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MEDIA RELEASE

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The Kit Carson County COVID positivity rate for December 1 – December 29th is 21.5%. There were 575 people tested with 124 positive cases in December. During the last two weeks, December 15 – December 29th, 262 individuals were tested and 45 were positive with a two week positivity rate of 17.2% - a 9% drop and improvement overall from our highest level since the beginning of December when the highest positivity rate for a two week period was 26.3%. If we can sustain this downward trend, and achieve a less than 10% positivity rate for two weeks, we could return to the yellow level soon. It will be revealed in the next two weeks if there is a “Christmas spike” in positivity. 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 the first 10 doses were given to healthcare providers who work at the hospital on December 23rd. The first 100 doses will continue to be prioritized for Phase 1a workers (those who are frontline healthcare workers).

Phase 1b priority workers will begin receiving vaccine on Wednesday, December 30th. 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. Currently, there are 30 individuals who have made reservations to receive the vaccine on December 30th. If you fit one of these categories listed above, please contact the Health Department at 719-346-7158, ext. 432 to schedule your shot.

The next push is scheduled for Wednesday, January 6th for additional 1B recipients. After all of Phases 1a and 1b have been completed, and local public health officials are satisfied that these priority individuals who want the vaccine have received it, Phase 2 will begin.

The health department received an additional 200 doses of Moderna COVID vaccine on December 29th. It is anticipated that Phase 2 could begin as early as the last week in January and will include essential workers such as teachers, 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, once everyone who wants to receive the vaccine in a 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 without delay.

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 when that process has been finalized. When Phase 2 begins, the reservation process **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 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](#).

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 9 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 staff at the Health Services District are excited to move to this new phase of response where we can actually change the course of the pandemic by having community members receive a proven and safe vaccine to stop the spread of COVID. We encourage everyone who is eligible to consider being immunized to help get this virus behind us. (Currently, no COVID vaccine will be given to anyone under 18 years old). We would still be dealing with so many devastating illnesses today like Polio, Smallpox, Measles, and Pertussis if it weren't for the marvel of immunizations that have helped stop the spread of disease in its tracks! Now is our chance as a community to help achieve herd immunity and return to normal life sooner than later.

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