



# COOK COUNTY HEALTH

**ISRAEL ROCHA, JR.**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
**REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Addendum to slide deck)**  
**JANUARY 29, 2021**

## Activities and Announcements

- **Food As Medicine**

As access to healthy food remains a great need for our patients and communities, the Fresh Truck partnership between Cook County Health (CCH) and the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) continues. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic required CCH and GCFD to develop and implement revised protocols for the Fresh Truck distributions that allow for appropriate screenings and social distancing to protect patients, as well as CCH and GCFD staff and volunteers. These revised protocols are in place until further notice.

Through January 15, CCH's Fresh Truck partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) resulted in 302 visits to CCH health centers – Arlington Heights, Austin, Blue Island, the CORE Center, Cottage Grove, Englewood, Logan Square, North Riverside, Provident/Sengstacke, Prieto, and Robbins.

Collectively, the Fresh Truck distributions have resulted in the provision of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as some shelf stable items during the COVID-19 pandemic, to an estimated 37,369 individuals, representing 123,683 household members, totaling more than 785,000 pounds of food. Most of the individuals benefiting from the Fresh Truck screened positive for food insecurity at a CCH health center visit.

- **Top Box Foods**

CCH began hosting Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital in December 2020 – these will continue through the first half of 2021, while we monitor participation. Additional CCH pickup sites may be added, depending on interest from staff and community members.

A variety of pre-packed boxes of fruits, vegetables, and various proteins are available for pre-order. Top Box Foods accepts debit and credit card payments, as well as SNAP, making it an option for community members who may be resource limited. Visit the Top Box Foods website at <https://www.topboxfoods.com/cook-county-chicago/home> for more information and to place an order.

Top Box Foods is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that seeks to make great, healthy, affordable food accessible to all. Top Box Foods offers fresh produce, frozen meats, and other essentials and believes that filling your plate and feeding your community doesn't have to empty your wallet.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository's Fresh Food Truck visits for the month of February include the following ACHN Health Centers.

- February 2 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546
- February 4 – **Austin Health Center** - 4800 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60651
- February 9 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** - 1645 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411
- February 18 – **Englewood Health Center** - 1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621
- February 16 - **Robbins Health Center** - 13450 S. Kedzie Avenue, Robbins, IL 60472

## ***Community Advisory Councils***

Cook County Health Advisory Councils include patients, community and religious organizations and serve as a way to promote our services in the communities where our centers are located. The Councils provide feedback to our staff and help strengthen our health center's relationships in the community. The councils meet quarterly to provide current information on Cook County Health and as an avenue for members to share information about their organizations.

During January, we convened the first Provident/Sengstacke Advisory Council meeting, which was extremely successful. Members are energized and ready to work to promote Provident/Sengstacke in the community. In addition, at the Cottage Grove meeting, which took place on January 26, we shared information on the Community Vaccination program and had a conversation on vaccination hesitancy, which will hopefully help dispel myths and encourage people to get vaccinated.

Upcoming CAC meeting dates, including the 2021 schedule:

**Robbins:** Tuesday at 1:00 PM: February 16, May 18, August 17, November 16  
13450 S. Kedzie Road, Robbins, IL 60472

**Arlington Heights:** Tuesday at 1:00 PM: February 23, May 25, August 24, November 23  
3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

**North Riverside:** Wednesday at 1:00 PM: March 17, June 16, September 15, December 15  
1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546

**Englewood:** Thursday at 1:00 PM - March 18, June 17, September 16, December 16  
1135 W. 69<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, IL 60621

**Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center:** Wednesday at 10:00 AM: April 14, July 14, October 13  
500 W. 51<sup>st</sup> Street, Chicago, IL 60609

**Cottage Grove:** Tuesday at 1:00 PM: April 27, July 27, October 26  
1645 S. Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411

IMPACT 2023 Focus Area 5

**Media, social media reports and other documents attached.**

## Legislative Update

### Local

- At the December Cook County Board meeting resolutions were introduced calling on CCH to appear monthly through 2021 before the Cook County Board's Health and Hospitals Committee to provide updates on COVID-19, vaccine distribution and contact tracing. The CCH/CCDPH team appeared before the committee on January 26. The February committee meeting date has not yet been scheduled.

### State

#### Summary of Lame Duck – 101<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Session

- Earlier this month, the legislature returned to Springfield for “lame duck” session. The driving force for the return was the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus which filed bills focused on four pillars: education, criminal justice, economic development, and health and human services. The health and human services pillar was championed by Representative Camille Lilly (D-Oak Park) and Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago). The original bills included a number of provisions supported by CCH, including adding Community Health Workers, doulas, and home visiting as new providers/services to the Medicaid program, requiring implicit bias training of health care providers, and protecting individuals reporting overdoses. **However, language that targeted Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), effectively forcing an immediate re-procurement of contracts and possible termination of existing contracts was identified as significantly problematic to CCH/CountyCare. The original legislation also included language that would have placed a moratorium on hospital closures and service line/capacity reductions as of January 1, 2020 until December 31, 2023, which sought to address hospital closures, including the future of Mercy Hospital.**

CCH/CountyCare and a number of health care associations including the Illinois Association of Medicaid Health Plans and the Illinois Health and Hospital Association communicated our concerns to the sponsors and several new amendments were filed over the next several days.

**Amendments filed late on January 12/early on January 13 removed or changed the provisions of greatest concern to CCH/CountyCare, managed care organizations, and the hospital community.** The House and Senate passed legislation in each chamber that was sent to the other chamber for concurrence. Despite conducting floor activity into the early morning hours of January 13 and returning mid-morning, neither of these bills came up for a concurrence vote before the 101<sup>st</sup> General Assembly session ended.

The 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly began the afternoon of January 13, and it is expected that some or all provisions from the health and human services pillar will be refiled as new legislation in the new session. In fact, Representative Lilly has already filed two house bills ([HB158](#) and [HB159](#)) which includes much of the language from the amended health and human services lame duck legislation.

The three other pillar bills concerning criminal justice, education, and economic development passed and will be sent to the Governor.

- The House and Senate passed legislation authorizing the distribution of up to \$150M of annual hospital and health care transformation funds and sets forth the framework for how these funds will be allocated. [SB1510, HA3](#) was filed, voted on, and received nearly unanimously bi-partisan support in both chambers in the final hours of session. State funds related to this legislation require annual appropriation, and the state intends to draw down federal Medicaid matching funds.

- The General Assembly did not pass legislation to decouple Illinois from federal business tax cuts. As a result, Illinois could see an additional annual budget gap of \$1B, putting additional pressure on the state fiscal situation.

### Other State Updates

- The Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board (IHFSRB) met [virtually](#) on December 15 and voted unanimously against the proposed closure of Mercy Hospital and Medical Center. The application to close Mercy Hospital will be heard again at the March 16, 2021 meeting of the IHFSRB.

The IHFSRB met January 26, 2021 where the Board voted against an [application for Mercy Care Center](#), filed by Trinity Health, the parent company of Mercy Hospital, to offer outpatient care, including urgent care, care coordination, and diagnostic testing. Opponents to the application for the outpatient center said that proposal was inadequate and said that Mercy Hospital should not be allowed to close.

- The Governor announced \$711M in cuts to the current FY2021 state budget, in order to address budget deficits from reduced state revenues and the failure of the Fair Tax. Reductions will mostly come from hiring freezes, grant reductions, and operational savings.

While the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services is part of a group of health and human service agencies that will see a total of \$31.9M in reductions, it does not appear that Medicaid services, rates, or eligibility will be reduced. Additionally, the federal Families First COVID-19 relief bill requires states to preserve Medicaid eligibility in order to qualify for enhanced federal Medicaid match during the Public Health Emergency period, which continues to remain in place.

- The Senate and House calendars for the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly session indicate that the chambers will meet regularly through the May 31<sup>st</sup> adjournment date, but leaders may make adjustments based on health and safety precautions.
- Emanuel “Chris” Welch was elected to serve as the next Speaker of the House, succeeding Mike Madigan who served in this leadership role for nearly four decades. Speaker Welch is a Democrat who represents West Suburban Cook County and is the first Black Speaker to lead the Illinois House.

### Federal

- The 117th Congress convened on Jan. 3. Democrats hold a narrow majority in the House and after the Jan. 6 runoff election in Georgia, the Senate is divided 50-50. After the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, democrats gained control of the upper chamber, with the Vice President casting tie breaking votes. Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell are currently negotiating a power sharing agreement, which may include agreements on limitations on the use of the filibuster.
- President Biden has identified COVID response as one of the six interrelated crises he will tackle immediately. His team has begun releasing legislative and administrative plans to address the pandemic, including a COVID response plan, executive orders and a new legislative relief package.
- **Biden Administration “American Rescue Plan”** – A week before the inauguration, the Biden-Harris transition released the outline of additional COVID-19 relief legislation that they are asking Congress to take up as soon as possible. While the President has expressed a preference for building bipartisan support, some Senate Republicans have already expressed reservations over the package’s \$1.9 trillion price tag, casting doubt on the outlook for advancing a package quickly, as proposed.

The proposal includes \$350 billion in aid for state and local governments, framed as support for first responders, expanding testing, and reopening schools. It is unclear how the funding would be allocated.

Additionally, the proposal would create a national vaccination program, provide funding to expand the health workforce by 100,000 to conduct outreach and contact tracing, offer \$50 billion to expand national testing, and provide \$40 billion for supplies. The proposal also includes:

- A direct payment to of \$1,400 per person, in addition to the \$600 provided under the year-end omnibus spending bill.
  - Expanding emergency paid leave and unemployment programs, while increasing the minimum wage to \$15.
  - Extending a 15% increase of benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
  - Expanding tax credits for children and childcare and reducing health insurance premiums.
- **Biden Administration Executive Actions on COVID Response** – The Administration continues to roll out Executive Orders to advance their COVID Response agenda. These include orders related to:
    - **Masks** -- Require masks on federal property and will call on state and local officials as well as business leaders to encourage mask wearing and social distancing.
    - **Travel** – Require masks on interstate public transportation, including trains, buses and aircraft. International travelers will have to present evidence of a negative COVID test before entering the Country and will be required to quarantine upon arrival.
    - **Supply chain** – Direct agencies to use the Defense Production Act to compel companies to make supplies including PPE and supplies for testing and vaccine administration.
    - **State and Local Support** – Provide more funding to local and state officials, set up more vaccination sites and launch a national public education campaign and direct FEMA to set up 100 community vaccination centers over the next month.
    - **COVID-19 Response Office** – Establish an office in the White House to coordinate pandemic response across federal agencies and set up clear lines of communication to local officials.
    - **Data Collection** – Direct the response office and federal agencies to improve data collection and sharing. CDC to publish a dashboard showing cases at the County level.
    - **New Treatments** – Continue to research COVID treatments, especially antivirals remdesivir. Establish a new drug development program to emphasize diversity in clinical trials.
    - **Testing** – Emphasize more testing, including a new pandemic testing board to study new tests and scale them up.
    - **Reopen Schools and Businesses** – Direct the HHS to collect data on school reopenings and COVID spread. Direct OSHA to take on a larger role and set clear guidance to employers on safe workplace practices and enforcement.
    - **Equity** – Set up a “COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force” to ensure vaccines, treatments, masks and other resources reach everyone, including those communities of color that have borne a disproportionate burden from the pandemic.
  - **Biden Administration Health Leadership Appointments** – President Biden has named California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be HHS Secretary. Becerra’s Senate nomination hearings have not yet been scheduled. A civil servant, Norris Cochrane, will serve as Acting Secretary until the Senate confirms Becerra. Similarly, CMS will be led by civil servant Liz Richter as Acting Administrator. Biden has not identified a CMS nominee. On the other hand, Massachusetts General’s Rochelle Walensky, Biden’s pick for CDC Director, has already moved into place since the position does not require Senate confirmation. Biden’s COVID Response team includes a number of familiar names including Vivek Murthy, who was Obama’s Surgeon General and has been nominated for that position again, and Bechara Choucair, who has been tapped to be vaccine coordinator and previously served as Chicago’s Health Commissioner.

- **Budget and Appropriations** – Before the 116th Congress adjourned *sine die*, it managed to pass the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 133.), which President Trump signed into law on Dec. 27. The massive bill funded all federal agencies for the remainder of FY 2021, provided \$900 billion in additional COVID-19 relief, and enacted several other significant program authorizations and extensions, including extensions of expiring health care programs. Here are some of the highlights of interest to Cook County Health:

#### Health Care “Extenders”

- **Eliminate Medicaid DSH reductions** — Amends the current schedule of Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payment reductions to eliminate the reductions in effect for fiscal year 2021, 2022 and 2023, and add reductions to fiscal years 2026 and 2027. ***This has been a top priority for CCH and the County.***

#### Emergency Supplemental Appropriations (“COVID Relief Package”)

- **Coronavirus Relief Fund Extension** — Extends the date by which state and local governments must make expenditures with CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund awards from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021. ***This has been a priority for the County.***
- **Department of Health and Human Services** – \$73 billion to support public health; research, development, manufacturing, procurement, and distribution of vaccines and therapeutics; diagnostic testing and contact tracing; mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment services; childcare support; and other activities related to coronavirus, including:
  - **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Vaccination** – \$8.75 billion to support federal, state, local, territorial and tribal public health agencies to distribute, administer, monitor, and track coronavirus vaccination to ensure broad-based distribution, access, and vaccine coverage, including:
    - ❖ \$4.5 billion for State, local, Territorial, and Tribal Public Health Departments; and
    - ❖ \$300 million for a targeted effort to distribute and administer vaccines to high-risk and underserved populations, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities.
  - **Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund** – \$25.4 billion to support testing and contact tracing to effectively monitor and suppress COVID-19, as well as to reimburse for health care related expenses or lost revenue attributable to the coronavirus, including:
    - ❖ **Testing and Tracing** — \$22.4 billion for testing, contact tracing, and other activities necessary to effectively monitor and suppress COVID-19, including \$2.5 billion for a targeted effort to improve testing capabilities and contact tracing in high-risk and underserved populations, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities; and
    - ❖ **Provider Relief** — \$3 billion in additional grants for hospital and health care providers to be reimbursed for health care related expenses or lost revenue directly attributable to the public health emergency resulting from coronavirus, along with direction to allocate not less than 85 percent of unobligated funds in the Provider Relief Fund through an application-based portal to reimburse health care providers for financial losses incurred in 2020. Permits providers to use HHS June guidance for reporting lost revenue. ***This has been a priority for CCH.***
  - **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** – \$4.25 billion to provide increased mental health and substance abuse services and support, including:
    - ❖ \$1.65 billion for the Substance Abuse and Prevention Treatment Block Grant.
    - ❖ \$1.65 billion for the Mental Health Services Block Grant.

- **Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation** – On Jan. 19 a notice was published in the Federal Register officially withdrawing the proposed regulation. Among other things, the rule would have severely limited the ability of states and localities to finance the non-federal share of Medicaid supplemental payments via Intergovernmental Transfers and Certified Public Expenditures. **Elimination of the rule has been a priority of CCH and the County**
- **HHS Allocation of CARES Act Provider Relief Funds** – HHS determined that CCH was not eligible for the third phase general distribution of PRF funds.
- **117th Congress Leadership Changes** – While the outcome of the Georgia Senate runoff election has given Democrats control of the chamber, committee chairs are currently frozen because the organizing rules have not yet been agreed upon. In the House, Rep. Frank Pallone will continue to chair the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid and a number of other public health programs. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-Wash.) will be the committee’s top Republican and Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.) will be the top Republican on the health subcommittee. Guthrie replaces Rep. Michael Burgess, M.D. (R-Texas) who challenged McMorris Rogers for the top spot on the full committee.

**Cook County Health**  
**Media Compilation Report**  
**November 24, 2020 – January 25, 2021**

# Media Dashboard: November 25, 2020-January 25, 2021

Total Number of Media Hits: 284

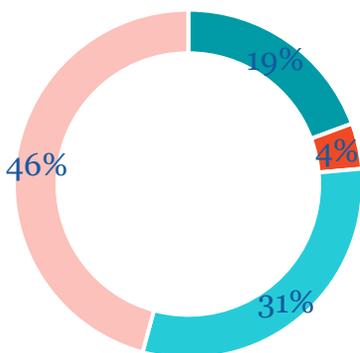
## Top 5 Local Media Outlets

1. *NBC-5 News*
2. *Chicago Tribune*
3. *ABC-7 and CBS-2*
4. *Chicago Sun-Times*
5. *FOX-32 News*

## Top 4 National Media Outlets

1. *The Wall Street Journal*
2. *Yahoo! News*
3. *Associated Press*
4. *The Washington Post*

## Media Outlet Type

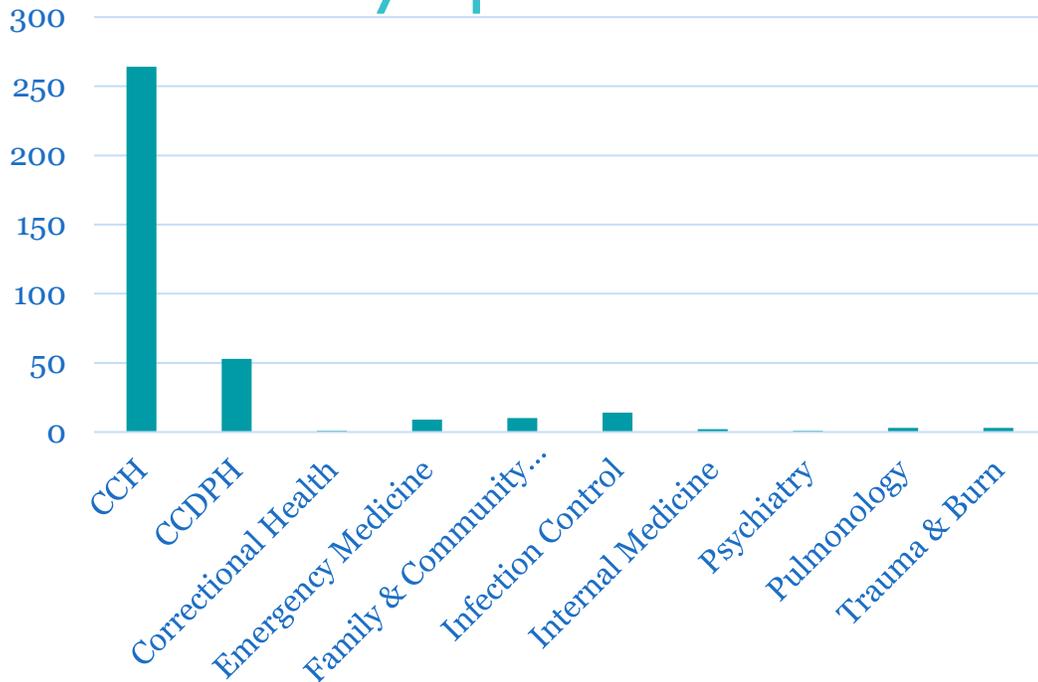


■ Print ■ Radio ■ Television ■ Web ■

## Most Common Topics

1. Cook County's COVID-19 vaccination distribution plans
2. Dr. Ngozi Ezike, IDPH director, getting her COVID-19 vaccination at North Riverside Health Center
3. Illinois National Guard to help vaccinate at Cook County Health ACHN Centers.
4. First COVID-19 vaccinations for employees and frontline workers at Cook County Health

## Media Mentions by Department



# Lowry votes for unanimously passed county budget

*Herald staff report*

Nov 25, 2020 Updated Nov 30, 2020

[https://www.hpherald.com/news/politics/lowry-votes-for-unanimously-passed-county-budget/article\\_6cc4b97c-2f68-11eb-83c7-fbeb53d1ec34.html](https://www.hpherald.com/news/politics/lowry-votes-for-unanimously-passed-county-budget/article_6cc4b97c-2f68-11eb-83c7-fbeb53d1ec34.html)

Cook County Commissioner Bill Lowry (D-3rd) voted for a \$6.94 budget that closes a \$222.2 million gap without raising taxes, though two Cook County Health clinics in Woodlawn and Bronzeville will close on Dec 7 as part of cost-cutting measures.

All services will be retained at the John Sengstacke Health Center by Provident Hospital in Washington Park, 500 E. 51st St., though the move has drawn harsh criticism from the nurses' union.

In a statement, Lowry thanked President Toni Preckwinkle, Chief Financial Officer Ammar Rizkio and their teams for ensuring that Cook County residents would not see any new taxes.

"We are all aware how tough this year was and continues to be during the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. "This year's budget process was unlike any previous process. There was and continues to be stress on all levels of government — we have a heightened need for health care resources to support our 3rd District, as well as communities outside of the district — but are unable to rely on our regular revenue sources to provide an increased level of support.

"Like everyone, we had to look meticulously at our overall budget, and we made sure Cook County residents would see no new taxes," Lowry continued. "I always operate with transparency, collaboration, and action. It is with these core tenets I promise to continue to serve you as your commissioner."

Lowry will host a virtual town hall on the budget on Monday, Nov. 30, at 5:30 p.m. to discuss the budget further with constituents and community leaders. Attendees can RSVP on his [Facebook page](#) and learn more on his website, [commissionerlowry.com](http://commissionerlowry.com).

Preckwinkle, the former 4th Ward alderman, praised the budget in a statement, saying it would advance her work on criminal justice reform, public health, infrastructure and economic development.

"This is a balanced budget, without tax increases, that makes millions of dollars in important equity investments made possible because of our hard work, tough decisions and avoiding quick fixes," she said. "We've done a great deal of heavy lifting to instill fiscal responsibility and financial stability in Cook County."

