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Media Release

COVID-19 Vaccine Will Be Distributed Following Federal, State Framework

Joint Statement of the Bay Area Health Officers



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Tuesday, December 15, 2020

As Bay Area nurses, doctors and other healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients receive the first, small batches of a rigorously tested vaccine, the region's Health Officers see hope: we now have a critical tool to help fight this pandemic.

These vaccinations in acute care hospital settings follow a federal and state framework adopted locally that will also soon protect those living in skilled nursing facilities, settings where elderly, vulnerable members of our communities are more likely to have severe illness and die from COVID-19.

As vaccine supplies grow to eventually include other groups, the Bay Area's Health Officers and federal officials believe these safe and effective vaccines will work in tandem with the daily habits and essential public health work that will ultimately end the pandemic.

Those [key steps to fight the pandemic](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e2.htm) (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e2.htm>) include public health work to protect high-risk groups and health care workers, identifying and isolating cases, and also tracing and quarantining contacts. For the public that means wearing face coverings, avoiding

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gatherings, postponing travel, and staying home whenever possible.

"This first batch of vaccines will protect our front-line healthcare workers so they can help our hospitals withstand the current winter COVID-19 wave and save as many lives as possible," said Dr. Chris Farnitano, Contra Costa County's health officer. "Now is the time to double down on our efforts to slow the spread of the pandemic so that we can all stay alive and healthy until there is enough vaccine for everyone."

The 12 health officers for the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma and the City of Berkeley support the [state's vaccine distribution guidelines \(https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Allocation-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-Vaccine-During-Phase-1A-Recommendations.aspx\)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Allocation-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-Vaccine-During-Phase-1A-Recommendations.aspx), which now prioritize healthcare workers in acute care facilities. Each jurisdiction will use that roadmap to implement the distribution of vaccines in this first phase, which may take several months as supplies increase. Vaccines for the general public may be available by early summer.

All of the region's health officers plan to take the vaccine when the opportunity comes.

These early doses of COVID-19 vaccine come amidst an unprecedented surge of cases regionally and statewide. As hospitals' intensive care units near capacity, stay at home orders are either in place or anticipated soon throughout the region.

Staying home saves lives.

"In this darkest hour, the vaccine gives us a beacon to show the direction we're headed," said Dr. Lisa B. Hernandez, Health Officer for the City of Berkeley. "The actions and daily habits we each take increase the light on that path and improve safety for all."

Learn more about the state's guidelines for the first phase:

California Department of Public Health: COVID-19
Vaccine Phase 1A distribution guidelines
(<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/CDPH-Allocation-Guidelines-for-COVID-19-Vaccine-During-Phase-1A-Recommendations.aspx>)

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