% protection from COVID. You do not reach full protection until 30 days after receiving the second dose (the body takes that long to mount immunity). For Moderna recipients, the second dose is given 28 days after the first, so it will take about two months to be considered 95% “safe” from getting COVID. So, yes, masks will still be needed for a while longer after receiving the vaccine!

Even though the rates are showing some improvement, our county remains at a high level of positivity, and continues to be considered “High Risk”. Until enough of the population is immunized and herd immunity is achieved, it is important to continue to use all of the strategies that have been encouraged for the last 10 months. This includes limiting social gatherings to immediate family members only, not going into public buildings including churches, businesses and restaurants without taking the proper precautions needed and staying home when sick, or after being exposed to someone who is sick. Remember – a common symptom of COVID is reported by many as having cold-like symptoms. Even if you think it is no more than a cold and nothing to be concerned about – stay away from other people and take social distancing precautions until your symptoms are gone!

Local public health and the Kit Carson County Health Services District are partnering to get the vaccine to everyone who wants it. We are striving towards at least 70% of our eligible residents to be immunized in order to achieve the all-important herd immunity. We encourage everyone who is eligible to consider being immunized to help get this virus behind us. (Currently, no Moderna COVID vaccine will be given to anyone under 18 years old). Please consider being immunized against COVID when it is your turn. You will be protecting not only yourself, but those you love and will contribute to the long-awaited return to “normal” life in eastern Colorado.

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