Commissioners unanimously voted to close the gap through \$77 million from the county's rainy day fund, expenditure holdbacks, \$50 million in federal stimulus through the CARES Act, higher-than-expected revenue through sources like cannabis, gaming and online sales and not hiring 569 new public employees to fill vacant positions. Payments since 2016 into the unfunded pension liability have left the county's credit ratings at A2 by Moody's and A+ by Fitch.

Cook County Health closed a \$187 million gap through expenditure reductions, including the closure of the two clinics, and a \$40 million county tax allocation, among other measures. Reports as of last month indicated that some layoffs were still possible for the public health care network.

The budget includes millions in business support, programs related to justice reform and capital investments. The Metra pilot to cut the cost of commuter rail tickets on the Electric Line, including on stops in Hyde Park, is still targeted to begin in January.



# 'Chicago Tonight' in Your Neighborhood: Rogers Park

Quinn Myers

November 25, 2020 8:47 pm

<https://news.wttw.com/2020/11/25/chicago-tonight-your-neighborhood-rogers-park>

Holiday lights are beginning to go up in Rogers Park, Chicago's northernmost neighborhood.

The community hugs the coast of Lake Michigan, and spreads out to a college campus, small businesses, and large, historic homes.

It's a neighborhood where seniors live in assisted-living buildings along Sheridan Road – just across the street from college kids who go to Loyola University.

About a quarter of the residents here are Black and another quarter are Hispanic Latino. There's also a large Orthodox Jewish population.

Two ZIP codes make up Rogers Park, and together they've seen about 5,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases. That's relatively high compared to case counts in Edgewater on the neighborhood's southern end and Evanston to the north.

But it's far lower than the more than 10,000 COVID-19 cases that so far have been reported in the 60629 ZIP code on the Southwest Side, which includes West Lawn and Marquette Park.

All across Chicago, the pandemic and rising case counts have heightened food insecurity, and Rogers Park has been anything but immune.

Every Wednesday, the Howard Area Community Center gives away food to those who need it from its headquarters on Paulina Street.

Employees say they used to distribute food to a couple hundred families a month; now it's doubled. They also send food to home-bound seniors.

Silvina Mamani started volunteering 23 years ago, and now, she's a full-time staff member.

She says the community center's been a fixture in the neighborhood for more than 50 years; the building used to be a church, with services for immigrants.

"Rogers Park, I think, is the most diverse community, neighborhood. It's changing, every time it's changing. Sometimes we have more Latinos come, and now we have more people from the Middle East, from Africa, from Asia," Mamani said.

Today, the group does much more, and has kept it up since COVID-19 hit. That includes dental clinics, ESL classes, citizenship workshops, assistance for job seekers, and HIV prevention. They also offer support for those who have been domestically abused, and employees say demand for those services has also increased during the pandemic.

"They're leaving the building with a hope, and we are here. With this time of pandemic, we are here, we are open. Through virtual classes, through distributing food, we are open, we are here for them," Mamani said.

Another organization helping feed the community is A Just Harvest, located right across the street from the Howard Area Community Center.

The group has continued offering daily hot meals to anyone who wants one – albeit with some COVID-19 precautions. Instead of doing a sit-down lunch, they're offering food to go.

“We used to do a sit-down, restaurant-style meal,” said executive director Marilyn Pagán-Banks. “We had to shift things because the pandemic, and since March we’ve used [our space] for groceries, delivery, that kind of thing, and we’re doing food to go.”

Meanwhile, the Rogers Park Business Alliance says it’s helping the local business community in any way they can, like making them aware of webinars, new state or city COVID-19 rules, and opportunities for grants.

“We’ve been following all the grants that are available, and making sure that we reach out to, if it’s industry-specific, to that industry, so they know what’s available to them and helping with the applications, if we get to that,” said Sandi Price, the group’s director.

Navigating it all can be a lot, but Price says Rogers Park business owners are resilient.

That was on display at Third Coast Comics on Sheridan Road.

Owner Terry Gant has encouraged customers to wear masks with a sign reminding them.

Wednesdays are a big day for comics fans. In comic shops nationwide, it’s when new releases are dropped.

“I treat it like, I’m a small shop, I can be agile. You’re a human being, you can adjust. So why don’t we just bring your ability to adjust and my ability together, and get you the books that you need,” Gant said.

Even so, Gant says due to COVID-19 and a lack of Loyola students on campus, his businesses has seen a big drop-off in foot traffic.

So he’s gone back to how his business started: the mail-order model.

He’s planning - and hoping - to do a lot of that as the holiday shopping season kicks off.

Rather than trying to draw customers to his store on Black Friday, the notorious shopping binge the day after Thanksgiving, Gant says for their safety and for his own, he hopes to help comic fans shop remotely.

Rogers Park is represented on the Cook County Board by 13th District Commissioner Larry Suffredin.

That body oversees the Cook County Health and Hospitals System, which Suffredin says is holding out in the fight against COVID-19.

“Tonight at Stroger Hospital we still have capacity. We are working very hard to make sure our staffs are safe, that our patients are safe...at this point we are stable, and I’m optimistic that we’ll be able to deal with this next surge,” Suffredin said.

## Coronavirus cases are skyrocketing again in cities

Brittany Shammass, Mark Guarino and Jacqueline Dupree

November 26, 2020

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/11/26/coronavirus-cases-cities/>

For a few months, coronavirus-weary Chicago residents got a reprieve from the [strict regulations](#) that shuttered the nation's third-largest city during the spring.

After infections plummeted in early June, restaurants welcomed diners back inside. Movie theaters, fitness centers and bowling alleys reopened their doors. And the barriers came down on the bike pathway along the city's cherished lakefront.

But with new coronavirus cases surging beyond the springtime peak, [Chicago](#) is now hunkering down. Statewide measures have closed some businesses and limited the capacity at others, while officials are urging residents to stay home. Again.

"We've been through a heck of a lot this year," Lori Lightfoot, the city's Democratic mayor, said during a recent news conference. "And it's not over."

Across much of the United States, the picture is similar. Major metropolitan areas were the face of the pandemic before being overtaken by spikes in [less-populated](#) parts of the country in September. Since then, the nation's worst outbreaks have been concentrated in rural parts of the Upper Midwest.

### 'Catastrophic' lack of hospital beds in Upper Midwest as coronavirus cases surge

Yet dramatic increases have been reported in many major U.S. cities in recent weeks, with some being hit harder than they were during their previous peaks. Testing has [greatly ramped up](#) since the start of the pandemic, but that alone does not explain the growing caseloads.

"The dreaded fall wave, in many places, is upon us," said Josh Michaud, an epidemiologist and associate director for global health policy at the nonprofit Kaiser Family Foundation. "And that includes in metropolitan areas."

In Cook County, where Chicago is located, the seven-day average of new cases hit a record high of 4,654 on Nov. 17 — far outpacing the peak of 1,690 during the spring surge. Deaths are lower than the numbers seen in the spring but have climbed in recent weeks.

With winter approaching, business owners who stayed afloat by turning to outdoor service have been investing in heating lamps, hoping to keep customers coming even in temperatures that can drop below freezing.

Michelle Foik, co-owner of Eris Brewery & Cider House, said she saw the [shutdown of indoor dining](#) as inevitable. The facility's patio has been "our saving grace," she said, but she worries about what will happen this winter. She's torn between relief that the rise in cases was met with more restrictions and concern over the effect on her business.

"Believe me, we need the money," Foik said. "We're a start-up. We are investing in our future, but if this becomes a longtime shutdown, it just hurts everything."

At NorthShore University HealthSystem, infectious-disease specialist Kamaljit Sandhu Singh said he and other health-care workers were "exhausted physically and mentally" as hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions increased.

He said the pandemic reminded him of growing up during the Vietnam War: “I could never wrap my brain around the number of soldiers’ lives lost, but the pictures were compelling.”

Cases are surging on Chicago’s West and Southwest sides, where the virus spread at a disproportionate rate in the spring and the majority of residents are Black or Latino. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health, said “a myriad of factors” play into why those areas are surging highest, but that a common attribute is that people there “experienced structural racism over decades.”

*[‘I just pray God will help me’: Racial, ethnic minorities reel from higher covid-19 death rates](#)*

The second peak in Chicago mirrors those in metropolitan areas across the country. In recent weeks, counties home to cities including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Detroit, Las Vegas and Minneapolis have seen new cases surpass their past highs. [Miami-Dade County](#) has been trending up again, while Salt Lake County is experiencing its first major peak of the pandemic, with cases and hospitalizations rising since early October.

In [Maricopa County](#), which includes Phoenix, Valleywise Health “had a little breather” after the summer’s surge in Sun Belt states, said Michael White, the health system’s chief clinical officer. But the seven-day average of new cases, which hovered around 500 a day in late October, exceeded 2,000 on Monday.

“We’re hanging in there is how I would describe it,” White said. “Our biggest concern always is, as we continue to see this case count rise, that that certainly can lead to more folks needing hospitalization down the road, on top of a time where we usually see a higher rate of hospitalizations for non-covid-related illnesses.”

Phoenix-based Banner Health is projecting that 125 percent of the system’s licensed hospital beds will be full by the first week of December. Hospital administrators believe they have stocked up on enough personal protective equipment, ventilators and beds to weather the surge, Chief Clinical Officer Marjorie Bessel said during a news conference Tuesday. They worry most about staffing; they’ve hired nearly 1,000 health-care workers from out of state and are recruiting 900 more.

The health system always beefs up its staff for the winter months, Bessel said, but the coming weeks are expected to be markedly different from previous years and even the Sun Belt’s summer surge.

“The entire country is surging at the same time,” she said.

Health officials attribute the virus’s resurgence in cities to several factors, including eased restrictions, increased gatherings and what’s being called “covid fatigue.” Eight months into the pandemic, “there is no longer that sense of urgency,” said Mouhanad Hammami, chief health strategist in Wayne County, home to [Detroit](#). “When you live with something, it is no longer urgent, and you tend to get desensitized to it.”

Some authorities in Chicago blamed rock-bottom hotel prices and the state-imposed indoor dining ban, suggesting it may have caused parties to relocate to hotel rooms or other spaces, such as Airbnb rentals. On Nov. 12, Lightfoot told reporters that current restrictions apply to both.

“I know the hotel industry was hit hard and is in many instances is on life support, but that cannot include parties,” she said. “I urge the hotel industry to be much more diligent about who is coming in. ... People think it’s party time. It’s not.”

Officials in many hard-hit cities also point to increasingly widespread transmission across the United States, which has been reporting [record-setting](#) numbers of infections. Over the past week, the country had well over 150,000 new cases each day. Ahead of [Thanksgiving](#), traditionally a time of significant travel and extended family get-togethers, health experts feared the number would only continue to climb.

“We would love to be that shining city on the hill where we’re avoiding all this,” said Philadelphia Department of Public Health spokesman James Garrow. “But I don’t know that anybody’s going to be able to avoid this.”

Mortality rates have improved from earlier in the pandemic — a change attributed to improved therapeutics and knowledge of how to handle covid-19, the disease caused by the virus. Still, authorities in areas that are seeing spiking infections have reacted with alarm, noting that the explosion in cases will inevitably drive up the death toll.

In [Los Angeles County](#), where hospitalizations are up and deaths increased slightly last week, Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer on Friday described the data as looking “really bad right now” and added that the county had experienced “three terrible days in terms of case rates and increases in hospitalizations.” She said health officials were hoping deaths “don’t go up ... as much as earlier in the pandemic.”

With rapidly rising case numbers has come a return to some of the restrictions of the spring. In Los Angeles, health officials suspended outdoor dining for the first time since May. They warned that a stay-at-home order could follow if the situation worsens.

Wayne County’s health department on Friday [strongly recommended](#) that schools shift to virtual instruction through mid-January, noting that the current wave “is at a level higher than the first peak in April 2020.”

Philadelphia on Nov. 20 imposed [new “Safer at Home”](#) restrictions, which required schools to shift to online learning, restaurants to suspend indoor dining, and gyms and indoor fitness classes to close. Movie theaters, casinos and bowling alleys were also shuttered and indoor gatherings of more than one household prohibited.

“The hope is that by implementing these restrictions as soon as we could — and we’re doing it ahead of at least a lot of surrounding counties and states — that we’ll be able to head off getting to a point where we outstrip our capacity and get to a point worse than we were in April,” Garrow said.

Months after the first shutdowns in the United States, a better understanding of how the [coronavirus](#) spreads means that this latest wave of restrictions can be more targeted, Michaud said. Authorities can focus on what is believed to carry the greatest risk of transmission: venues where people are crowded together indoors for extended periods of time.

“In the spring, we didn’t know a whole lot about the virus and exactly what were the activities that were the riskiest,” he said. “We know a whole lot more now. And that means that we don’t have to put in a Chinese-style lockdown to have an effect on transmission. You can be much more surgical in your approach.”

But among some already battered by earlier shutdowns, the new restrictions drew frustration.

The Illinois Restaurant Association released a statement objecting to the state’s ban on indoor dining, arguing that it “will force people into less controlled, private gatherings with no safety precautions — resulting in the exact opposite of slowing the spread” of the virus. The organization said that without being allowed to serve indoors in some capacity, “our state’s largest private sector employer will be pushed to the brink of permanent devastation.”

Mark Domitrovich, co-owner of Chicago restaurants Ina Mae Tavern and Frontier, said he was trying to “string together as much as an outdoor dining situation as we can get” because takeout and delivery alone weren’t enough to get by.

“At this point, we’re trying to grind it out. To try to drive as much business as possible,” he said. “It’ll run out at some point, and it doesn’t seem like the cavalry is on the way, either, so we’re just praying right now.”



# Morning Insiders: Still Want To Visit People For The Holiday? Hear From A COVID Survivor: 'This Is Not A Joke'

*Tim McNicholas*

November 26, 2020

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/11/26/morning-insiders-still-want-to-visit-people-for-the-holiday-hear-from-a-covid-survivor-this-is-not-a-joke/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — Some of you are going to defy advice and invite loved ones into your home.

Before you start breathing on granny and uncle Irv, take a minute and watch this. CBS 2 Morning Insider Tim McNicholas shows us that COVID doesn't always go away after some magical 14 day window.

"I would never wish this on anyone."

CBS 2 first met Christina Hill in April. She had oxygen tubes in her nose, recovering from COVID-19.

"This is not a joke," she said. "Everyone's dealing with their own stuff. I feel fortunate."

CBS 2 caught up with Christina, some seven months later, to check on her recovery. How are things now?

"Pretty good, I feel pretty good," she said. "I have developed asthma-like symptoms, short of breath, pretty chronic cough."

It's a cough she didn't have before and she has to use an inhaler at least twice a day. If days in the hospital with a fever and trouble breathing weren't enough for Christina, she's now stuck with this thing for who knows how long.

"It's becoming sadly more common."

Doctor Katie Radigan is with Cook County Health. Hill is not a patient of hers, but Radigan has seen her fair share like Hill.

"The post-COVID syndrome is oftentimes what we call long haulers," Radigan said.

It's become so common, there are names to describe what Christina's experiencing. And while actual COVID tends to last days or weeks, post-COVID syndrome is a mystery.

"Only studies will tell them the future whether it will last for years, or perhaps even permanently," Radigan said.

So as you perhaps invite outsiders into your home for the holidays, Dr. Radigan offers this sobering advice:

"I think we need to look at each individual around the table. And if it's not someone that lives within our house, how would we feel if we infected that individual?"

What does Christina Hill want people to know about the virus?

“People should definitely be social distancing and wearing masks,” Hill said.

Social distancing and masks, or you may wind up with an oxygen mask, inhalers or even worse.

Doctor Radigan warns it’s not just lung issues. Some patients have persistent heart issues. Download the new CBS 2 app and look for the section called Morning Insiders.

## Cook County looks to redevelop former Oak Forest Hospital campus

Mike Nolan

November 27, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-oak-forest-hospital-campus-st-1129-20201127-xs72dsgqibfeda2oimfz2synug-story.html>

It was a poor farm for Chicago's indigent and sanitarium for tuberculosis patients, then later a full-service hospital.

Now the site of the former Oak Forest Hospital, closed since 2011, is in line for a redevelopment that will depend heavily on private investment and take years to fully realize.

Cook County is in the very early stages of the process, bringing on a bevy of consultants, headed by real estate services firm CBRE, to figure out how the property can be reused including what needs to be preserved.

Southeast of Cicero Avenue and 159th Street in unincorporated Cook County, the 153-acre site contains more than 50 buildings.

Key elements that are priorities for preservation include old growth oak savanna at the northwest corner, closest to the intersection, with trees estimated to be more than two centuries old. Places of worship that catered to staff and the ill are also being viewed for reuse.

The county's Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security will continue to have a presence, and a solar electricity farm is considered a priority as it will contribute to Cook County's goal of cutting the county's emissions of greenhouse gases by 80% by 2050.

Cook County's Health and Hospitals System, after Oak Forest Hospital closed, continued to [offer outpatient services](#) at the campus but they were [relocated to Blue Island](#) this past June.

The property was, in its heyday, "literally a village within itself," Suzanne Kahle, a project co-manager with CBRE, said during a recent session outlining plans and considering potential redevelopment plans.

Housing for the homeless, space for a community college and even a water park are among the ideas floated for the property.

Formulating possible uses will continue into 2021, with Cook County officials having to review those plans, according to Andrew Norman, a co-manager of the project with CBRE.

Any actual redevelopment is unlikely to get underway any sooner than 2022, he said, with his firm contracted to come up with at least three redevelopment scenarios, according to a contract Cook County approved in June.

A market analysis of possible new uses and what structures might be saved for new uses will be part of the CBRE analysis.

The directive includes plans that "attract established companies and foster creation of new companies in emerging business sectors" as well as attracting "individuals and institutional investors to support the growth and development of these companies."

Any redevelopment, CBRE representatives said, is likely to be a collaboration between private interests and government agencies, such as the county.

Redevelopment will include demolishing buildings that contain hazards such as asbestos and lead paint, but Norman said there “is nothing here that is unexpected.”

CBRE and other firms including engineering companies, traffic consultants and engineers will receive about \$538,000 for their work, with their services extending through at least March 2022 with provisions for two one-year extensions, according to the agreement.

The campus had been home to the 600-bed Oak Forest Hospital, which not only provided inpatient care in the south suburbs but served as a training ground for thousands of health care workers.

After the hospital closed, outpatient care continued to be offered there before being moved this summer to the five-level former Masonic Temple at 12757 S. Western Ave. in Blue Island, according to Cook County officials.

Though unrelated, the relocation dovetailed with the [closing in Blue Island](#) of the 314-bed MetroSouth Medical Center, formerly St. Francis Hospital.

Cook County officials said the Oak Forest buildings “are expensive to operate and in need of costly repairs” and those designed for health care use do not reflect health care designs.

Cook County Commissioner Deborah Sims, D-5th District, whose district includes the property and who said she’d like to see a water park included in redevelopment plans, said any thoughts about a new hospital springing up at the site are unlikely.

“We don’t have the funding for it,” she said.

### **History dates back centuries**

The Oak Forest campus is bordered by the Cook County Forest Preserve District’s 455-acre Midlothian Meadows on the north side of 159th and east of Cicero, as well as the district’s Oak Forest Heritage Preserve to the east. The 176-acre site was purchased by the district for \$15 million in 2010.

St. Gabriel Catholic Cemetery, on the east side of Cicero, is directly to the south of the hospital property and the forest preserve district’s St. Mihiel Woods is across Cicero to the southwest.

Linking the hospital campus to the forest preserve properties is part of the county’s redevelopment plans.

According to a history of Oak Forest, a poor farm was established in 1910 on the land that was intended to relieve overcrowded conditions at the county’s existing poor farm on Chicago’s Northwest Side.

“The poor farm operated as an institution for the destitute of all ages who found it necessary to live somewhere for the remaining days of their lives,” the history states.

The working farm “housed the indigent poor, alcoholics from the slums of Chicago, the mentally ill, advanced tuberculars (children also) and at one period women patients under medical care serving prison sentences,” according to the history.

A 1916 map of the property shows locations of cow and hog barns, poultry house and a hog hospital, an aged couples home, baseball fields, tennis courts, a crematory, casket manufacturer and Protestant and Catholic chapels.

There is also evidence of a Native American settlement, possibly dating to the 1600s, with archaeological surveys in the late 1950s uncovering eight houses and an entire Native American village, according to the forest preserve district. Among the findings were hundreds of prehistoric artifacts, primarily stone tools or byproducts of stone tool making.

Using logs kept from 1910 to 1971, Cook County officials were able to verify that [more than 91,000 people were buried on property](#) who may have lived at the poor farm or a tuberculosis sanitarium the county established at the site.

The forest preserve district's plans for the Oak Forest Heritage Preserve, along with recreational trails, include a historical museum to educate the public about the poor farm's history. Sims said she considers preservation of those burial sites a priority in any redevelopment plans.

Some of the burial sites and remains were uncovered in 2014 as the forest preserve district was [creating a trail](#) through the Heritage Preserve.

As far as a museum on the hospital grounds itself, the question during the planning session was what agency might establish and fund it.

It is the goal that "something can be put together that reminds us of the history" of the site, Kahle said.

Some of the physical structures eyed for preservation include Sacred Heart Chapel, [shuttered in the fall of 2018](#), which was once one of three spiritual refuges to patients and staff at the hospital.

While not part of the hospital campus, [St. Roch Friary](#), directly to the north, was purchased and demolished to become part of Midlothian Meadows.

It had operated for more than a century, and the friary's priests ministered to the sick at the hospital and performed simple funeral rites at the gravesides of indigent Catholics who died at the hospital and were buried at a nearby cemetery overseen by Franciscan priests.

The priests had also held worship services at Sacred Heart Chapel and, at one point, more than a half-dozen priests from St. Roch tended to hospital patients.

# Lost in translation: How language barriers can add anguish and complicate care for COVID-19 patients who don't speak English

*Tribune Content Agency*

*December 1, 2020*

[https://www.gmtoday.com/health/lost-in-translation-how-language-barriers-can-add-anguish-and-complicate-care-for-covid-19/article\\_8ca342c6-33e7-11eb-9362-d7d5403b1b90.html](https://www.gmtoday.com/health/lost-in-translation-how-language-barriers-can-add-anguish-and-complicate-care-for-covid-19/article_8ca342c6-33e7-11eb-9362-d7d5403b1b90.html)

CHICAGO — Even though Rodolfo Reyes' partner died of COVID-19 complications more than six months ago, he still buys her flowers almost every day.

Her remains are in a small off-white urn on the kitchen counter he turned into an altar. It is surrounded by some of her favorite red and white roses, and votive candles.

"I think about her every single day, and I still can't believe she is gone forever," said Reyes in Spanish as he stared into the distance while sitting on a chair in the small dining room of the Little Village basement apartment he once shared with his life partner.

Reyes promised her family that he would take care of her until her last breath. And he did, but he couldn't save her from the deadly virus that has taken the lives of more than a million people across the globe.

But his deepest pain, he said, is knowing that she died alone, unable to communicate with him, or anyone for that matter.

Maria Isabel Alfaro was 50. She did not speak English, and before her death, she shared the anguish and desperation she felt because she wasn't able to understand or communicate with the medical staff, Reyes said.

Although the medical staff at the Chicago hospital where Alfaro was hospitalized provided interpreters when possible, "it wasn't enough," he said.

Reyes worries that his partner couldn't communicate something that could have saved her life.

Patients, community leaders and health officials say language barriers are "an added burden" to those suffering from COVID-19 and their loved ones. They recognize the lack of bilingual medical staff and prevention resources in Spanish influenced the way the virus harshly hit the Latino community in Chicago and across the nation.

Facing a second coronavirus surge, hospitals will again see an influx of patients, including many who do not speak or understand English. Approximately 6 in 10 Latino adults have issues communicating with a health care provider due to language and or cultural barriers, according to a 2018 study by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

While officials and hospital staff have mobilized to provide bilingual resources on how the virus spreads, where to get tests and treatment, Pilar Guerrero, an emergency room doctor at Stroger Hospital, says it's not enough.

"You don't provide the patient with the ownership of their own health," Guerrero said about medical staff who are not able to verbally communicate with non-English-speaking patients. "You're kinda leaving them in the dark."

She said challenges go beyond the language barrier in the health care system.

Guerrero believes the messaging around safety and prevention has been culturally insensitive to populations disproportionately hit. Many Latinos are unable to stay home or isolate because they live in multigenerational households. Many don't have a primary care doctor or health insurance. Recent Illinois Senate Public Health Committee hearings noted the need for more diverse medical staff, implicit bias training and cultural sensitivity to address these realities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted the Latino community is at elevated risk of exposure for reasons including being essential workers, poor access to health care and that 25% live in multigenerational households. The agency also said in June that "The lack of reliable information in Spanish has impeded efforts to combat the spread of the virus in Hispanic communities." A July study in the *Annals of Epidemiology* journal found that monolingual Spanish speakers are at an elevated risk of getting infected.

In April, the city announced a Racial Equity Rapid Response team to launch a bilingual education campaign and town hall. On Thursday, the city's stay-at-home advisory noted Black and Latino residents continue to be disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. According to the most recent city statistics, Latinos made up 38% of confirmed COVID-19 cases, despite being 29% of the population. They make up just 16% of those tested for the coronavirus in the city.

As patients with COVID-19 filled the city's hospitals in the spring, language was "one of the biggest barriers," said Sara Mirza, a Rush University Medical Center pulmonary disease and critical care medicine specialist. This has forced hospitals to confront interpretation capabilities and, in some cases, innovate or improve them.

At Northwestern, so many Spanish-speaking patients arrived that the hospital roomed them in the same area, to gather and utilize bilingual staff.

Hospitals use a variety of interpretation services to communicate with patients who speak different languages, including Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Polish, Russian, Korean, Arabic, Urdu and Hindi. Many have certified interpreters on staff or turn to staff members who have tags that say they speak a specific language. But depending on when a patient arrives, an in-person interpreter might not be available, and the patient may have to wait for care until one is located. Hospitals also use phone and video translation options. Patients also have turned to an English-speaking family member for help, often younger ones.

When Reyes' partner became ill in March, the family was unclear about how to obtain information about her condition, despite calling and asking for help in Spanish, he said. It would sometimes take hours to get connected to medical staff or an interpreter who spoke Spanish.

"We were desperate to find out what was happening, and we felt impotent because for a few days we didn't know anything about her and we also couldn't go to the hospital (to visit)," Alfaro's older sister Rosa Alfaro said in Spanish. Once they did speak to someone, they had trouble understanding the complex medical terminology, she said.

Distressed, Rosa Alfaro turned to her daughter, Janet Garcia, 26, for help. She speaks English and had served as her mother's translator at school and at doctor visits.

Garcia, who lives in Tennessee, was designated the point of contact and called the hospital every day, sometimes multiple times a day, to ask about her aunt.

She would record every single call and take notes before calling her uncle and other family members.

"I was afraid that I was going to miss something or tell my family the wrong information," Garcia said. "I was terrified that if something bad happened to my aunt, it was going to be my fault."

Her aunt died on April 27. Garcia got the call from the hospital and shortly after broke the news to Reyes and the rest of the family.

"It was traumatic and painful," she said.

Through the pandemic, children of immigrants who do not speak English continue to be the ones responsible for translating COVID-19 information to their parents, said Nury Ortega, president of Friends of Spry, an organization of Spanish-speaking parents founded at Little Village's John Spry Community School.

Members who speak English began acting as advocates for those who don't. They have since focused on sharing information in Spanish about COVID-19 prevention and care for patients who contract the virus.

"I have seen firsthand the frustration at the lack of, or insensitive information, about COVID-19 in our language and specifically keeping in mind the way our community lives," Ortega said.

Ortega criticized the response from the federal and local government to the pandemic and the initial lack of bilingual information.

"If our government doesn't change the system that continues to abandon low-income, Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, we will always be left behind," Ortega added. "We have been isolated, and we will continue to be isolated because of our language, the lack of health insurance, our immigration status and the color of our skin."

After refusing to go to the hospital for more than a week with COVID-19 symptoms in late April, Rosalio Espinoza, 57, a father of six, couldn't resist anymore.

His 15-year-old daughter, Olivia Espinoza, called 911 after he had trouble breathing and then helped to translate when the paramedics arrived at their home in Little Village.

His wife, Maria Espinoza, begged the paramedics to let her go with him, but they said no, so she gave her husband the only cellphone they had.

For the first three days, Rosalio Espinoza would answer his family's phone calls to let them know he was alive, he said. Suddenly, the phone calls wouldn't go through anymore, his wife recalled. The phone battery had died.

"I felt a deep anguish, and I asked my daughter to please call the hospital, but she told me she didn't feel capable of doing it because she couldn't understand what the doctors were saying," Maria Espinoza said in Spanish.

Rosalio Espinoza said he tried to focus on "trusting that doctors knew what they were doing."

"I just prayed that I would get better to see my children again," he said.

When he was finally discharged a week later, despite getting the aftercare instructions in Spanish, all he understood was that he had to continue taking medicine, he said.

Eileen Johnson, Northwestern's manager of interpretation services, said with a virus so little understood, clear communication has been vital. Especially during end-of-life conversations, she said, having a human presence is important.

"It's really comforting to our patients and their families," she said.

At Sinai Health System, which serves predominantly Latino communities on the Southwest and West sides, there are 30 caregivers who are bilingual and bicultural professionals, said Raul Garcia, the director of community relations. They include interpreters, social workers, community health workers, family case managers and mental health professionals.

Despite the high number of infections, Garcia believes the help with translation has been sufficient, "but if we had more, it would be much better," he said.

At Rush, staffers have treated COVID-19 patients speaking an estimated 60 languages. As a doctor who speaks multiple languages, Mirza knows the look of relief on patients' faces when they realize she speaks Urdu.

But she also knows the challenges when a language isn't shared. One patient, for example, thought doctors were saying the patient was about to die. Instead, doctors were communicating that the patient would be put on a ventilator.

People might nod as if they understand, Mirza said, but once an interpreter is involved, they share more detail about their condition.

The Joint Commission, which offers accreditation to hospitals, requires hospitals to have interpretation services and provide information tailored to a patient's language. This can include staffers or translation through phone or video.

But first, patients must know they have this option. Hospitals vary on how they make clear to patients their language options. At Edward-Elmhurst Health system, staffers wear tags saying what languages they speak. At Advocate Health Care, each patient is asked whether they need an interpreter.

Guerrero said that while some patients are not comfortable communicating their symptoms through a third party, having someone who speaks their language still brings some level of comfort. "If they speak Spanish, it gives the patients ... a sense of security that even though it's an unprecedented time, they are going to get them the help they need."

In the neighboring town of Cicero, Irene Romulo made sure the community had information about COVID-19 in Spanish.

Residents turned to her publication, Cicero Independiente, which publishes articles in Spanish and English, to learn about the virus, where to get tested and where to get help. The publication has a number of stories that highlight the unique struggles of the Latino community.

In April, after her grandfather died of COVID-19 complications, Romulo wrote an editorial: No, It's Not that Latinx People Don't Care, It's Our Governments That Don't. It was a response to public officials suggesting that Latinos were being disproportionately affected by the virus because they were careless, she said.

"As a country, as a town, we could have been more prepared for this; to address the systematic factors that lead to this," Romulo said.

"We shouldn't have to wait for a pandemic to hit to realize how crucial it is to have resources and medical staff that speak Spanish."



# Medical community in U.S. worried about the shortage of resources

Cesar Rodriguez

December 1, 2020

<https://www.fox17online.com/news/national/coronavirus/medical-community-in-u-s-worried-about-the-shortage-of-resources>

Medical experts in the private and public sector agree that the U.S. might see an increase in COVID-19 cases now that Thanksgiving has passed. The increase could impact tests, resources, and providers.

“Healthcare professionals across the country are terrified of what might happen after Thanksgiving,” said Dr. Emily Landon, an infectious diseases expert at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Landon is not the only medical professional who shares this perspective. Dr. Kiran Joshi works for the Cook County Department of Public Health, one of the largest counties in the country, and says communities are already feeling the impacts.

“We are already seeing our systems for testing strained by the surge we are experiencing now,” Dr. Joshi said. “It should come as no surprise if people gather, those systems can experience additional strains.”

The medical community fears the potential spike of infections will increase lines at testing sites, specifically in parts of the country with harsh winters.

# Modern Healthcare

## Maximizing Clinical Equipment to Meet the Burdens of COVID

## How Executives Are Overcoming Pandemic Challenges and Planning for the Future

*December 2, 2020*

<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/hospitals/maximizing-clinical-equipment-meet-burdens-covid>

In the current environment, health systems have been forced to think creatively about how to maximize their capital dollars while determining the best way to maintain and procure clinical equipment. Leaders are not only faced with reduced capital budgets but are also responding to rapidly shifting patient behaviors as fear of infection is driving some patients away from the hospital setting. Hackers have also taken advantage of this fear and uncertainty, increasing the threat to medical devices during this vulnerable time.

LeAnne Hester, Chief Marketing Officer at TRIMEDX, met with three leading healthcare executives to discuss the challenges they have faced during the pandemic and share their best practices for maximizing device efficiency and safety while addressing the unique challenges of COVID-19. Download the full conversation below.

<https://s3-prod.modernhealthcare.com/2020-12/TRIMEDX%202020%20Focus%20Group.pdf>



# Suburban hotel faces backlash after hosting giant wedding despite COVID-19 protocols

*Dane Placko*

*December 3, 2020*

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/northbrook-hotel-apologizes-after-hosting-giant-wedding>

**NORTHBROOK, Ill.** - A suburban hotel is apologizing after it was caught hosting a giant wedding, despite COVID-19 protocols.

Cook County health officials are now trying to track down the partygoers.

The bride and groom walked out of the **Northbrook** Hilton Wednesday night, ending the wedding bash, but starting a major public health investigation.

"People weren't wearing masks. They were crowded together, the risk for transmission and making this a super spreader event is probably significant," said Dr. Rachel Rubin of Cook County Public Health.

Eyewitnesses estimate between 200 and 300 people were jammed together in a hotel ballroom, eating and dancing, with most not wearing masks.

Now, the Cook County Health department is threatening to slap the hotel with fines and violations. They also want a list of everyone who attended.

"They need to quarantine themselves for 14 days. Everybody who was at that wedding. Everybody who served at that wedding, everybody who planned that wedding, everyone who was there at that hotel," said Dr. Rubin.

Many of the guests' cars had plates from all over the country, including Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Texas. Now, Gov. Pritzker is angry and worried they may be carrying COVID-19 back home.

"It's very irresponsible and it's also irresponsible of the hotel to host an event like that. They too have breached the rules and they should be held responsible," said Pritzker.

In a statement, the Northbrook Hilton, which is locally owned and not operated by the Hilton corporation, says "the wedding was booked prior to the state's latest mitigation efforts," but sincerely "regret allowing this gathering to proceed, and our family apologizes to our guests, employees and the Chicagoland community."

# North suburban hotel under investigation after hosting wedding indoors, Cook County officials say

*InterNewsCast*

December 4, 2020

<https://internewscast.com/north-suburban-hotel-under-investigation-after-hosting-wedding-indoors-cook-county-officials-say/>

CHICAGO (WLS) — Cook County health officials announced Thursday that a hotel likely violated state and county health regulations during the pandemic after a wedding was held there Wednesday.

“If food was served, and we understand it was, that it violates the indoor dining, it also violates the prohibition of large communal events in public spaces,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Co-Lead & Senior Medical Officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The wedding was booked at the Hilton Chicago Northbrook.

“Last evening, the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hosted a family wedding with approximately 150 people in attendance. While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state’s latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community,” said Holly Allgauer-Cir, General Manager, Hilton Chicago/Northbrook in a statement.

“The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety,” she said.

“We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton’s brand standards,” Hilton Hotels released in a statement.

The president of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association also spoke to the owners.

“They realized they made a mistake,” said Michael Jacobson President & CEO, IL Hotel and Lodging Association. “They realize it was a total lapse in judgment. I know they are looking at all their bookings in the future.”

Health officials said the wedding party and guests will not be cited, just the hotel’s owners.

Health officials said they are also concerned about the health of those who attended.

“The risk for transmission and making this a super spreader event is actually probably significant,” Rubin said. “What needs to be done is that everybody, and I hope they’re listening to this, they need to quarantine themselves for 14 days.”



# North suburban hotel under investigation after hosting wedding indoors, Cook County officials say

Stacey Baca

December 3, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/hotel-likely-violated-regulations-after-hosting-wedding-indoors-/8475863/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Cook County health officials announced Thursday that a hotel likely violated state and county health regulations during the pandemic after a wedding was held there Wednesday.

"If food was served, and we understand it was, that it violates the indoor dining, it also violations the prohibition of large communal events in public spaces," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Co-Lead & Senior Medical Officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The wedding was booked at the Hilton Chicago Northbrook.

"Last evening, the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hosted a family wedding with approximately 150 people in attendance. While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state's latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community," said Holly Allgauer-Cir, General Manager, Hilton Chicago/Northbrook in a statement.

"The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety," she said.

"We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton's brand standards," Hilton Hotels released in a statement.

The president of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association also spoke to the owners.

"They realized they made a mistake," said Michael Jacobson President & CEO, IL Hotel and Lodging Association. "They realize it was a total lapse in judgment. I know they are looking at all their bookings in the future."

Health officials said the wedding party and guests will not be cited, just the hotel's owners.

Health officials said they are also concerned about the health of those who attended.

"The risk for transmission and making this a super spreader event is actually probably significant," Rubin said. "What needs to be done is that everybody, and I hope they're listening to this, they need to quarantine themselves for 14 days."



# Health Officials Investigating Large Wedding Held at Suburban Hotel in Violation of Coronavirus Restrictions

December 3, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/health-officials-investigating-large-wedding-held-at-suburban-hotel-in-violation-of-coronavirus-restrictions/2385691/>

Cook County health officials are investigating after a large wedding was held Wednesday at a north suburban hotel in violation of restrictions on gathering sizes implemented earlier this year to slow the spread of the deadly coronavirus.

The wedding took place Wednesday night at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, located at 2855 Milwaukee Ave in Northbrook. A Village of Northbrook official on Thursday clarified that the hotel is technically outside of the village's limits, noting that the village was aware of reports of the wedding.

Video taken from outside the hotel showed the bride and groom entering a luxury car for what appeared to be a send-off from the reception as a large crowd gathered nearby, waving to the couple, with few members of the group wearing masks and no social distancing in place.

A spokesperson for Hilton said in a statement that the hotel is independently operated but the company was "shocked" by the event and contacted its ownership.

"The safety and wellbeing of our guests and Team Members has always been and remains our top priority," the statement from Hilton reads. "We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton's brand standards. We immediately connected with the hotel's ownership to understand the facts and are now addressing our expectations with them directly."

"Hilton prides itself on having industry-leading cleaning and event protocols to protect our guests and Team Members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This incident is not representative of our portfolio of hotels and the extraordinary levels of hospitality offered by our hard-working Team Members every day," the spokesperson added.

The owners of the hotel did not immediately respond to request for comment.

The Cook County Department of Public Health said it was investigating legal options over the event.

"We are appalled that this event was allowed to proceed. We are considering citing the hotel and are investigating our legal options today," CCDPH's Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin said in a statement.



# COVID In Illinois: Massive Northbrook Hotel Wedding Reception Called Potential ‘Super-Spreader Event’ By Cook County Health Department

Charlie De Mar

December 4, 2020

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/04/covid-in-illinois-massive-northbrook-hotel-wedding-reception-called-potential-super-spreader-event-by-cook-cook-county-health-department/>

**NORTHBROOK, III. (CBS)** — A weekday wedding reception at a hotel in unincorporated Northbrook is being called a potential “super-spreader event” by county health officials and the hotel could face civil citations.

As CBS 2’s Charlie De Mar reported, the Cook County Department of Public Health said the wedding put lives in danger.

Hundreds of people crowded into a hotel ballroom on Wednesday, toasting newlyweds. It was a story that CBS 2 aired exclusively Wednesday night and that county public health officials saw: The bride walked into a room filled with hundreds on her special day. All eyes were on her, and no masks were on to block the smiles. [At the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, CBS 2 saw no social distancing at the wedding](#) – and the groups of people walking about without masks. Only a sparing number of people covered up.

“Profound dismay,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health. “This event should not have happened. It’s put a lot of individuals in danger.”

Rubin spoke after watching the CBS 2 story showing how the wedding blatantly broke COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

“They violated the order for indoor dining,” Rubin said. “They also violated the state ordinance or state order that went out related to limiting large events.”

Wedding guests and staff alike are being told to quarantine, and the county already preparing for positive COVID-19 cases.

“We will be requesting a guest list, and assuming we receive that, we will try and reach out to as many individuals that we can,” Rubin said. “I do see it as a potential super-spreader event.”

Rubin and fellow Cook County Department of Public Health Senior Medical Officer and co-lead Dr. Kiran Joshi said in a statement that they are “considering citing the hotel and are investigating our legal options today.”

“We need to focus on the people that were there at the wedding, but also, this is important for the hotel to know so that they can clean those rooms thoroughly,” Rubin said.

It was estimated Wednesday night that there were 200 to 300 guests, despite the state putting a stop to all private parties and ballroom gatherings.

Photos provided to CBS 2 show a crammed cocktail hour – where friends and family embraced and the appetizers were finger-licking good.

On Thursday night, De Mar heard from a band member who performed at the wedding. The band member said he felt completely unprotected surrounded by a group of maskless people, and now is concerned that he may have been exposed.

“I thought this was the craziest environment I’ve been in since the pandemic,” said Jeff Yang.

Yang, a freelance violinist, performed at the wedding and was assured that COVID-19 safety measures would be in place.

“We were going to have Plexiglas to separate us and the guests, and when we got there there’s basically none of that,” he said.

As far as whether the guests were wearing masks, Yang said, “Very few – some of the children were, but very few people.”

Indeed, our exclusive video of the wedding backs that up – no masks for hugs and laughs. People were also seen eating inside despite the states ban on indoor dining.

“It was just utter shock that at this point that we have such high deaths around the U.S. and Illinois, that no one seems concerned about it,” Yang said.

De Mar asked Yang why he thought it was important for him to say something.

“Just for a fellow man – I feel bad for the people that were getting married,” Yang said. “We should just be careful, because this is no joke.”

The Hilton in Northbrook is independently-run. Hotel leadership was named in a 2017 foreclosure case.

Hilton Chicago/Northbrook General Manager Holly Allgauer-Cir released the following statement late Thursday afternoon, placing the head count at 150 rather than the 200 to 300 that we observed based on a count and information from people inside.

*“Last evening, the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hosted a family wedding with approximately 150 people in attendance. While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state’s latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community.*

*“The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.*

*“We are committed to working with state and local health authorities to ensure our hotel is abiding by all safety measures and mitigation guidelines. We immediately reviewed our bookings to ensure any business that is inconsistent with the state’s guidelines are not held at this property, and we are committed to following contact tracing and testing protocols recommended by health officials.*

*“It will take time, but we hope to rebuild the trust of our guests, staff and community have placed in us for so many years.”*

A corporate spokesperson for Hilton said Thursday: “The safety and wellbeing of our guests and Team Members has always been and remains our top priority. We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton’s brand standards. We immediately connected with the hotel’s ownership to understand the facts and are now addressing our expectations with them directly.”

Gov. JB Pritzker said he was “deeply concerned for the people who attended that wedding.”

“I understand that people were in very close proximity from one another. I understand that those people will go home, or back into their communities, and may have in fact infected other people. And this is very concerning to all of us. At a moment when we have rampant COVID-19 throughout Illinois, community spread, here we have people who are, in a concentrated fashion, have the ability now to go spread it to everywhere that they return to,” he said.

The governor said he hopes everyone who attended that wedding will now self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19.

Pritzker said he’s been in contact with the Cook County Department of Public Health to make sure they’re following up on the incident.

“It’s very irresponsible, and it’s also irresponsible of the hotel to host an event like that. They, too, have breached the rules, and they should be held responsible,” he said.

## Cook County health officials investigating after hundreds attend wedding at suburban hotel

WGN Web Desk, Erik Runge, Gaynor Hall

Posted December 3, 2020 / Updated: December 4, 2020

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-officials-investigating-after-hundreds-attend-wedding-at-suburban-hotel/>

PROSPECT HEIGHTS, Ill. — Hundreds of people attended a wedding at a suburban hotel in violation of [Illinois "Tier 3" COVID-19 mitigation efforts](#).

Video and still photos from inside the event Wednesday night captured the massive gathering at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Hotel, located at 2855 Milwaukee Ave. Most people were not wearing masks and not social distancing.

Under Illinois' mandate, gatherings are limited to 10 people and banquet halls are supposed to be closed.

While the hotel has the Hilton name, it is independently owned and operated.

On Thursday afternoon, the hotel issued a statement and said they regret hosting the wedding.

*"Last evening, the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hosted a family wedding with approximately 150 people in attendance. While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state's latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community.*

*The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.*

*We are committed to working with state and local health authorities to ensure our hotel is abiding by all safety measures and mitigation guidelines. We immediately reviewed our bookings to ensure any business that is inconsistent with the state's guidelines are not held at this property, and we are committed to following contact tracing and testing protocols recommended by health officials.*

*It will take time, but we hope to rebuild the trust of our guests, staff and community have placed in us for so many years," said Holly Allgauer-Cir, General Manager, Hilton Chicago/Northbrook.*

The wedding was on the same day [Illinois announced its greatest number of COVID-19 deaths](#) in a 24-hour period. Though it didn't account for the lag time over the long holiday weekend, still reported it 238 lives lost — and that is a sobering number.

So far, Gov. JB Pritzker's office has not commented specifically on the gathering, or what repercussions the hotel could face for allowing the wedding to take place.

It's events like these that public health officials have warned could be super spreader events.

The Cook County Department of Health released the following statement regarding the wedding:

*"We are appalled that this event was allowed to proceed. We are considering citing the hotel and are investigating our legal options today."*

**RACHEL RUBIN, MD, MPH, FACP, SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER AND CO-LEAD KIRAN JOSHI, MD, MPH, SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER AND CO-LEAD, COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

No comment yet from the Prospect Heights Department, nor from any elected leaders.

The hotel has a Northbrook zip code, but is located in Prospect Heights.

## Cook County health department investigating large wedding held at Hilton hotel on day state marked highest number of COVID-19 deaths

Kaitlin Edquist

December 3, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/northbrook/ct-nbs-wedding-banquet-northbrook-hotel-tl-1210-20201204-lsmnm2xhifgrng4b2udmf2ykg-story.html>

Health officials are investigating a large, mostly maskless gathering held at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Hotel Wednesday night — the same day Illinois passed a grim COVID-19 milestone.

Photos and videos of the event first [reported by CBS 2](#) show crowded rooms full of people hugging, eating, drinking and talking in close proximity, the vast majority of whom were not wearing masks. The event was a wedding with about 150 guests in attendance, according to hotel officials.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead for the Cook County Department of Public Health said during a news conference Thursday that she felt “profound dismay” after hearing about the wedding.

“This event should not have happened,” she said. “It’s put a lot of individuals in danger.”

The hotel released a statement Thursday evening apologizing for hosting the wedding. General manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said the pandemic has created challenges for the hospitality industry but that their hope “to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.”

“While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state’s latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community,” Holly Allgauer-Cir said.

She said the hotel will work with local and state health authorities to abide by all guidelines moving forward, as well as contact tracing and testing recommendations.

“It will take time, but we hope to rebuild the trust of our guests, staff and community have placed in us for so many years,” she said in the statement.

The wedding occurred on the same day Illinois public health officials reported 9,757 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and 238 COVID-19 deaths, [the most deaths in a single day](#) since the pandemic began.

“It’s very irresponsible and it’s also irresponsible of the hotel to host an event like that. They, too, have breached the rules and they should be held responsible,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Thursday at his coronavirus briefing in Chicago, in response to a question about the wedding being held in violation of the state’s gathering limits aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus.

Pritzker said he’s concerned for the people who attended the wedding and the people they may go on to infect, as COVID-19 runs “rampant” throughout the state.

“Here we have people who are in a concentrated fashion, have the ability now to go spread it to everywhere that they return to, so I’m deeply worried for them and for the communities that they return to, for their families, and so on,” he said. “I hope that each of them will isolate and get a test.”

County officials said they are now investigating. According to the health department, violations of the state order banning indoor dining and other indoor congregations such as this could lead to arrest, a fine of \$1,000 per offense and further actions.

Rubin and fellow senior medical officer and co-lead Dr. Kiran Joshi released a joint statement prior to a news conference to highlight the gravity of the situation, according to department officials.

“We are appalled that this event was allowed to proceed,” they said in the joint statement. “We are considering citing the hotel and are investigating our legal options today.”

According to Rubin, officials are still discussing legal options, but notices of violation would be issued to the hotel and other possible organizations involved, such as caterers or wedding planners, rather than the individuals at the wedding.

“They should know the rules,” she said of the facility hosting the event.

The notice will most likely not result in a fine initially, but the hotel will be watched carefully moving forward to see if more instances of violation occur. A health department senior inspector was at the hotel Thursday to examine the rest of the hotel’s operations and management, Rubin said.

Rubin said she views the wedding as a “potential super-spreader” event.

To the health department’s knowledge, no one at the wedding had a positive confirmed case, but with a large percentage of asymptomatic infections and high community spread, Rubin said they expect some of the attendees to have been positive without knowing.

She recommended that everyone at the wedding, including servers and planners, as well as those who were at the hotel unrelated to the wedding, should quarantine for 14 days.

The health department will request a guest list from the wedding party, Rubin said. They will either reach out to the individuals directly or communicate through the wedding party that those in attendance should quarantine. She said the department will not contact trace unless someone tests positive, but if someone does test positive, they would then be able to reference the guest list or the event to find close contacts.

Hilton corporate officials said the Northbrook location is independently owned and operated, and they have connected with the hotel’s ownership to address expectations with them.

“We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton’s brand standards,” corporate officials said in a statement.

The Hilton website emphasizes a “clean stay,” with frequent disinfection of rooms and public spaces, a requirement of face coverings in all indoor public areas and “a higher standard” to host events.

“This incident is not representative of our portfolio of hotels and the extraordinary levels of hospitality offered by our hard-working team members every day,” corporate office officials said in a statement.

The hotel, 2855 Milwaukee Ave., has a Northbrook address and ZIP code, but it falls under the jurisdiction of nearby Prospect Heights, according to Prospect Heights City Administrator Joe Wade.

Wade said the event was not initially reported to local police at the time but they are now following up with further investigation and a violation notice of their own.

Regarding the wedding's impact on his city, Wade said he continues to urge residents to maintain safe practices and avoid large gatherings. He encouraged residents to watch for any symptoms in the coming weeks. "Be careful, and try to be thoughtful," he said. "Be safe with each other."

The Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association, which represents hotels across the state, issued a statement in response to the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Hotel's decision to host the event, calling it unacceptable.

"When I found out about this situation, I subsequently contacted public health officials to determine the appropriate next steps and reminded hotel management that they must abide by the Tier 3 mitigations and safety protocols to ensure the health of their employees and guests," said Michael Jacobson, the organization's president and CEO, in a statement. "In addition, we have reached out to our hotel membership across the state to once again stress the importance of abiding by all health and safety guidelines."

*Tribune reporter Jamie Munks contributed.*



# Chicago-area hotel hosted 150-person wedding in violation of state COVID-19 rules, officials say

Meredith Deliso

December 3, 2020

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/chicago-area-hotel-hosted-150-person-wedding-violation/story?id=74530568>

A suburban Chicago hotel could face charges after hosting a large wedding that violated state COVID-19 restrictions, [health](#) officials said.

The wedding took place Wednesday evening at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, with about 150 guests in attendance, hotel officials said.

Under the state's current ["tier 3" mitigation measures](#), meeting rooms, banquet centers, private party rooms and other venues are not allowed to host weddings at any capacity. Indoor gatherings of more than one household are also prohibited. The requirements went into effect on Nov. 20 in response to a statewide surge in COVID-19 cases.

"This event should not have happened," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health, during a news conference Thursday. "It's put a lot of individuals in danger."

The hotel could face possible charges depending on the investigation, health department spokesperson Don Bolger told ABC News.

A Hilton Chicago/Northbrook spokesperson, in a statement to ABC News, said the wedding was booked before the state's latest mitigation measures went into effect, and they "sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed."

"The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety," general manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said in the statement. "We are committed to working with state and local health authorities to ensure our hotel is abiding by all safety measures and mitigation guidelines."

The hotel is also complying with contact tracing and testing protocol recommendations, as well as reviewing its bookings to "ensure any business that is inconsistent with the state's guidelines are not held at this property," Allgauer-Cir said.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said during his daily press briefing Thursday he was "deeply concerned" about the health of the attendees and their communities, and urged guests to quarantine and get tested. According to Pritzker, there was a lack of social distancing at the wedding as COVID-19 runs "rampant" throughout Illinois.

On the day of the event, Illinois public health officials reported a record 238 deaths and 9,757 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19. On Thursday, there were 10,959 such cases and an additional 192 deaths.

"It's very irresponsible, and it's also irresponsible of the hotel to host an event like that," the governor said. "They too have breached the rules and they should be held responsible."

Following news of the wedding, the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association said it reached out to its members "to once again stress the importance of abiding by all health and safety guidelines."

"The large gathering that was allowed to take place at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook is unacceptable and does not reflect the careful efforts the hotel industry as a whole has taken since the onset of the pandemic to protect guests, employees and our communities," President and CEO Michael Jacobson said in a statement.

*ABC News' Rachel Katz contributed to this report.*

# Did hotel host 'super spreader' wedding party? County investigates

Brandon Ison WBBM Newsradio 780 AM & 105.9 FM

December 4, 2020

<https://www.radio.com/knx1070/news/hotel-may-have-hosted-super-spreeder-wedding-party>

**(WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- A hotel in the northwest suburbs of Chicago has caught the attention of Cook County Public Health officials after it was reported there were nearly 300 people at a wedding party there.

The potential “super spreader” event reportedly occurred Wednesday evening at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook.

Cook County Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin on Thursday said a health inspector is looking into the matter.

The hotel could receive a notice of violation if it's determined any events fell afoul of the state's current restrictions, such as a ban on indoor dining, Rubin said. That's basically a warning, but she added the health department would keep a close watch on the hotel.

CBS Chicago reported the story earlier.

As for anyone who attended a large wedding party, Rubin has this sobering guidance:

“They need to quarantine themselves for 14 days — everybody who was at that wedding, everybody who served at that wedding, everybody who planned that wedding, everybody who was there at that hotel, in that event, should quarantine for 14 days.”

If reports are true, the crowded event occurred on the day the state of Illinois reported its highest daily death toll from COVID-19 — 238 deaths — since the pandemic began.

On Thursday, Illinois reported 192 additional deaths related to coronavirus and 10,959 new confirmed or suspected cases of the virus. Illinois hospitals are in danger of being overwhelmed during the current second wave of COVID-19, state officials say.

# 150-person wedding reception at suburban hotel under investigation for violating COVID-19 rules

*Stefano Esposito and Mitchell Armentrout*

*December 3, 2020*

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2020/12/3/22151157/hilton-chicago-northbrook-wedding-reception-investigation-coronavirus-covid-19-violations>

A north suburban hotel apologized Thursday after it hosted a wedding reception that triggered a Cook County health department investigation for violations of COVID-19 restrictions.

“Last evening, the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hosted a family wedding with approximately 150 people in attendance. While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state’s latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community,” general manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said in a statement issued Thursday afternoon.

“The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.”

Allgauer-Cir said the hotel will follow health officials’ recommendations on contact tracing and testing.

The Cook County Department of Public Health has requested the guest list for the reception, spokesman Don Bolger said.

The hotel is in Prospect Heights, which issued the venue a written warning. City administrator Joe Wade said Thursday the hotel’s general manager told him at least one hotel employee had urged members of the party to socially distance and wear masks.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker described the event as “very irresponsible.”

“This is very concerning to all of us at a moment when we have rampant COVID-19 throughout Illinois,” Pritzker said during his daily COVID-19 media briefing Thursday. “Here we have people who, in a concentrated fashion, have the ability now to go spread it to everywhere that they return to.

“I’m deeply worried for them and for the communities that they’ve returned to, for their families and so on. I hope that each of them will isolate and get a test.”

Pritzker said it would be up to local authorities to mete out punishment.

The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association said the event was “unacceptable and does not reflect the careful efforts the hotel industry as a whole has taken since the onset of the pandemic to protect guests, employees and our communities.”

“The hotel industry is committed to working with policymakers and public health officials to ensure this situation is not repeated,” association president and CEO Michael Jacobson said in a statement.

# Cook County Health clinics in Woodlawn, Bronzeville close; patients sent to Provident

Aaron Gettinger

December 4, 2020

[https://www.hpherald.com/news/local/cook-county-health-clinics-in-woodlawn-bronzeville-close-patients-sent-to-provident/article\\_50f524ac-367f-11eb-962f-d30336a2fc9f.html](https://www.hpherald.com/news/local/cook-county-health-clinics-in-woodlawn-bronzeville-close-patients-sent-to-provident/article_50f524ac-367f-11eb-962f-d30336a2fc9f.html)

The Cook County Health Woodlawn and Near South clinics closed Friday, with staff working at the Sengstacke Health Center at Provident Hospital and patients referred there for care.

The move was announced months ago, as the county government dealt with a large budget shortfall, and proceeded despite vocal protests from the National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United union.

"This move will allow patients to see their current doctor and receive more services in one convenient location with access to more clinical services, diagnostic testing and procedures as well as ample parking," wrote Cook County Health spokeswoman Deborah Song in an email.

"This equitable approach significantly enhances outpatient care and access on the South Side of Chicago. Patients will have access to a new Lifestyle Center, a series of new wraparound services for patients with diabetes and other chronic diseases which disproportionately affects the Black community, a new, state-of-the-art dialysis center, a new ambulatory center with expanded surgical services, and state-of-the-art imaging services which will include CT scans, MRIs and upgraded radiology rooms."

Song noted the multimillion-dollar investments Cook County Health is putting in Provident, 500 E. 51st St., over the next fiscal year, including a new colon cancer screening program and a "full portfolio of robust outpatient services."

Fewer than 10 union layoffs were expected as of the end of November.

At the Woodlawn, 6337 S. Woodlawn Ave., and Near South, 3525 S Michigan Ave., health centers on Friday, workers carted out equipment, as a few medical staffers looked on.

Beshantelle Childs, a medical assistant who worked triaging patients with doctors, giving shots and otherwise providing patient care at the Near South clinic for a year and four months, said she was happy to still have a job. She will begin working at Cook County Health's Englewood Health Center, 1135 W. 69th St., and looks forward to working nearer to where her mother lives.

"I'm just a little sad, because I'm so close with the patients," she said. "A lot of the patients have been here for a very long time. That was pretty much my concern, just the patient care and where they were going to go. I've got big concerns about how far they've got to travel now, especially with Mercy closing.

Nevertheless, Childs said many of the patients were happy to be able to follow their care providers to Provident, as Washington Park is not too far from Bronzeville. "That was a good thing," she said, adding that the patients all said they have transportation to the expanded clinic. "At least they have somewhere to still go that's not too far."

"I'll miss my coworkers," she said. "That's the sad part. I've been getting to know them, and a lot of us are splitting up."



# CCDPH issues COVID-19 mitigation notices to suburban hotel responsible for large wedding

FOX 32 Digital Staff

December 4, 2020

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/ccdph-issues-covid-19-mitigation-citations-to-suburban-hotel-responsible-for-large-wedding>

**NORTHBROOK, Ill.** - The Cook County Department of Public Health issued notices on Friday to the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Hotel and onsite Allgauer's on the Riverfront restaurant, following a recent large gathering that was caught on video. The health department also conducted an inspection of the facilities, the CCDPH communications team said.

The notices issued include:

A Facility Order to Disperse, for Non-Compliance with the Cook County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Mitigation Order, based on observed violations made Thursday by the Department of Public Health during the course of an inspection, as well as violations identified in the media video captured Wednesday.

A Facility Notice of Non-Compliance, for Non-Compliance with COVID-19 Regulations from the Illinois Department of Public Health based on observed violations made Thursday by CCDPH during the course of an inspection, as well as violations identified in the media video captured Wednesday.

"The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible. This event was in violation of the current COVID-19 Mitigation order and should not have taken place," said Rachel Rubin, MD, MPH, FACP, Senior Public Health Medical Officer and Co-Lead, Cook County Department of Public Health. "I sincerely hope no one becomes sick or dies as a result of this event. All who were in attendance should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and get tested to keep from spreading COVID to the greater community."

Authorities say the notices serve as a warning to the establishments while the Cook County Department of Public Health attorneys review evidence and case notes to determine next steps.

If cited, the hotel and restaurant would need to appear in court, and if found guilty, penalties could include: arrest, a fine of \$1,000 per offense and further actions.

CCDPH says they will closely monitor the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hotel and onsite restaurant.

Additional reports of non-compliance could result in further actions being taken.



# Suburban Hotel That Hosted Large Wedding Issued 2 'COVID-19 Mitigation Citations'

December 4, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/suburban-hotel-that-hosted-large-wedding-issued-2-covid-19-mitigation-citations/2385841/>

A north suburban hotel that hosted a large indoor wedding reception received multiple "COVID-19 mitigation citations" for allowing the event, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The department said Friday that the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, as well as the onsite Allgauer's on the Riverfront restaurant received the following "notices of violation":

- A Facility Order to Disperse, for Non-Compliance with 2020-01 Cook County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Mitigation Order, based on observed violations made Thursday, December 3, 2020 by CCDPH during the course of an inspection, as well as based on observed violations identified in the media video captured the evening of Wednesday, December 2, 2020; and
- A Facility Notice of Non-Compliance, for Non-Compliance with COVID-19 Regulations from the Illinois Department of Public Health (77 Ill. Admin. Code 690.50), based on observed violations made Thursday, December 3, 2020 by CCDPH during the course of an inspection, as well as based on observed violations identified in the media video captured the evening of Wednesday, December 2, 2020.

"The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible. This event was in violation of the current COVID-19 Mitigation order and should not have taken place," Cook County Health Department Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer Rachel Rubin said in a statement. "I sincerely hope no one becomes sick or dies as a result of this event. All who were in attendance should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and get tested to keep from spreading COVID to the greater community."

Rubin said Thursday an investigation was underway at the hotel to determine if other events took place recently and to obtain a guest list from the wedding, which took place Wednesday night at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, located at 2855 Milwaukee Ave. in Prospect Heights.

The violation notices serve as a "warning."

"CCDPH will closely monitor the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hotel and onsite Allgauer's on the Riverfront restaurant. Additional reports of non-compliance could result in further actions being taken," the department stated.

Rubin said the newlyweds and attendees won't be cited for the event because "we don't cite individuals for their behavior."

"This event should not have happened," Rubin said. "It's put a lot of individuals in danger. I don't even know where to begin. This is the kind of thing that we've been trying to avoid and educate the community about since day one."

Video taken from outside the hotel showed the bride and groom entering a luxury car for what appeared to be a send-off from the reception as a large crowd gathered nearby, waving to the couple, with few members of the group wearing masks and no social distancing in place.

A spokesperson for Hilton said in a statement that the hotel is independently operated but the company was "shocked" by the event and contacted its ownership.

"The safety and wellbeing of our guests and Team Members has always been and remains our top priority," the statement from Hilton reads. "We were shocked to learn that one of our independently owned and operated hotels chose to host an event that disregarded both local regulations and Hilton's brand standards. We immediately connected with the hotel's ownership to understand the facts and are now addressing our expectations with them directly."

"Hilton prides itself on having industry-leading cleaning and event protocols to protect our guests and Team Members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This incident is not representative of our portfolio of hotels and the extraordinary levels of hospitality offered by our hard-working Team Members every day," the spokesperson added.

The owners of the hotel did not immediately respond to request for comment.

Health officials urged anyone who attended the event to quarantine, saying "there are going to be at least a few people at that wedding who were COVID positive and didn't realize it."

"People weren't wearing masks and were crowded together," Rubin said, noting the reception posed a "significant risk" and could become a super spreader event.

## Local, county health officials issue formal citations to suburban Hilton hotel after indoor wedding with 150 guests

Kaitlin Edquist

December 4, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/northbrook/ct-nbs-northbrook-hotel-wedding-citations-tl-1210-20201204-iuphnd7yn5f7xemen3wizutzhy-story.html>

Cook County health officials announced Friday that formal citations were issued to a Northbrook-area hotel following a large gathering this week and a subsequent inspection of the facilities.

A large, mostly maskless wedding event with about 150 guests was held at the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook Hotel Wednesday night, violating the state's gathering limits aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus. Footage from the event first [reported by CBS 2](#) showed crowded rooms full of people hugging, eating, drinking and talking in close proximity.

"The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible," Dr. Rachel Rubin, a Cook County Department of Public Health senior medial officer and co-lead, said in a Friday news release. "This event was in violation of the current COVID-19 mitigation order and should not have taken place."

The Cook County health department announced the formal citations Friday, after Rubin said one day earlier that the department was [investigating and discussing legal options](#).

The citations issued included a facility order to disperse for non-compliance with the the county health department's COVID-19 mitigation order, as well as a facility notice of non-compliance for not following the Illinois Department of Public Health's COVID-19 regulations.

Both were based on observed violations that were identified in photos and videos captured on the evening of the wedding, as well as observed violations made by county health officials during an inspection the following day, officials said.

"I sincerely hope no one becomes sick or dies as a result of this event," Rubin said in the news release. "All who were in attendance should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and get tested to keep from spreading COVID to the greater community."

According to the health department, the notices serve as a warning to the facility while the county's attorneys continue to review evidence to determine next steps. If officials decide to cite the hotel under Cook County municipal code, "the hotel and restaurant would need to appear in court, and if found guilty, penalties could include arrest, a fine of \$1,000 per offense, and further actions."

During a news conference Thursday, Rubin said the notices of violation would be issued to the hotel and other possible organizations involved, such as catering or wedding planning companies, rather than individuals at the wedding.

News of the event caught the attention of local, county and state officials Thursday. When asked about the event during his coronavirus briefing in Chicago, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he's concerned for the people who attended the wedding and the people they may go on to infect, as COVID-19 runs "rampant" throughout the state.

The wedding occurred on the same day Illinois public health officials reported 9,757 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and 238 COVID-19 deaths, [the most deaths in a single day](#) since the pandemic began.

The hotel released a statement of apology in which general manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said the pandemic has created challenges for the hospitality industry but that their hope “to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.”

“While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state’s latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community,” Allgauer-Cir said.

In Rubin’s news conference Thursday, she said she views the wedding as a “potential super-spreader” event.

The health department is requesting a guest list from the wedding party, Rubin said. They will either reach out to the individuals directly or communicate through the wedding party that those in attendance should quarantine. She said the department will not contact trace unless someone tests positive, but if someone does test positive, they would then be able to reference the guest list or the event to find close contacts.

The hotel, 2855 Milwaukee Ave., has a Northbrook address and ZIP code, but it falls under the jurisdiction of nearby Prospect Heights, according to Prospect Heights City Administrator Joe Wade.

Wade said the event was not initially reported to local police at the time, but they followed up with further investigation.

The city issued a violation notice of its own on Thursday. The notice served as a “written warning of failing to follow the Tier 3 Mitigation Measures” that went into effect Nov. 20.

“As a business owner, it is your responsibility to adhere to the Tier 3 Mitigation Guidelines and reduce the potential for COVID-19 exposure to your guests, employees and their families,” Wade wrote in the official notice.

If the establishment refuses to comply with public health guidance moving forward, they’re subject to a fine ranging from \$75 to \$2,500 and can be charged with a misdemeanor.

In the hotel’s apology statement, Allgauer-Cir said the hotel will work with local and state health authorities to abide by all guidelines moving forward, as well as contact tracing and testing recommendations.

“It will take time, but we hope to rebuild the trust of our guests, staff and community have placed in us for so many years,” she said.



# Suburban hotel cited for hosting 150-person wedding reception

*Sun-Times Media Wire*

December 5, 2020

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/suburban-hotel-cited-for-hosting-150-person-wedding-party>

**NORTHBROOK, III. (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- A north suburban hotel has been cited for hosting a large wedding reception Wednesday night with about 150 guests.

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced the citations Friday, a day after health officials announced they'd be investigating the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook, which issued a public apology for hosting the reception. The citations include an order to disperse for non-compliance with the county mitigation order and a notice of non-compliance with state COVID-19 regulations.

"The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible. This event was in violation of the current COVID-19 Mitigation order and should not have taken place," said Rachel Rubin, a senior medical officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health. "I sincerely hope no one becomes sick or dies as a result of this event. All who were in attendance should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and get tested to keep from spreading COVID to the greater community."

Health officials said the notices serve as a warning while their attorneys review evidence and determine next steps. If the hotel and on-site restaurant, Allgauer's on the Riverfront, are found guilty in court, they could face arrest or a fine of \$1,000 per offense, health officials said.

"While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state's latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community," general manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said in a statement issued Thursday afternoon. "The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety."

The wedding reception drew the ire of Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who called it "very irresponsible." The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association said the event was "unacceptable and does not reflect the careful efforts the hotel industry as a whole has taken since the onset of the pandemic to protect guests, employees and our communities."

## Latest coronavirus news for December 5, 2020: 150-person wedding reception cited, ‘The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible’

*Sun-Times Staff*

*December 5, 2020*

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2020/12/5/22155749/latest-coronavirus-news-live-updates-chicago-illinois-2020>

A north suburban hotel has been cited for hosting a large wedding reception Wednesday night with about 150 guests.

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced the citations Friday, a day after health officials announced they'd be [investigating the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook](#), which issued a public apology for hosting the reception. The citations include an order to disperse for non-compliance with the county mitigation order and a notice of non-compliance with state COVID-19 regulations.

“The hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests were all reckless and irresponsible. This event was in violation of the current COVID-19 Mitigation order and should not have taken place,” said Rachel Rubin, a senior medical officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health. “I sincerely hope no one becomes sick or dies as a result of this event. All who were in attendance should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and get tested to keep from spreading COVID to the greater community.”

Health officials said the notices serve as a warning while their attorneys review evidence and determine next steps. If the hotel and on-site restaurant, Allgauer's on the Riverfront, are found guilty in court, they could face arrest or a fine of \$1,000 per offense, health officials said.

“While the event was booked prior to the implementation of the state's latest mitigation measures, we sincerely regret allowing this gathering to proceed and our family apologizes to our guests, employees, and the Chicagoland community,” general manager Holly Allgauer-Cir said in a statement issued Thursday afternoon. “The coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for the hospitality industry and our family-owned business. However, our hope to keep the hotel afloat and employees working should not outweigh health and safety.”

The wedding reception drew the ire of Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who called it “very irresponsible.” The Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association said the event was “unacceptable and does not reflect the careful efforts the hotel industry as a whole has taken since the onset of the pandemic to protect guests, employees and our communities.”

## Cook County cites Prospect Heights hotel that hosted crowded wedding

12/4/2020

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20201204/cook-county-cites-prospect-heights-hotel-that-hosted-crowded-wedding>

The Cook County Department of Public Health Friday cited a Prospect Heights hotel that was the site of a crowded wedding reception this week, in what officials labeled a potential COVID-19 superspreader event.

The Hilton Chicago/Northbrook hotel and on-site Allgauer's on the Riverfront restaurant, which has a Northbrook address of 2855 Milwaukee Ave. but is within the city limits of Prospect Heights, was served with two notices of violation after hosting a wedding reception attended by at least 150 people Wednesday night.

The health department violations -- technically called a facility notice of noncompliance and a facility order to disperse -- charge disobeying the state's current prohibition on indoor dining and hosting a large communal event in a public space.

The citations, considered civil violations, don't have fines attached to them, but the hotel could face penalties of up to \$1,000 per offense if there are repeated violations. Health department attorneys are still reviewing evidence and case notes to determine next steps, officials said.

In a written announcement of the citations Friday afternoon, Dr. Rachel Rubin, colead and senior medical officer at the county health department, called out the hotel, restaurant, bride, groom, caterer and guests, saying they were "reckless and irresponsible" for throwing the large wedding reception in violation of COVID-19 mitigation restrictions.

The hotel released a statement Thursday in which management apologized for allowing the gathering to take place, though the event was booked before the latest state mitigation measures. Though it operates under the Hilton brand, the hotel is independently owned and operated.

Health department officials issued the citations Friday afternoon after viewing local TV news video of the crowded gathering and a subsequent inspection of the facility on Thursday. They added they would closely monitor the hotel and restaurant, and additional reports of noncompliance could result in further actions.

The health department's violation notice came with guidance to all who were at the wedding to quarantine for at least 10 days and get tested in an effort to avoid spreading COVID-19 to the community at large. County officials have requested the wedding guest list to assist with contact tracing efforts if someone tests positive.

"People weren't wearing masks. They were crowded together. The risk for transmission in making it a superspreader event is significant," Rubin said Thursday.

The county violations are in addition to a written warning issued Thursday by Prospect Heights city officials.

Mayor Nick Helmer said the wedding reception was booked with the understanding that face masks would be worn, among other directives. But he said "it wasn't followed up properly" by the on-site staff, and the hotel owners were just as surprised by what they saw.

Of the owners' mea culpa written statement, Helmer said, "Frankly, they put it in on a straight-up basis: They screwed up." Helmer said the city hasn't had any problems with the hotel in the past, calling it one of the best businesses in town.



# 'That's a fraction of what we will need': Chicago anticipates vaccine approval, urge continued mitigation efforts

Will Jones

December 6, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/chicago-covid-vaccine-latest-pfizer/8567802/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- The FDA set to deliberate Thursday on Pfizer's vaccine for the coronavirus.

"I expect them to recommend approval based on the data I'm aware of and I saw the vaccine is highly effective; the vaccine is safe and the safety profile is compared to many other vaccines that have been in use for years," said Dr. Moncef Slaoui, Chief Scientific Adviser of Operation Warp Speed.

If approved, the vaccine could be available within days nationwide. Illinois is set to receive 109,000 doses, with 23,000 of that for [Chicago](#).

"Now, that's a fraction of what we will need," Mayor Lori Lightfoot said on Face the Nation Sunday. "But we've been working with our hospital partners to identify those within their workforce who are going to be front of the queue to get the early doses of the vaccine."

The CDC recommending health care workers and long-term care residents be in the front of the line. It could take months before most Americans get the vaccine.

"It really depends on the speed with which the federal government and the vaccine manufacturers can get the vaccine to the states, and then to vaccine providers," said Dr. Kiran Joshi with the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Illinois Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi is concerned about the spread of [misinformation about the vaccine on social media](#).

"Unfortunately, this is the season of conspiracy theories," he said. "And I think that combined with the anti-vaxxer movement which, you know, was a phenomenon before the pandemic, we're gonna have our work cut out for us."

Public health officials said even with a vaccine on the horizon, you should continue to wear a mask and keep your distance.

"I think we need to stay the course and together we can protect the most vulnerable among us, and that includes our seniors and those with chronic conditions," Dr. Joshi said.

All eyes will be on the [UK as it begins offering the Pfizer vaccine](#) on Tuesday. It could help public health officials in the U.S. prepare for the rollout of the vaccine.



# Health Experts Push Flu Shot Week Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Kye Martin

December 8, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/top-videos-home/health-experts-push-flu-shot-week-amid-covid-19-pandemic/2389716/?fbclid=IwAR0R4aZV6sguo8NeOicmYxOXRoA-Uag6sugMcS9JkkHNwyQfw2Vyh90XPSg>



Health officials across the United States are pushing Americans to get their annual flu shot, especially with the additional risk of the coronavirus this year.



# COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccine: Two Health Care Workers In UK Have Allergic Reaction; Doctors Say General Public Should Not Be Scared

*Jim Williams*

*December 9, 2020 at 5:25 pm*

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/09/covid-19-pfizer-uk-allergic-reaction/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — The United Kingdom is on day two of its rollout of the Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19, and it now comes with a warning: If you have significant allergies, you should not be given the shot. Two health workers who got the vaccine developed serious allergic reactions.

The general public should not be scared of the vaccine, and those with severe allergies should talk to their doctors before getting the shots.

Infectious disease doctor Gregory Huhn, who is the COVID vaccination coordinator for Cook County Health, said given the large numbers of people expected to get the vaccine, it is likely a small group will have allergic reactions.

“When you have hundreds of thousands or millions potentially getting this vaccine there will be rare instances of severe reactions,” he said.

In Britain the two health workers who had adverse reactions to the Pfizer COVID vaccine have histories of serious allergies and carry EpiPens. British health officials have urged people with strong allergic reactions to food or medicine not to get the vaccine now.

But CBS 2 wondered whether those who don’t know if they have allergies should be alarmed by what’s happened in the UK.

“These are going to be very rare events. It is surprising that two came up, popped up right away with the initial rollout, but it’s going to be a rare event. And so we’re just going to have to monitor that,” Huhn said. “I hope that this will not break with the enthusiasm right now with the 95% effectiveness that we’ve seen with this vaccine in a very strong phase three trial.”

Northwestern Doctor Robert Murphy echoes Huhn, saying people with severe allergies should first talk with their physicians, but the general public should not be worried.

“With all the tens of thousands of people that have taken the vaccine, this is first we’ve heard about this yesterday, these two patients. So that’s a good sign,” Murphy said.

The two health care workers Britain have recovered. Pfizer says it has medical investigators working to understand why it happened.



# City, State Health Officials Fine-Tune COVID Vaccine Rollout Plans as Approval Nears

December 9, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/city-state-health-officials-fine-tune-covid-vaccine-rollout-plans-as-approval-nears/2391009/>

With a coronavirus vaccine potentially getting approval from the Food and Drug Administration as soon as this week, city and state health officials are continuing to fine-tune their plans for administration of the treatment.

Pfizer's vaccine against the virus could potentially be approved for emergency use by the FDA after a hearing on Thursday, and if that vaccine is approved, Chicago could roll out its first doses of the treatment by next week.

The city is preparing to receive 23,000 doses in its first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine, while the state of Illinois is hoping to get more than 100,000 doses total of the treatment.

Dr. Atul Gupta, the medical director of infection prevention at New Lenox's Silver Cross Hospital, expects to be vaccinated next week as part of the first wave of vaccinations, and his staff is continuing to implement plans.

"We're getting a certain amount next week, but we can expect weekly shipments of vaccine," Gupta said. "So while everyone on the front lines won't be vaccinated right away, they're hoping they will be in the next few weeks."

Staff are not only having to deal with the procedures of getting the vaccine themselves, but with the concerns of patients who have questions about how quickly the vaccine was developed.

"What I've been telling them right now is the most important message we can give to patients is that the vaccine's development was not rushed," Gupta said.

Dr. Gregory Huhn, the COVID-19 vaccine coordinator of Cook County Health, says that the department has cut no corners at all in its preparation, and they feel confident in the processes used by the drugmakers that have formulated the treatments.

"The misconception is that it isn't going to be safe, or whether it can give someone the disease," he said. "It will not give you the disease, not the way that these vaccines were formulated."

City officials in Chicago say healthcare workers who treat COVID patients, residents in long-term care facilities, and essential workers, will be among the first people to get the treatment. Those with underlying medical conditions and those who are over the age of 65 will also be among the first in line.

## 10 notable CEO transitions this year

Kelly Gooch and Morgan Haefner

December 10, 2020

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/hospital-management-administration/10-notable-ceo-transitions-this-year.html>

*Becker's Hospital Review* reported on more than 300 CEO transitions at several academic medical centers, for-profit hospital operators, nonprofit hospitals and public health systems in 2020.

Some of those moves were memorable due to their abruptness. Others stood out because they bookended decades-long careers, or involved power changes at hospitals and health systems in some of the largest U.S. cities.

Here are 10 of this year's hospital and health system CEO moves that captured the attention of *Becker's Hospital Review's* readers:

1. Longtime Boston Children's leader [Sandra Fenwick](#) said this year that she is retiring in March 2021. Under Ms. Fenwick's leadership, *U.S. News & World Report* has [ranked](#) Boston Children's as the nation's top pediatric hospital. Boston Children's Hospital tapped [Kevin Churchwell](#), MD, as its next CEO. Dr. Churchwell currently serves as president and COO of the hospital.
2. [Wayne Smith](#), who has led Franklin, Tenn.-based Community Health Systems as CEO for more than 20 years, will step away from his role Jan. 1 to become executive chair of the board. CHS intends to name current President and COO Tim Hingtgen as CEO. The move comes as two other national hospital operators — Quorum Health and Universal Health Services — also saw their chiefs step down in the months before Mr. Smith.
3. [Joey Jacobs](#) stepped down as CEO of Brentwood, Tenn.-based Quorum Health in September. He left after only two months on the job. He was named CEO just as Quorum was emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Dan Slipkovich, who sits on Quorum's board, was named interim CEO.
4. Days after Quorum announced a transition of leadership, [Alan Miller](#), founder, chair and CEO of Universal Health Services, said he was stepping down as CEO of the King of Prussia, Pa.-based company at the start of 2021. Mr. Miller [founded](#) UHS 41 years ago. At the time, the company had six employees, but it has since grown to about 90,000 employees. The company operates about 400 facilities in 37 U.S. states, Puerto Rico and the United Kingdom. Marc Miller, president of UHS, will take over the CEO role.
5. [Karen Olscamp](#), president and CEO of the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center in Glen Burnie, will retire in January after 12 years of leading the medical center. During Ms. Olscamp's tenure, the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington expanded obstetrics, behavioral health, cancer, critical care and surgery programs, among other accomplishments, the medical center said. She has been with the system for 34 years, beginning as an administrative resident in 1987.
6. [Israel Rocha Jr.](#), the CEO of two hospitals in New York City's public health system, was approved as the next CEO of Cook County Health in Chicago. Mr. Rocha's transition from New York City's public health system to Chicago's comes as Cook County Health is facing financial challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It's a hot seat: Cook County Health's previous CEO, John Jay Shannon, was [voted out](#) of his role in November 2019 to address several major challenges, including a ballooning charity care budget.

7. Detroit Medical Center named [Karima Bentounsi](#) CEO of its adult central campus hospitals, effective Aug. 10. Her role includes oversight of DMC Detroit Receiving Hospital, DMC Harper University Hospital, DMC Heart Hospital and DMC Hutzel Women's Hospital. Ms. Bentounsi first joined DMC in 2017 as president and CEO of DMC Huron Valley-Sinai Hospital, where her leadership helped the hospital attain an "A" grade from Leapfrog.

8. [Kelby Krabbenhoft](#) is no longer president and CEO of Sioux Falls, S.D.-based Sanford Health. The development comes after 24 years of Mr. Krabbenhoft's leadership in the top position of the 46-hospital system and days after he wrote an email to 50,000 employees explaining his stance on face coverings amid the most severe COVID-19 surge in the U.S. to date. His abrupt exit led Sanford to [indefinitely suspended](#) discussions about a planned merger with Salt Lake City-based Intermountain Health.

9. In July, [Lloyd Dean](#) became the sole CEO of Chicago-based CommonSpirit Health. Kevin Lofton, co-CEO of the Chicago-based health system, officially [retired](#) June 30. CommonSpirit said its dual-CEO model was a transitional one to better integrate the two systems and was not intended to be permanent. Several other health systems — including Milwaukee and Downers Grove, Ill.-based Advocate Aurora Health and Greenville, S.C.-based Prisma Health — [have ditched](#) the dual-CEO model in recent years.

10. Navicent Health President and CEO [Ninfa Saunders](#), MSN, retired from the Macon, Ga.-based system this year. She helmed Navicent, one of Georgia's largest health systems, since 2012. During her tenure, Dr. Saunders played a key role in mergers with smaller Central Georgia hospitals and a [partnership](#) with the Charlotte, N.C.-based Atrium Health.



# Health Department Launches Law-Enforcement Driven Deflection And Naloxone Distribution Initiative To Fight Opioid Overdose

December 10, 2020

<https://patch.com/illinois/palatine/health-department-launches-law-enforcement-driven-deflection-naloxone-distribution>

## Press release from the Cook County Health Department:

FOREST PARK, IL –Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) today officially launched a comprehensive initiative to prevent opioid overdose deaths and help people with opioid use disorder find community-based treatment and support in suburban Cook County.

“No matter where law enforcement and other first responders work, they invariably encounter and respond to the impacts of drug use and co-occurring disorders in their communities,” said Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle. “This keeps people with opioid use disorder out of jail and the emergency room, and provides resources and support in a compassionate way.” The opioid initiative has four major components: • Technical assistance to establish deflection programs for suburban Cook County law enforcement agencies. Deflection refers people with opioid use and substance use disorder to community-based treatment as an alternative to incarceration or the emergency room. • Training on opioid overdose and naloxone use for law enforcement agencies. • Distribution of naloxone to priority law enforcement agencies and community partners. • Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis on opioid overdose and opioid use disorder to inform public health efforts. “Thanks to the leadership of CCDPH, 12 police departments and communities will be starting new deflection programs, which is the largest single cluster of deflection sites ever conceived, created, and launched in such a short period of time in the nation,” said Jac Charlier, executive director for the Center for Health and Justice, the Press Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Dec. 9, 2020 Media Contact: Kim Junius, [kjunius@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:kjunius@cookcountyhhs.org) technical assistance arm of Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC). TASC, will provide tailored, no-cost technical assistance to law enforcement agencies in CCDPH’s jurisdiction of suburban Cook County. “This initiative is a huge first step toward bringing deflection to scale, moving up the point in time at which people at risk of overdose can access treatment,” said Charlier. “When used effectively, deflection can save lives, reduce drug use, and build community trust while promoting public safety.” People who are referred by law enforcement into deflection programs will be supported by deflection specialists. Deflection specialists support people with substance use disorder in getting to their first treatment appointment as well as addressing housing, transportation, employment, and other barriers to staying in treatment. Harvey, Markham and Maywood police departments participated in a pilot program for this initiative. As of Wednesday, Dec. 9, CCDPH and its partners have trained 78 officers and distributed 169 naloxone kits. Maywood’s 60153 zip code, which also includes Broadview, has one of the highest mortality rates for opioid overdose in suburban Cook County. “We have used naloxone on 42 incidents,” said Maywood Police Chief Talley. “Our officers use naloxone to reverse overdoses weekly, and sometimes more than once a week.” In Markham, explained Chief White, “My officers have been buying naloxone out of their own pocket. I have too. Then of course, the price went up. We’re grateful for the support.” He added that, “We want to establish a deflection program in Markham because our first priority as a police department is to help people. We don’t want to be locking people up just because of dependency.” “Harvey’s officers were already engaging in deflection, before we knew what it was called,” said Harvey Police Chief Collins. “Sometimes people just need support, and it doesn’t always have to end in an arrest. Arrest is placing them in a cycle and sets them up for failure. Deflection may be that exit ramp.” The City of Harvey’s police department received technical assistance from TASC through a previous grant. The CCDPH initiative provides support for implementing their plans. “Our work with TASC has allowed the department to identify more community resources and to formalize those relationships,” said Chief Collins. “This supports not just people who are at risk of opioid overdose,

but it helps bring resources to commercial sex workers and victims of human trafficking. There's a broader impact." CCDPH will coordinate with treatment providers, harm reduction advocates, community-based partners, researchers, and other government agencies to carry out the initiative. Cook County Department of Emergency Management and Regional Solutions (DEMRS) will help promote CCDPH's initiatives to law enforcement partners. The initiative builds on a DEMRS program to train 30 law enforcement agencies in the Western suburbs on naloxone administration. CCDPH and TASC will also convene regional taskforces in the south and west suburbs to bring together partners and identify mutual resources for people with opioid use and substance use disorder. The initiative is supported by federal and state grant dollars. "This epidemic within a pandemic requires a comprehensive approach that engages diverse partners across suburban Cook County," said CCDPH Senior Medical Officer and Co-lead Dr. Kiran Joshi. "In addressing this crisis, we knew we had to start with saving lives, but we also had to transform the broken systems that traumatize our communities, destroy families, and perpetuate opioid use and substance use disorder." On December 16, between 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., TASC will host a virtual orientation on deflection for suburban Cook County law enforcement agencies interested in participating in the program. The training will cover the value of deflection and how to identify individuals that are appropriate for deflection. To register for TASC's virtual orientation on December 16, please contact Nikki Munoz at [nmunoz@tasc.org](mailto:nmunoz@tasc.org). For information about CCDPH's opioid overdose prevention initiative, or to request naloxone, visit the CCDPH website at: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/behavioral-health/opioids/>



# Cook County Health Doctor 'Debunks' Coronavirus Vaccine Myths

Sandra Torres

December 10, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/top-videos-home/cook-county-health-doctor-debunks-coronavirus-vaccine-myths/2391733/>



Dr. Sharon Welbel, the director of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control for Cook County Health, said she understands some people might have concerns about the vaccine, but she, too, wished to inform people of what is known so far.

## Deadliest year ever for fatal opioid overdoses in Cook County. 'These are losses that could and should be prevented.'

Alice Yin

December 10, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-opioid-deaths-cook-county-20201209-vepciaddh5aajn3e6ilfpihg3i-story.html>

Cook County will end 2020 with its deadliest year for opioid overdoses, according to data from the medical examiner's office that underscores how a chronic public health crisis raged to record levels amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The county's confirmed opioid overdose deaths this year have already surpassed last year's record-breaking tally, with 1,498 cases compared with 2019's 1,277, according to chief medical examiner Dr. Ponni Arunkumar.

There are more than 600 death cases still pending, and about 70% to 80% of them are expected to be ruled as opioid-related. Arunkumar said Cook County is on track to exceed 2,000 opioid deaths this year.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has overshadowed the opioid crisis this year, but this crisis deserves our attention," Arunkumar said at a news conference Wednesday. "For 2,000 families across Cook County, (2020) will be remembered as the year that opioids took their son or daughter, parent, sibling and uncle or dear friend. These are losses that could and should be prevented."

Blacks and Latinos make up 63% of the deaths even though they represent less than half of the county's total population, she said. Men account for more than three-quarters of the cases. The 45- to 54-year-old age group is most likely to die from an overdose, followed by 55- to 64-year-olds.

"We're in a very bad place," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said at the news conference. "This is an extraordinary time, and surely levels of stress and anxiety are very high, and sometimes folks are tempted to deal with that stress and anxiety with self-medication."

Arunkumar said 2020's caseload was already above the same period last year before the pandemic, but there was a spike after Gov. J.B. Pritzker issued his stay-at-home order in March. Fentanyl, an extremely powerful synthetic drug, was the most common opioid in the cases this year.

Officials with the Cook County Department of Public Health revealed a multiyear project with the nonprofit Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities to curb opioid overdoses in suburban Cook County. It will kick off with a partnership among 12 police departments and communities for naloxone distribution and "deflection sites," senior medical officer Dr. Kiran Joshi said.

Naloxone is a medication that rapidly reverses opioid overdose. Deflection entails approaching someone who is at high risk of an overdose, has previously overdosed or is in need of substance abuse treatment and connecting them with case management and other treatment options that don't involve the criminal justice system or emergency departments, according to Jac Charlier, executive director of TASC's Center for Health and Justice.

Other resources provided would include help with housing, transportation and employment.

As of Wednesday, 78 law enforcement officers were trained in naloxone administration and 169 kits were disseminated, Joshi said. The goal is to give out 2,500 kits by the end of September and train 1,900 officers in their use.

The program is funded by a multiyear grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Joshi said.

Three suburban police chiefs who participated in a pilot of the project spoke at the news conference about how pervasive opioids are in some areas. Maywood police Chief Vladimir Talley said his ZIP code 60153, which also includes Broadview, has one of suburban Cook County's highest mortality rates in opioid overdoses. His officers have deployed naloxone at least 42 times, often on a weekly basis, he said.

"At one point, the entire length of 159th Street was nicknamed the Heroin Highway," Markham police Chief Terry White said. "At its height, we were seeing two to three deaths by overdose every month. One death is too many."



# Chicago Hospitals Prepare For Distribution After COVID-19 Pfizer Vaccine Approved For Emergency Use

*Charlie De Mar*

*December 11, 2020*

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/11/chicago-hospitals-prepare-for-distribution-after-covid-19-pfizer-vaccine-approved-for-emergency-use/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — At Cook County Health they surveyed staff and say there is a high degree of acceptance of health workers who will step in and take the vaccine.

The conversation nationally and in Chicago has shifted from slowing the spread to a vaccine.

“I absolutely plan on getting vaccinated,” said Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious disease physician with Cook County Health. “I’m looking forward to it.”

Huhn is responsible for coordinating the vaccine rollout for the hospital.

“Once the vaccine lands at our front door, we would anticipate that that within probably three days will be ready to launch our vaccination program for first tier one employees, those healthcare workers on the front lines,” he said.

Healthcare workers who work directly with COVID patients will be among the first in line to get vaccinated.

At Rush University Medical Center the plan initially is to vaccinate 1,000 health care workers a day in newly constructed pods in the hospital lobby. Doctors, nurses, techs and med students will administer the shots.

Each vial contains five doses.

“This is surreal to me. We’ve been doing this for months sort of trudging along,” said Rush emergency room doctor Meetah Shah.

Back at Stroger Huhn said they are ready, but the former CDC outbreak investigator knows with an operation this big there could be challenges.

“We anticipate vaccinating hundreds a day,” he said. “So we would hope that it’s critical that we actually keep pace. This is a rather intricate process where where the vaccine needs to be maintained in ultra cold storage.,” he said.

With the vaccine likely coming in a matter of days, it’s now crucial enough people have confidence to roll up their sleeves.

“We did not cut corners. Although we moved fast, we really ensure this vaccine is safe,” Huhn said.



# COVID-19 Vaccine: With Distribution Soon To Begin For Frontline Health Care Workers, Push Launched In Chicago To Reassure Public It Is Safe

Steven Graves

December 12, 2020

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/12/covid-19-vaccine-with-distribution-soon-to-begin-for-frontline-health-care-workers-push-launched-in-chicago-to-reassure-public-it-is-safe/>

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine was one day out from distribution late Saturday, and Chicago is slated to get [23,000 doses to start](#).

[Frontline workers](#) are eager to [get the shots](#) – some of them as early as Monday. Late Saturday, CBS 2's Steven Graves spoke to community leaders anxiously awaiting their turn.

We know doctors and nurses are ready. And while it is unclear when the vaccine will get to the general public, there is groundwork happening now to make sure people understand the treatment.

On Saturday, Chicago-based United Airlines confirmed it is the first commercial airline to fly the Pfizer [COVID-19 vaccine](#). The company joined FedEx and UPS in the massive distribution of roughly 3 million doses nationwide.

[Health care workers](#) and the elderly are first in line. Doctors in and around Chicago will get the vaccine as soon as Monday or Tuesday.

Health professionals continue to praise the science and speediness behind the vaccine. On Saturday, they reassured the public it is safe.

"I will absolutely take this COVID-19 vaccine, pending availability and distribution, because I have complete trust and confidence in the FDA's career staff's evaluation," said Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn.

"A lot of people have been skeptical about the vaccine," said Enrique Mendoza, who works at a nonprofit in Chicago educating people on the Southwest Side about the vaccine.

His own mom is on that list.

"At this time, she feels like she really doesn't want to take it," said Mendoza, vice president of The Southwest Collective.

His family and the heavily Latinx community he lives in remain devastated by COVID. The local ZIP code has one of the highest case counts in the city.

"We don't have a lot of health care infrastructure," Mendoza said. "Health literacy is something that's not that common, so it's really about building that up and building that trust in the community."

His group plans to give out health care fact sheets from the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Education efforts even prompted Mayor Lori Lightfoot to take to Twitter Saturday. She posted emotional video imploring Chicagoans to trust science.

“I will get it, and I hope and encourage you all to do likewise,” said nurse Rhodelyn Bedford of Stroger Hospital of Cook County.

Currently, [the city has a web page dedicated strictly to education](#). But masking and social distancing remain the suggestion for the near-term future.

It is also recommended that people with significant allergies talk to their doctor before taking the vaccine.

The City of Chicago plans to monitor people’s side effects through text message.



# Chicago healthcare professionals prepare for arrival of COVID-19 vaccine

By [Mike Krauser](#)

December 12, 2020

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/local-healthcare-pros-prep-for-covid-19-vaccines-arrival>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** — As coronavirus cases steadily climb in Chicago, local healthcare professionals join those across the country preparing for the COVID-19 vaccine that's on the way.

Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious disease physician with Cook County Health, is responsible for coordinating the vaccine rollout at Stroger Hospital and told CBS 2 those who work directly with COVID-19 patients will be at the front of the line.

“We anticipate vaccinating hundreds a day. So we would hope that — it's critical that we actually keep pace. This is a rather intricate type of process where the vaccine needs to be maintained in ultra-cold storage,” Dr. Huhn said.

At Rush University Medical Center, they're planning to vaccinate a thousand healthcare workers a day in newly constructed pods in the hospital lobby.

Dr. Meetah P. Shah, who works at Rush, said it feels surreal having the vaccine after months and months of caring for coronavirus patients.

In the meantime, the coronavirus cases in Illinois continue to accumulate.

On Saturday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 8,737 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, including 127 additional virus-related deaths. Since the pandemic's start, Illinois has a total of 841,688 cases, including 14,176 deaths.

IDPH has reported that 126,888 coronavirus tests have been administered over the past 24 hours, bringing the total administered tests to 11,713,184.



## **With Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccines On The Road, A Look At How They Will Be Distributed In Illinois, Indiana**

By [Steven Graves](#)

December 13, 2020

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/13/with-pfizer-covid-19-vaccines-on-the-road-a-look-at-how-they-will-be-distributed-in-illinois-indiana/>

The first doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine were headed to hospitals late Sunday, and were poised to be administered to frontline health care workers within hours.

The precious cargo started leaving [Pfizer's facility in Michigan](#) early Sunday. It is a logistical challenge that involves factory workers, truck drivers, and even airline pilots.

On Sunday night, CBS 2's Steven Graves broke down what the distribution in our region will look like.

The vaccine is a long time coming for health care workers. Hospitals like Stroger Hospital of Cook County and many others will get the vaccine first.

Illinois will receive more than 100,000 doses in the first run, while Indiana will receive a little more than half that many.

COVID-19 cases and deaths are still major concerns in both states.

Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine shipped out in frigid temperatures from the drug company's Kalamazoo, Michigan site on Sunday. Truckloads of it were escorted by police.

Planes also filled up.

It is a portion of the approximately 3 million initial doses headed out nationwide. [Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker said](#) the state will get 109,000.

Counties with the highest COVID-19 death rates will take priority. Leaders in each area will determine allocations.

Chicago will manage its own supply and initially get [23,000 doses](#). Nine hospitals will store and distribute the vaccine.

Vaccination sites for [health care workers](#) – the first to receive the treatment – could look much like the makeshift pods now set up at Rush University Medical Center for the purpose. The plan is to vaccinate 1,000 staffers a day.

At Stroger, the plan is to vaccinate hundreds a day. In DuPage County, some doctors expect to get the shot as early as Tuesday.

Indiana is slated to get about 55,000 doses, at a time when the state is experiencing record hospitalizations.

"We do believe when nurses get a vaccines themselves, they role model the behavior we feel will set us on the path to attain widespread vaccination," said Emily Sego, President of the Indiana State Nurses Association.

Northwest Indiana's Munster Community Hospital is slated to serve as a pre-positioning site.

Right now, there is no mandate for people to take the vaccine. People are also encouraged to stay socially distant and mask up.



Here's What We Know About the COVID-19 Vaccine So Far

By [Becca Wood](#)

Published December 13, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/heres-what-we-know-about-the-covid-19-vaccine-so-far/2393570/>

As shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine are set to hit cities across the U.S. this week, the Chicago-area prepares for its initial doses.

Over the past couple weeks, health experts have attempted to explain how the coronavirus vaccine will work and debunk any myths attached to its usage.

Here's what we know so far about the COVID-19 vaccine:

When Can I Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine in the Chicago Area?

After being approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency use last week, the Centers for Disease and Control made recommendations for coronavirus vaccination best practices.

The FDA said the first doses of the vaccine should go to healthcare workers, specifically people working with coronavirus patients, and people at long-term care facilities.

In Chicago, first in line will be "healthcare workers who treat COVID patients or conduct procedures that put them at high risk for COVID-19 spread" at all 34 hospitals in the city, according to Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady.

CDPH anticipates receiving [23,000 doses in the initial batch, though reports of those numbers have fluctuated](#). Health officials say additional doses of the vaccine will arrive in Chicago every week thereafter, though exactly how many is unclear.

After frontline health care workers, the city says priority will be given to: residents and staff at long-term care facilities, workers in essential and critical industries including emergency services personnel, people at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions and people ages 65 and older.

According to the CDC, pregnant women and people under the age of 16 should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine until more testing has been done, which could take place as soon as January, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Dr. Anthony Fauci said.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike have reminded residents that the general public will not receive the vaccine for several months, but more details will become available over the next few weeks.

Illinois and Chicago officials explained that people will know when it is their turn based on a major upcoming messaging campaign and through working with employers and healthcare providers.

City officials said the goal is for all adults in Chicago to be vaccinated at no cost to the individual in 2021 through doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, health centers and other providers.

## Where Can I Get the Vaccine When It's Available to Me?

According to the IDPH website, hospitals will provide the COVID-19 vaccine to healthcare workers in the initial dose.

As the vaccine is able to be more widely distributed, several thousand providers will carry the vaccine from doctors' offices and retail pharmacies to hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

Ezike has also noted that she hopes the state can provide a vaccination process similar to testing where people can do drive-through vaccinations in communities' churches and hospitals.

## Will I Have Any Side Effects From Taking the Vaccine?

Health officials have warned of potential mild side effects with the coronavirus vaccine based on clinical studies, however they are likely signs of building protection.

Former FDA Chief Dr. Margaret Hamburg told CNBC that side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine are indications that the shots are helping build protection against the disease.

"You'll know when you get the vaccine, but that also tells you it's working and that your body is responding," added Hamburg.

Health experts have shared that [25-50% of the 75,000 patients involved in the Pfizer and Moderns trials experienced some side effects](#). These primarily included flu-like symptoms, such as:

- Pain, redness and swelling at the injection site
- Muscle soreness
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Loss of appetite
- Sweating
- Fever

Similar to all vaccines, the coronavirus vaccine has a low risk for allergic reactions. In Britain, [two individuals had an allergic reaction to the vaccine since vaccinations began](#) last Tuesday. According to reports, the two both have a history of allergies.

## Can I Get COVID-19 From the Vaccine?

No. Health experts have explained that the vaccine itself does not contain the live COVID-19 virus.

Arwady said people who take the vaccine cannot contract the coronavirus, but symptoms may temporarily look similar.

Dr. Sharon Welbel, director of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control for Cook County Health, said the vaccine is what is called an mRNA vaccine, or messenger RNA, relatively new technology that uses genetic material to provoke an immune response.

"The vaccine is a little snippet of the genetic code of the virus that causes COVID-19. It instructs our bodies how to create a protein that's specific to the virus and then we develop our own antibodies," Welbel said.

Typically, a vaccine puts a weakened or inactivated virus into our bodies to trigger an immune response, which then produces antibodies. Those antibodies are what ultimately protect us from getting infected if we ever encounter the real thing.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, mRNA vaccines "teach our cells how to make a protein—or even just a piece of a protein—that triggers an immune response inside our bodies."

Will the Vaccine Change My DNA?

No. According to the CDC, "mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein."

"mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept," the CDC stated. "This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease."

Mayo Clinic also said "injecting messenger RNA into your body will not interact or do anything to the DNA of your cells."

"Human cells break down and get rid of the messenger RNA soon after they have finished using the instructions," the clinic's website reads.

Was Vaccine Testing Too Rushed to Be Considered Safe?

Welbel said the vaccine approval process wasn't about being "rushed," but rather that it was given high priority.

Welbel said that "a lot of resources" were put into the vaccine's development, which helped to shorten the timeframe but that it "still went through the traditional phases of any trial."

Welbel's response was echoed by others in the medical field, including Mayo Clinic.

"This emergency situation warranted an emergency response. That does not mean the companies bypassed safety protocols or performed inadequate testing," the hospital system's website states.

Ezike also said she trusts in the vaccine's "development and approval," saying "what is known of the safety has been evaluated."

When Will Life Go Back to 'Normal?'

Health experts have attempted to address this question with initial data, but will not have a detailed answer until there is more information on the number of people that can be vaccinated over the next year.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar on Wednesday said [the country was still on track to have enough doses to vaccinate 20 million Americans](#) by the end of 2020 and 50 million by the end of January 2021.

"We remain confident that across our portfolio of multiple vaccines, we will have enough doses for any American who wants a vaccine by the second quarter of 2021."

Fauci said last week that the United States could get the coronavirus pandemic under control by the "back half of 2021" if enough people are vaccinated against the disease in the spring once doses are widely available.

That would mean businesses could likely welcome employees back to the office, restaurants could open indoors at full capacity and sporting events and theater performances could resume safely if enough people are vaccinated against Covid-19, Fauci told [The Wall Street Journal's CEO Council summit](#).

"I think we can get there towards the second half of 2021 if we implement the vaccine program properly and aggressively," Fauci said.

The infectious diseases expert, who will remain in a similar position next year as an advisor to President-elect Joe Biden on Covid, said it's likely there should be enough doses of vaccine available for all Americans beginning in late March and early April.



## State health officials report 7,216 new COVID-19 cases, 115 additional deaths

By [WBBM Newsradio Staff Report](#)

December 13, 2020

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/idph-7-216new-covid-19-cases-115-additional-deaths>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** — The Illinois Department of Public Health on Sunday reported 7,216 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, including 115 additional virus-related deaths. Since the pandemic's start, Illinois has a total of 848,904 cases, including 14,291 deaths.

A man and a woman, each in their 20s, are among the 28 people who reportedly died from the virus on Sunday in Cook County.

IDPH has reported that 63,648 coronavirus tests have been administered over the past 24 hours, bringing the total administered tests to 1,776,832.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from Dec. 6 through Dec. 12 is 9.1%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from Dec. 6 through Dec. 12 is 10.6%.

COVID vaccine won't guarantee return to normal for 'many months': Doctor

Chicago area healthcare professionals are preparing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which is on its way.

"We anticipate vaccinating hundreds a day. So we would hope that — it's critical that we actually keep pace. This is a rather intricate type of process where the vaccine needs to be maintained in ultra-cold storage," Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious disease physician with Cook County Health who is responsible for coordinating the vaccine rollout at Stroger Hospital, told CBS 2.

The Pfizer vaccine was approved late Friday and rolled out of a manufacturing facility in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on Sunday.

The vaccines, which were packed in dry ice, will go from the Pfizer manufacturing facility to UPS and FedEx hubs before heading out to 636 locations nationwide this week. The first shipments were set to arrive at 145 distribution centers Monday and another 425 sites on Tuesday. The final 66 sites will receive it on Wednesday.

COVID-19 vaccine shipments begin in historic US effort

About 3 million doses are expected to be delivered initially, with priority going to health care workers and nursing home residents—those among the most at risk of catching the virus, which has infected about 16 million people and killed nearly 300,000 in the U.S.

Illinois will receive 109,000 doses of the vaccine, with 23,000 going to the city of Chicago and 86,000 for the rest of the state.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he expects the first doses of the vaccine to arrive in the state this week with the first phase of distribution possibly occurring from Dec. 20 through Dec. 26.



COVID-19 vaccine arrival delayed at Edward Hospital in Naperville

By [Diane Pathieu](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/vaccine-arrival-delayed-at-suburban-hospital-/8791805/>

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (WLS) -- Edward Hospital in Naperville was expecting the COVID-19 vaccine to arrive Tuesday, but they just received word that there will be a delay.

Edward Hospital said that their COVID-19 vaccines were delayed Tuesday morning.

The hospital is expected to receive the shipment on Wednesday, according to Keith Hartenberger, an Edward Hospital spokesman.

The 1,950 doses of the vaccine were slated to arrive Tuesday morning.

It is not immediately clear why the vaccines were delayed, Hartenberger said.

Across the suburbs in Cook County, 20,000 doses of Pfizer's newly authorized vaccine are still expected to arrive Tuesday.

The Cook County Health Department covers 15 hospitals in the suburbs.

Cook County health officials said doses will be doled out to suburban hospitals based on their number of essential personnel and how badly COVID-19 has impacted their staff and patients.

"It is my sincere hope that today marks the moment, where we flag Tuesday December 14th, as the beginning of the end," said Toni Preckwinkle.

Lake County's health department was waiting Tuesday on their first shipment of 6,000 doses that will be distributed to six hospitals.



## It Will Take Time Before Average Person Gets COVID-19 Vaccine, Public Health Experts Emphasize

By [Jeremy Ross](#)

December 14, 2020 at 7:20 pm

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/14/it-will-take-time-before-average-person-gets-covid-19-vaccine-public-health-experts-emphasize/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — The effort to protect [health care workers](#) with a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) is starting – but what about average workers; the general population composed of millions of others in Illinois and specifically Chicago?

As CBS 2’s Jeremy Ross reported, the answer from Lindsey Salvatelli of the McHenry Department of Health was, “We all need to be patient with it.”

While hospitals are preparing for their own workers to be vaccinated, now is the time for the average person to talk with their doctor and see if they have any allergies or issues that could complicate getting a shot – because it will be a while before the general public can get one at all.

[The vaccine](#) took months to develop, and it will be months more before the average person will be able to receive a shot with its protections.

“It’s not the immediate answer that I think everyone’s looking for for that return to normalcy,” Salvatelli said. “It will take some time.”

Salvatelli described a line of people waiting for COVID vaccines – beginning with health care workers, certain seniors, and eventually essential workers. But there is no formal registration or word on when much of the population could be next, due to demand for the vaccine far outpacing supply.

“With the availability now, it’s going to be difficult to say,” she said.

While there is no line to get in, Salvatelli there is a way to be notified when the line starts.

On Monday, the county launches its E-Notify Program. Residents can sign up to be alerted – whenever the general vaccination process begins.

“We want people to know what’s going on with it,” Salvatelli said.

McHenry County is far from alone in not having an immediate timeline. Cook County health officials on Monday said there is not yet a registration system in place because the focus now is on hospitals.

In a news conference, Cook County officials echoed what Kane, DuPage, McHenry, and Will counties told CBS 2. There is no process yet for an average individual to sign up for immunizations.

In Lake County, that is not the case. Tens of thousands have signed up there to be notified when they can be vaccinated through a web registration and screening process.

Deerfield-based Walgreens told us vaccines will be available at their more than 9,000 stores sometime in 2021.

“It’s going to be quite some time,” Salvatelli said.

The bottom line for most is that there is no formal process to register for yet. But you can check with your city or county website or doctor to get notified on vaccine rollout updates for the general public.

And while most counties are being vague about when everyday healthy people could get a shot, other doctors – as well as Lake County – estimated it would be sometime this spring.

And anytime another vaccine is approved, the chances of that happening get greater, because that is when supply can get closer to demand.



## **COVID vaccine Illinois: Chicago hospitals awaiting 1st doses of COVID vaccine**

By [Jessica D'Onofrio](#), [Michelle Gallardo](#) and [Liz Nagy](#)

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/chicago-covid-vaccine-19-for-covid-19/8765086/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- The first shipments of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine have arrived in Illinois. Deliveries are expected at various hospitals and other cold-storage facilities between now and Wednesday.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot tweeted photos of the vaccine's arrival in Chicago late Monday night. The first healthcare workers in the city of Chicago will get vaccinated Tuesday morning at Loretto Hospital on the city's West Side, officials said.

The 50 Illinois counties with the highest COVID death rates per capita are the priority in this initial vaccine shipment. That includes suburban Cook County, where the first batch of more than 20,000 doses is expected to arrive this week.

"It is my sincere hope that today marks the moment where we flag Tuesday, December 14th as the beginning of the end," Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle said.

For now, it appears the first vaccinations will take place both in suburban Cook County and at the county's two public hospitals on Wednesday. The vaccines will be split between 15 hospitals and will go to health care workers and people living in assisted care facilities.

Cook County health officials said doses will be doled out to suburban hospitals based on their number of essential personnel and how badly COVID-19 has impacted their staff and patients.

"We need to have as many people vaccinated as possible," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Cook County Dept. of Public Health. "70% is the absolute minimum."

Vaccine shipments are going directly to the hospitals that will be administering them, but also to the county's ultra-cold storage facilities, where they will hold the surplus until hospitals are ready for it.

Nearly 3,000 people have died from COVID-19 in suburban Cook County alone. With a population of around 2.5 million - many of them lower income - developing a plan to deploy to the community at large is something the health department is already working on, even as for now, they are focused on first inoculating as many of their health care workers as are willing.

"We'll give 20,000 workers their first dose. It's not enough to cover 1a. It's not enough to cover all of the health care workers in the hospitals in 1a," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, with Cook County Dept. of Public Health. "We anticipate it's going to be at least 4 to 5 weeks before we get through that first hospital-based wave."

And, while there is no concrete timeline for when vaccinations will be available for the community at large in Cook County, health officials say their priority is getting to those lower income areas, and identifying potential vaccination sites that are of easy access to most people.

"Whether it's the YMCA or whether it's the local school because they understand that it is the center of the community...we are in the process of identifying certain places where we would be able to set up vaccination sites especially on the south and west suburban area," Dr. Rubin said.

In addition to those 20,000 doses, both of the county hospitals located in Chicago - Stroger and Provident - will receive 1,000 doses this week. Vaccinations of employees there start Wednesday and conclude on December 24.

The health department in north suburban Lake County is waiting on their first shipment of 6,000 doses that will be distributed to six hospitals.

"What we're doing is recommending to them that they really concentrate on those individuals that work in the ICUs: individuals like doctors and nurses, medical assistants," said Mark Pfister, executive director of the Lake County Health Dept.

The goal is to get those workers inoculated within five days. That won't cover even every healthcare employee, but more shipments should be arriving every week.

Lake County is already preparing for when vaccines are available to the general public, perhaps by early spring.

"We've had over 100,000 people already register on our website to get the vaccine, so that is great news for us," Pfister said. "Our goal is 80% of our population, which is 560,000 people."

Pfizer began shipping the vaccine from its Kalamazoo, Michigan plant Sunday morning, less than 48 hours after the FDA granted emergency use authorization.

"I'm moved by the impact of science, I'm moved by the impact that we can have for patients around the world," Mike McDermott, President of Global Supply at Pfizer. "I think this vaccine today gives us the promise and the light at the end of that tunnel."

The precious cargo was then loaded onto planes in Grand Rapids for nationwide transport. Tracking and security of the vaccine is at the top of mind. UPS planes equipped with special ultra-cold freezers will take the vaccines across the country.

In the air, the FAA is giving priority clearance for planes carrying the shipments. On the road, the shipments have escorts.

"Pfizer is putting a tracking device on every package, but FedEx also puts their own. So [there is] 2-3 layers of tracking that is taking place," said Northwestern University Logistics Systems Expert Hani Mahmassani. "You want to know where everything is and you want to be able to account for it."

Mahmassani said there will be unique challenges ahead for the distribution, stressing that problems could come post shipment.

"The local handling aspect is where I am much more concerned about," Mahmassani said. "The more hands that are touching it, the more things that can go wrong."

Federal officials said the shipments are being staggered, arriving at 145 distribution centers Monday, 425 on Tuesday and the remaining 66 on Wednesday.

Once out of the shipping container, every second counts. Within 90 seconds the vaccine needs to be moved into those special freezers or put in a standard refrigerator to thaw, where it can stay for up to five days.

When it's out of the refrigerator, a vial is quickly diluted into five doses that must be injected within two hours or it spoils. The first doses are expected to be administered Monday.

Mahmassani said he's cautiously optimistic.

"It seems to be going according to plan at this point," he said.

With health care workers and those in nursing homes at the top of the list to receive vaccinations, it may be several months before they're available to the community at large. Much remains to be worked out about how that will happen.

Some are already pushing for city and state officials to widen their vaccination campaign beyond health care facilities, worried that in a city where 3 out of 10 people don't have access to a vehicle, many might be left out in the cold.

"We have DFSS facilities. We have warming centers. We have park districts, we have churches, we have the ability to make sure that everybody in the City of Chicago has access to vaccination," said Ald. Byron Lopez.

Meanwhile, the city's Department of Public Health remains deliberately vague, saying they are prepared to accept, store and distribute vaccine doses when they arrive, but not saying exactly when that will happen --only that it will be in the next couple of days.

The FDA reiterated that it has sees the potential benefits of the vaccine outweighing potential risks.

An independent panel also advised the CDC and recommended that people 16 and older be vaccinated.

Experts said they still do not know if someone who is vaccinated can still spread COVID-19.

# CRAIN'S

## CHICAGO BUSINESS.

### **Will employers require workers to get vaccinated?**

It's the latest COVID conundrum. Either choice carries risk, including potential legal exposure.

[STEPHANIE GOLDBERG](#)

December 14, 2020 07:03 PM

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/will-employers-require-workers-get-vaccinated>

While the public anxiously awaits widespread availability of coronavirus vaccines, employers view the rollout with some trepidation.

The arrival of vaccines presents companies with a thorny dilemma: whether or not to require that employees get vaccinated before returning to the workplace.

Either choice carries risk. While a mandate could help companies more quickly resume business as usual, it also could expose them to lawsuits from employees who object to the vaccine for various reasons or those who have adverse reactions to the shot. On the other hand, employers that don't have a mandate could be liable in the case of a workplace outbreak.

Companies aren't keen to discuss the issue; few responded to inquiries from Crain's. Those that did say they aren't requiring vaccinations. Even companies involved in the vaccine rollout are holding off on mandates, at least for now.

"We will offer COVID-19 vaccines to pharmacy and store team members as they become eligible to receive the vaccine, in accordance with federal, state and CDC guidance," says a Walgreens spokeswoman. "We will not require team members to get vaccinated at this time."

A big concern for companies is the lack of long-term data on potential side effects of a vaccine that was okayed in record time under the U.S. Food & Drug Administration's "emergency use authorization" process.

"While under Emergency Use Authorization, the vaccine remains voluntary," says a spokeswoman for Amita Health, which operates 19 Chicago-area hospitals.

If hospital workers aren't required to get the vaccine, that could be enough to deter employers in other industries, says Michael LeRoy, a labor law expert at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"We're in uncharted territory," LeRoy says.

Still, Brian Weinthal, a labor attorney in Chicago, says he's fielded a dozen or so calls from companies—most of which are in manufacturing—asking if they can require workers to get vaccinated. The answer is yes, with the exception of workers who can't get the shots due to disabilities or religious beliefs, Weinthal says. Whether employers should impose a mandate is another story.

"From a business continuity standpoint," it makes sense to require that workers get vaccinated against the novel coronavirus, says Dr. David Zieg, a partner and clinical services leader at the Mercer consulting firm. In addition to protecting workers from getting sick, vaccination also shields employers from potentially having to cover medical costs associated with serious cases of the virus.

"But the vaccine was moved through (the federal authorization process) very quickly, and there's a lot of individual skepticism," Zieg adds, noting that a mandate could plunge companies into the political controversy surrounding the vaccine and spark resentment among employees who belong to ethnic groups that have expressed serious qualms about the shot.

While employers in industries where social distancing is difficult—food processing, for example—might be tempted to require vaccination, “you have to consider the potential impacts,” Zieg says. “What if 40 percent of your employees refuse to take the vaccination? Do you lay off 40 percent of your people?”

Employment law experts say the more prudent course of action at this early stage is to encourage vaccination by educating workers about the safety and efficacy of authorized COVID-19 vaccines, covering the cost of the shots and even offering them on-site. All the while, companies should maintain other protective measures like social distancing and mask-wearing, they say.

“The masks coming off prematurely is one of the big dangers we have to worry about in the workplace,” says Dr. Marc Sala, assistant professor of medicine in pulmonary and critical care at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

While the vaccine is intended to prevent people from getting sick, it's not known whether individuals who get vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus.

Without data about any potential long-term effects, Advocate Aurora Health is not requiring its workers to get the vaccine, Dr. Robert Citronberg, executive medical director of infectious disease and prevention at the 26-hospital network, recently told reporters.

For now, Advocate Aurora will “strongly encourage” workers to get vaccinated and is “optimistic that the vast majority of our team members will take the vaccine over the next few months,” Citronberg said, noting that the policy may change in the future as more information becomes available.

Other large local hospital chains, including Northwestern Medicine, the Rush University System for Health and NorthShore University HealthSystem, have taken the same approach. It's a departure for hospitals, which require workers to get flu shots every year.

Despite making the vaccines voluntary, Cook County Health and Loyola Medicine say the majority of workers (75 percent and 70 percent, respectively) who so far have responded to employee surveys indicated they plan to get the shots.

“Whatever an employers’ strategy is today, they should revisit that in a few months” when more information is available, LeRoy says. He recommends an “agile” approach that responds to changing conditions such as local infection rates. Employers could also boost vaccinations through policies such as scheduling preferences for workers who get immunized.

Though employers likely won't be able to get doses for their workers for several months, sources recommend surveying employees—as many hospital chains have—to get a sense of whether they're likely to get vaccinated when shots become available.



**Watch: First COVID vaccines are given in Chicago**

The historic and highly anticipated event came just days after federal regulators authorized Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use.

[STEPHANIE GOLDBERG](#)

[December 14, 2020](#)

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/watch-first-covid-vaccines-are-given-chicago>

**Dec. 15 update:** At Loretto Hospital this morning, the first COVID-19 vaccines were given to five front-line health care workers. The historic and highly anticipated event came just days after federal regulators authorized Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use.

And Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike were on hand for initial COVID vaccinations to five people at OSF St. Francis in Peoria.

More vaccines will be on the way, Ezike said. "Patience will be the name of the game, but we will get this out," she said. "This will be an extended process, even though this is the last mile."

About 20,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine are arriving in suburban Cook County this week. The doses are being divvied up among 15 hospitals, many of which expect to start inoculating workers Dec. 16, Cook County health officials said today.

And tomorrow in Chicago, Loretto Hospital is expected to dole out the first doses of the vaccine, a source affiliated with the West Side safety-net facility told Crain's.

Five front-line health care workers—two physicians, two registered nurses and one respiratory therapist—are expected to be the first to get the highly anticipated shots, the source said.

Loretto treats large numbers of Black and Brown patients in Austin, one of the neighborhoods hit hardest by the pandemic. In addition to offering COVID tests, the hospital is in the midst of enrolling patients in clinical trials to study new COVID vaccine candidates, with the goal of ensuring minorities are represented. People of color historically have been underrepresented in such studies.

Without unlimited cold storage, local hospitals will need to administer the Pfizer vaccines they get within five days, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health. The department will store the additional initial doses, and future shipments are expected to be sent directly to the hospitals as needed.

Israel Rocha, CEO of two-hospital Cook County Health, said the public system expects to start vaccinating a small number of workers Dec. 16. About 1,000 employees who "perform aerosolizing generating procedures," as well as those who have "high contact with COVID-19 staff," will be included in the first phase of the rollout, he said. The phase is expected to be complete by Dec. 24.

While CCH workers are not required to get vaccinated, the majority of employees who have responded to a survey indicated that they intend to get the shots, Rocha said.

After getting the vaccines, individuals will be observed for at least 15 minutes to manage any potential allergic reactions and thereafter for any side effects, said Dr. Kiran Joshi, who co-leads the Cook County Department of Public Health. Those who experience adverse reactions will be entitled to a "COVID day" off.

Health care workers who get their first shots this week will return for their second doses in a few weeks and are expected to be fully protected from the virus a couple weeks after that.

While the vaccines are intended to prevent people from getting sick, it's not known whether individuals who get vaccinated can still carry and transmit the virus.

The vaccine was allocated to local hospitals based on the number of essential personnel and the impact of COVID-19 on the facilities, Joshi said.

Long-term care facility residents and staff are expected to get access to vaccines within the next two weeks, he added, followed by unaffiliated health care workers (such as those working in emergency medical services) and essential workers, including first responders and people who work for public utilities. Next up would be high-risk adults.

Meanwhile, the first shipment of Pfizer vaccines arrived today at the Illinois Strategic National Stockpile. Gov. J.B. Pritzker said during a press briefing today that the state got nearly half of the 109,000 total doses it's expecting in the first phase of the rollout, and additional shipments are expected in the coming weeks.

The federal government shipped doses directly to the city of Chicago and four large public health departments in Illinois: Cook, Lake, Madison and St. Clair counties, Pritzker said.

"Today marks a momentous occasion—not just this year, but in American history," Pritzker said in a statement. "Eleven months after scientists the world over first got their hands on the genetic sequence of this virus—and we are seeing the beginning of the end of this pandemic."

Pritzker said that after Moderna's vaccine is authorized, there should be enough doses to supply all the skilled-nursing facilities that have signed up to get vaccines.

Hospitals are expected to stagger vaccine administration by unit in case large numbers of workers experience side effects that require them to stay home for a day or two, Dr. Ngozi Ezike said during today's press briefing.

# CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

## Health officials outline coronavirus vaccine plan for suburban Cook County

The first batch of COVID-19 vaccine — about 20,000 doses — will go to 15 hospitals, according to county officials.

By [Sam Charles](#)

Dec 14, 2020, 3:03pm CST

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2020/12/14/22174938/coronavirus-vaccine-cook-county-health-officials-outline-distribution-plan-covid-19-shots>

As the new COVID-19 vaccine is distributed across the country, officials in the Cook County Department of Health on Monday detailed how initial doses will be doled out to suburban county residents.

“Health equity is at the core of our organization’s mission,” Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. “We are confident in our ability to develop a comprehensive plan to bring the vaccines to our employees, our patients and the community.”

The first batch of vaccine — about 20,000 doses — will go to 15 hospitals, according to county officials. Each hospital will decide how to allocate those doses among employees who are at the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19. Additional doses are expected to be delivered weekly.

The vaccine requires two doses to take effect, and the county health officials aim to have the first round completed by Dec. 24.

And while the vaccine is not mandatory for county health employees, Rocha said, the overwhelming majority of employees have signaled they would receive it.

After frontline health care workers, staff and residents of long-term care facilities and emergency medical professionals would be next in line, according to the county.

First responders, teachers, utility and transportation workers and high-risk adults would be the next groups eligible for the vaccine. Once the vaccine is more widely available to suburban Cook County residents, it will be available at hospitals, pharmacies, Cook County Health sites, as well as mobile and drive-thru sites.

“We want everybody to have the opportunity and have equitable access to the vaccine,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, one of the developers of the county’s vaccine rollout plan. “We want everybody to be vaccinated, ultimately.”

Myths and misinformation pose some of the largest challenges in maximizing the vaccine’s effectiveness, Rubin said.

“It’s a tough road to dispel those myths about the vaccine or to, at least, decrease peoples’ anxiety about it,” she said.

Asked how the county plans to confront misinformation about the vaccine, Rubin said county health officials will push out their message via social media but also partner with existing health organizations to quell fears and ease concerns.

“The idea is to work on the ground with partners that serve and are part of the communities throughout the suburban area to be resources and vaccine champions for providing appropriate information,” Rubin said.

Nurturing and encouraging public buy-in is paramount, Rocha added.

“Success of the overall effort requires more than public health training and preparedness,” he said. “It requires us, collectively, to build confidence among those same employees, patients and communities that this vaccine is safe.”

## Hope at a historic moment: First COVID-19 vaccinations scheduled to be given in Illinois on Tuesday

By DAN PETRELLA, SARAH FREISHTAT, STACY ST. CLAIR, LISA SCHENCKER, LISA DONOVAN, GREGORY PRATT and JAMIE MUNKS

DEC 14, 2020 AT 8:13 PM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-chicago-vaccinations-20201215-kdcvoosh6najxonropu26w2ipm-story.html>

The first COVID-19 vaccinations in Illinois are scheduled to be administered Tuesday, bringing a sense of hope along with the most significant action yet to blunt a pandemic that has killed more than 14,000 people statewide.

Amid a massive distribution effort that will take several days to reach medical centers in more than four dozen counties, Chicago selected a hospital in one of its hardest-hit neighborhoods to administer the city's first shot. The vaccination will be given Tuesday morning at Loretto Hospital in the Austin community, where the death rate dwarfs the citywide average.

"The Loretto Hospital and our colleagues at safety net hospitals across the city have been in the trenches of Chicago's battle against COVID since day one," Loretto President and CEO George Miller said. "We are honored to play a part in this historic moment, on behalf of all the front-line health care providers, our heroes, and our brothers and sisters so disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. We look forward to turning this corner, together."

Vaccinations also were slated to begin at a hospital in Peoria. Vaccinations planned Tuesday for Edward Hospital in Naperville and Elmhurst Hospital were postponed at least until Wednesday.

At Edward, priority access will be given to front-line workers caring for patients with COVID-19, as well as emergency department employees. Clinical and nonclinical staff members also will be able to receive doses in this early round.

"I didn't think they would be able to do it as quickly as they did, but we didn't have the time to wait," emergency room doctor Scott Yilk said. "I'm very happy to be among those getting the first shot."

On Monday, the state received 43,000 doses of [the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine](#) that federal regulators approved for emergency use late last week, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office. The initial shots will be reserved for health care workers in 50 counties that have seen the highest per capita death rates from COVID-19.

Pritzker's press office released a video of him watching with apparent elation as the doses were unloaded Monday from a UPS truck and then stored in ultracold freezers at the Illinois outpost of the Strategic National Stockpile. The administration did not allow reporters inside the warehouse, which is being guarded by Illinois State Police to protect the highly coveted shipment.

"Eleven months after scientists the world over first got their hands on the genetic sequence of this virus — and we are seeing the beginning of the end of this pandemic," Pritzker said later during his daily news conference. "May we all take a moment to feel hope."

Illinois expects to receive 100,000 doses over the next few days, with hundreds of thousands of additional doses in the coming weeks. The shipments are part of the [largest vaccination campaign in U.S. history](#), an effort to start beating back a pandemic has killed 1.6 million people and sickened 71 million people worldwide.

Hospitals in other parts of the country, including New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, began administering the shot to staff members Monday, raising questions about the speed with which Illinois is distributing its first allotment. Some Chicago-area hospitals told the Tribune they may not begin vaccinating personnel until Wednesday or Thursday.

The vaccines were shipped last weekend from the Pfizer manufacturing plant just a few hours away in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and flown out to other parts of the country through O'Hare International Airport.

During his press briefing, Pritzker said some hospitals across the country received direct shipments of the vaccine and were able to get them into staff members' arms quickly. Chicago — like other major metropolitan areas — also received a direct shipment, but the city's first vaccination isn't slated to take place until Tuesday morning.

Though the state has practiced its distribution plan for weeks, it still has the arduous task of divvying its allotment among the 50 counties slated to receive initial doses, the governor said.

"We have to receive it here and split it up into (dozens of) different packages to go to those public health departments," he said.

Chicago public health officials on Monday selected Loretto Hospital, a 122-bed medical facility, to administer the city's ceremonial first COVID-19 vaccination.

The community hospital, which treats all patients regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay, was chosen because of the care it has provided to neighborhoods hit hardest by the virus, sources familiar with the decision told the Tribune. City leaders hope the choice also allays concerns about the vaccine in the Black community, where the country's history of inhumane medical experiments such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study remains an unhealed wound.

In a recent Pew Research Center poll, more than half of African Americans nationwide said they would not get the vaccine.

Home to the first testing center on the West Side, [Loretto](#) has performed more than 18,000 COVID-19 tests, expanded an intensive care unit and created a 15-bed coronavirus ward to handle the onslaught of cases over the past 10 months.

Austin's main ZIP code has one of the city's highest death rates, with 1 in every 468 residents killed by the virus, according to data maintained by the Chicago Department of Public Health. The neighborhood death rate is about 62% higher than that of the entire city, a reflection of the deadly consequences that underserved Black communities have endured for generations.

The hospital is currently at 92% capacity, with more than half of its ICU beds open.

During an appearance Sunday on "Against the Grain" with Tio Hardiman and Raza Siddiqui on WCPT-AM 820, hospital CEO Miller said he understood the skepticism but insisted the vaccine was safe and necessary to achieve herd immunity. Without it, he said, Black Chicagoans likely would continue to die at a rate nearly twice that of white residents.

"We certainly understand and appreciate the history," Miller said in response to a caller who expressed doubts. "As a gatekeeper, we give that promise to you. At the Loretto Hospital — taking care of African American people, run by an African American CEO — we want to be sure you understand we're doing the best thing for our community."

Most counties will receive their allotment directly from the state, but health departments in Cook, Lake, Madison and St. Clair counties will receive direct shipments in the coming days and oversee distribution. Suburban Cook County expects 20,000 doses this week, which will go to workers at 15 hospitals.

Employees at Cook County Health's own hospitals, Stroger and Provident, may start receiving vaccines Wednesday, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. said. The department has identified about 1,000 workers who will get the vaccines first, based on their contact with COVID-19 patients and participation in aerosol-generating procedures.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said the state is working closely with hospitals across Illinois to make sure they track each dose from the time it arrives until it is injected into a patient's arm.

Those administering the vaccine "will log every single dose that's given and give all the information on every recipient: name, address, date of birth, ethnicity data," Ezike said. "All of that information has to be put in for every single person within 24 hours and uploaded into our system."

That will allow the state to see who has been vaccinated and where more outreach efforts might be needed to encourage more eligible people to participate, she said.

Hospitals also are being encouraged to stagger who receives the vaccine to make sure there aren't staff shortages in key areas if people who've received the shot need to take time off due to known side effects, such as headache and fatigue, Ezike said.

The state still awaits further guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on who should be included in the next round of vaccinations, including who would qualify as an essential worker.

Cook County health officials indicated EMS workers could be next, followed by essential employees such as first responders, corrections officers, education, transportation, food and agricultural workers. High-risk adults might then follow, though the exact order of vaccinations may depend on further recommendations expected from a CDC advisory committee in coming weeks.

When the vaccinations expand to larger swaths of the population in the coming months, suburban residents may receive shots in a variety of places, including doctor's offices, parking lots and churches, health officials said.

Cook County Health also plans to launch a public awareness and community engagement campaign, visiting churches, schools and businesses and holding town halls to answer questions about the vaccine and try to build confidence in it, Rocha said..

"The reluctance of many Americans to be vaccinated is understandable," Rocha said. "Our country has not always treated every American honestly and equitably, and we must recognize that," he said, noting that minority communities have borne the brunt of COVID-19.

A federal Food and Drug Administration advisory panel could recommend emergency use authorization Thursday to a second coronavirus vaccine, developed by Moderna. When the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine received the panel's stamp of approval last week, the FDA authorized it the next day.

If the Moderna vaccine follows a similar timeline, the first shipment could arrive in Illinois next week.

At that point, the state would begin setting aside a portion of its shipments for residents of long-term care facilities, who will be vaccinated through a federal program being run by Deerfield-based Walgreens and CVS, Pritzker said.

The much-anticipated vaccine arrived as Illinois reported 7,214 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, the lowest daily total since Nov. 30, when there were 6,190 cases reported following Thanksgiving weekend. The state has averaged 8,551 new cases per day over the past week, the lowest seven-day average since the week ending Nov. 7.

There have been 856,118 known cases statewide since the start of the pandemic.

The share of coronavirus cases out of all tests also continues to decline on a seven-day average. The statewide case positivity rate reached an average of 8.7% for the week ending Sunday, the lowest it's been since Nov. 3.

But the number of coronavirus deaths in the state remains high, even compared with the first wave of the pandemic in the spring.

The state recorded 103 fatalities Monday, marking seven straight days with more than 100 deaths for an average of 150 per day over that period. In all, Illinois has seen 14,394 deaths related to COVID-19 since March.

On Monday, the United States surpassed 300,000 total coronavirus deaths.

While state officials hailed the first vaccine shipment as a watershed moment, they continued to preach patience to the public. Most people are months away from being able to get vaccinated.

“I definitely look forward to the day when the vaccine is widely available to every single person in the state,” Ezike said. “Until that time, we still need to continue with our masking, avoiding crowds, watching our distance and washing our hands.”

# Chicago Tribune

## Parking lots, churches, pharmacies among places suburban Cook County residents will be able to receive COVID-19 vaccine

By LISA SCHENCKER

DEC 14, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-cook-county-vaccinations-20201214-zgqdqectgnfpbaftw455xqhw5u-story.html>

Residents of suburban Cook County will likely receive vaccines in a variety of places in the coming months, including from their own doctors and in parking lots and churches, county health leaders said Monday.

Suburban Cook County expects 20,000 doses this week, which will go to workers at 15 hospitals. Next, residents and staff of long-term care facilities will be vaccinated by Walgreens and CVS Health workers. Other health care workers, such as EMS workers, will then likely get the vaccine, followed by essential workers, including first responders, corrections officers, education, transportation, food and agricultural workers, said Dr. Kiran Joshi, colead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, during a news conference Monday.

High-risk adults might then follow, though the exact order of vaccinations may depend on further recommendations expected from a CDC advisory committee in coming weeks.

The Lake County Health Department [opened its own registration system for vaccines](#) last week. As part of that system, all Lake County residents are invited to register to be notified when it's their turn to receive vaccines. Lake County residents [can register online](#) by giving basic information about themselves and answering screening questions.

As of Monday afternoon, about 103,000 Lake County residents had registered through the system, said spokeswoman Hannah Goering.

Joshi said Cook County does not have its own registration system at this point. Once vaccines become available to those outside of health care and long-term care facilities, the county expects to work with health systems and other community partners to distribute the vaccines, he said.

It's likely that, eventually, many Cook County residents will be able to get the vaccines from their doctors, pharmacies or drive-thru clinics, said Dr. Rachel Rubin, health department colead.

The health department plans to work, in many cases, with community groups to set up vaccination sites in some of the hardest hit areas of suburban Cook County and places that may lack pharmacies, Rubin said.

Cook County Health also plans to launch a public awareness and community engagement campaign, visiting churches, schools, businesses and holding town halls to answer questions about the vaccine and try to build confidence in it, said Israel Rocha Jr., Cook County Health CEO.

"The reluctance of many Americans to be vaccinated is understandable," Rocha said.

"Our country has not always treated every American honestly and equitably, and we must recognize that," he said, noting that minority communities have borne the brunt of COVID-19.

Employees at Cook County Health's own hospitals, Stroger and Provident, may start receiving vaccines Wednesday, Rocha said. The system has identified about 1,000 workers who will get the vaccines first, based on their contact with COVID-19 patients and/or participation in aerosol-generating procedures.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization Friday to a COVID-19 vaccine produced by Pfizer. Because supplies of the vaccine will be limited, at first, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that the first vaccines go to health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities.

Many Chicago area hospitals expect to begin [vaccinating workers within the next couple of days](#), prioritizing employees who work with COVID-19 patients and in procedures that generate aerosols.



Cook County Health Officials Lay Out Plans for First Phase of COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout

**Published December 14, 2020**

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-officials-lay-out-plans-for-first-phase-of-covid-19-vaccine-rollout/2394430/>

Health officials in Cook County laid out their plans Monday for the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, saying that healthcare workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities will be among the first to receive the treatment.

The announcement was made during a press conference Monday, with officials saying that the county will begin administering the vaccine to eligible individuals this week.

“After a year that has presented unthinkable challenges to our residents, I’m grateful that the COVID-19 vaccine will become available in the coming weeks,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said in a statement. “As we look toward 2021, it is my hope that this vaccine, and Cook County’s plan to administer the vaccine, will provide renewed hope that we are a step closer to a sense of normalcy.”

County health officials announced that the first phase of the vaccine rollout will be limited to two categories of residents:

- Healthcare workers, particularly those who treat COVID patients
- Residents and staff at long-term care facilities

According to the county, hospitals will vaccinate their own employees as the treatment rolls out, and long-term care facilities are part of a federal program that will work with pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens, among others, to vaccinate residents and staff.

“We encourage all healthcare workers, staff and residents of long-term care facilities to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it’s available,” Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said.

Healthcare facilities are being encouraged to sign up for distribution of the vaccine, and the county has made information on that process available on its website.

As supply of vaccines increases, the county plans to make it available to all suburban Cook County residents who want to get it. The county will do some administration of the vaccine, but has also contracted with other companies and with pharmacies, and will make announcements on sites and other information on the administration of the vaccine when that info becomes available.

The county is also seeking to make sure that there is “equitable” distribution of the virus.

“We have watched minority communities suffer the brunt of this virus, the rate of illness and the rate of death,” Israel Rocha Jr., Cook County Health CEO, said. “There is nothing more important in healthcare than trust, and that important principle will be at the core of every effort to vaccinate our employees, our patients and our communities.”



Cook County Officials Expect to Get 20K Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine This Week

[Kristen Thometz](#) |

December 14, 2020 4:56 pm

<https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/14/cook-county-officials-expect-get-20k-doses-covid-19-vaccine-week>

As the first doses of a COVID-19 vaccine were being administered across the U.S. on Monday, Cook County officials outlined their plans for vaccinating 2.5 million suburban residents, starting with health care workers.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said she hopes it's a day people will remember.

"This has been an incredibly challenging year, and as the COVID-19 pandemic rages on it is my sincere hope that today marks the moment where we look back and flag this day, Dec. 14, as the beginning of the end," Preckwinkle said. "The end of the pandemic has taken too many of our friends, colleagues, family members and loved ones. By now we all know someone who has suffered from the disease or succumbed to it."

In suburban Cook County, there have been 151,761 confirmed cases of the coronavirus and 2,849 deaths as of Friday, the most recent date for available data, according to county officials.

Cook County officials said they expected to receive by Tuesday 20,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech. As with the [state's distribution plan](#), Cook County is taking a phased approach to COVID-19 vaccination, focusing its initial efforts on health care workers who are at the highest risk of exposure to the virus, along with long-term care facility residents and staff.

"The wonderful news is the efficacy demonstrated by this vaccine overall is 95% after two doses," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. People who receive both doses of a vaccine are considered to have achieved "full protection" two weeks after the second dose, according to Joshi. "Five weeks from first dose to full protection," he said.

The doses expected this week will be allocated to 15 suburban hospitals based on essential personnel and COVID-19 impact, according to officials, who said they expect to receive weekly shipments of the vaccine.

"The shipment and delivery of vaccine will not stem this pandemic immediately," said Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha. "It is a vaccination coupled with patience that will make the difference for all of us and that's what we encourage today."

While the initial doses will be reserved for health care workers, the county expects to begin vaccinating those in long-term care facilities within the next two to three weeks, according to Joshi.

County and state officials are awaiting guidance from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – the committee of medical and public health experts who develop vaccination recommendations – to determine the order in which other members of critical populations should be vaccinated. The committee is expected to meet at the end of the week to issue further guidance, according to Joshi.

Cook County officials have a goal of vaccinating 70% of suburban residents, which is the minimum percentage necessary to achieve herd immunity, according to Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. "We

need to have as many people vaccinated as possible,” she said, adding the county will build partnerships to help educate the public about the vaccine, address vaccine hesitancy and dispel any myths or misinformation.

Spreading myths and misinformation could lead to a loss of life, Rocha said. “We’re going to do everything possible to spread fact. ... We’ll be very, very committed to reach out to every group that has an influenceable community they can work with.”

Through the county’s contact tracing program, it has partnered with more than 30 community-based organizations, which officials intend to tap into to provide outreach about COVID-19 vaccines, according to Rubin.

“The Cook County Department of Public Health is committed to getting vaccine into the arms of all residents of the county, especially those most vulnerable and underserved,” said Rubin.

Officials said there are currently no plans to develop a vaccine registry for interested residents, as the Lake County Health Department has done, especially since it will likely be months before the vaccine will be widely available.



## First Coronavirus Vaccine Doses To Roll Out In Cook County

Lorraine Swanson, Patch Staff

Posted Mon, Dec 14, 2020

<https://patch.com/illinois/chicago/first-coronavirus-doses-roll-out-cook-county>

CHICAGO — On a day when new confirmed 7,214 COVID-19 cases and 103 deaths were announced, the first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine arrived Monday in the Chicago area.

"As COVID-19 rages on it is my sincere hope that today marks the moment, Dec. 14, as the day flagged as the beginning of the end of the pandemic," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Monday during a news conference. "May we never experience another year as marked by such grief and mourning as 2020."

Illinois has received about 43,000 doses at the [Illinois Strategic National Stockpile](#). Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a tweet. Chicago and local health departments in Cook, Lake, Madison and St. Clair counties expect to receive direct shipments this week. The first doses have been [allocated to regional hospital centers](#) across the state.

The [first-ever mRNA vaccine](#) allowed for rapid development was approved last week by the [Food and Drug Administration](#) for emergency use authorization for adults aged 16 and older. The Pfizer vaccine, administered in two doses, has demonstrated 95 percent efficacy.

To achieve herd immunity, a minimum of 70 percent of the population must receive the vaccine. The [Cook County Emergency Operations Center](#) is coordinating vaccine receipt, storage and distribution of the vaccine to hospitals and other health care providers.

The [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) is the state-certified local public health department overseeing the vaccine's distribution to suburban Cook County's 2.5 million residents.

Cook County health officials unveiled their plans to distribute about 20,000 doses this week during a news conference on Monday. The first doses have been allocated to based on essential staff and COVID-19 impact. Hospitals will administer the vaccine to their own employees.

Health care workers, especially those working directly with COVID-19 patients, are expected to start getting vaccinated Wednesday during in Phase 1 of the rollout plan. Rocha said that 70 percent of the 6,000 employees working within the Cook County health network at Stroger and Provident hospitals have signed up to receive the vaccine. Immunization for county employees is voluntary.

Health care providers, nursing home residents, first responders and corrections officers will receive the vaccine first, Dr. Kiran Joshi, colead for the Cook County Department of Public Health, said. High risk adults may follow based on CDC recommendations. There are 654,598 health care workers and 109,227 nursing-home residents at the front of the line for the vaccine in Illinois.

Pharmacy partnerships with CVS and Walgreens, which have federal contracts, will vaccinate residents and health care workers at long-term health care facilities.

"We encourage all healthcare workers, staff and residents of long-term care facilities to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, a senior medical officer and colead for the Cook County health department. "Although the first doses of the vaccine are here, we must all remain vigilant and continue to wear a mask, watch our distance and wash our hands, whether we have received the vaccine or not."

The [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) will take the lead in coordinating immunizations for the most at-risk populations in the poorest communities and bridging gaps in coverage.

"When we get beyond healthcare and first responders, we are committed to a program that focuses on populations at most risk," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, Jr. said. "This pandemic has been another glaring example of the inequities in our nation. We have watched minority communities suffer the brunt of this virus, the rate of illness and the rate of death. Our focus on vaccine distribution will ensure that we prioritize health equity."

Cook County health officials are looking to form community partnerships to help distribute the vaccine. Health care providers can sign up to be a vaccine provider on the [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) website.

Pharmacy partnerships with CVS and Walgreens, which have federal contracts, will vaccinate residents and health care workers at long-term health care facilities.

Mobile and drive-thru vaccination events are being planned, said Dr. Rachel Rubin, colead for Cook County's health department. Once the vaccine is distributed to the public, residents are likely to receive it at pharmacies, such as CVS and Walgreens, parking lots, churches and YMCAs.

Cook County health officials also have plans to address misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines not being safe, through town halls, partnering with news media and social media campaigns. During Monday's live stream of the news conference announcing the shipment of the Pfizer vaccination, a viewer remarking: "Please don't make this vaccination a requirement for employment! It's not safe!"

Chicago, which has its own public health department, announced that it had received its first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine. Loretto Hospital in Chicago's Austin neighborhood has been chosen for the first ceremonial vaccine.

The [Lake County Health Department](#) has set up a registry for residents to be notified when the vaccine becomes available to the public. Lake County residents [can register online](#) by giving basic information about themselves and answering screening questions.

Yoshi said the county does not anticipate setting up a similar registry because most suburban Cook County residents will likely receive the vaccine at community inoculation events, pharmacies, clinics or from their doctors. While the vaccine is free, health care providers may charge patients to receive the vaccine. Residents should visit [CCDPH for more information](#) about Cook County's rollout and development of the vaccine.

[Northwestern Medicine](#) issued a statement Monday saying it had not yet received its allocation of COVID-19 vaccine.

"We do anticipate receiving shipments at our hospitals soon. Our plan is to begin vaccinations to our workforce by midweek, if not sooner, and this will occur at a number of Northwestern Medicine hospitals concurrently. As background, the COVID-19 vaccination will not be mandatory for employees. Employees must opt in if they chose to receive the vaccine. And we will be taking a tiered approach to vaccinating our workforce with employees working in COVID-19 units or with COVID positive patients being in the first grouping."

Similarly, a spokeswoman for [Advocate Aurora Health Care](#) said the launch of its team member vaccination program is imminent as some distribution sites have begun to receive their first shipments. Advocate Aurora has more [information about its vaccine online](#).

"We know the community is eager for information, and our priority is fair and equitable distribution of the vaccine in line with recommendations from federal and state governments, the CDC and our own medical ethics guidelines," Lee Ann Betz said.

# Illinois receives first 43K doses of COVID-19 vaccine

By SOPHIA TAREEN

December 14, 2020

<https://apnews.com/article/health-illinois-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-chicago-916addc3fb1e080653ded21153bc91d6>

CHICAGO (AP) — Illinois received about 43,000 doses in its first shipment of a COVID-19 vaccine Monday as health officials reported another 103 coronavirus deaths statewide.

Most of the shots will be distributed to local health care centers for health care workers, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office.

The news came as health care [workers nationwide started getting](#) the first shots of the vaccine made by Pfizer Inc. and its German partner BioNTech.

Pritzker has previously [said he expects Illinois](#) to receive about 109,000 doses within weeks. Chicago officials expect about 20,000 to 25,000 of those doses to arrive in the city.

"Eleven months after scientists the world over first got their hands on the genetic sequence of this virus and we are seeing the beginning of the end of this pandemic," Pritzker said in a statement calling it a "momentous occasion."

Illinois reported another 7,214 COVID-19 cases Monday. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Illinois has reported more than 850,000 cases. Nearly 14,400 people have died.

In Chicago's Cook County suburbs, health officials expect about 20,000 doses this week for 15 hospitals, Dr. Kiran Joshi, who heads the Cook County Department of Public Health, said during a Monday news conference.

# LINCOLNWOOD REVIEW

## Lincolnwood mayor lashes out against ban on indoor dining, says he refuses to enforce it

By DANIEL I. DORFMAN

DEC 14, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lincolnwood/ct-lwr-dining-ban-tl-1217-20201214-xmxunizagjhkfglssat5xaxwru-story.html>

Lincolnwood Mayor Barry Bass has condemned the state's ban on indoor restaurant dining, saying he will not enforce it. State and county officials responded that would put the health, and possibly the lives, of employees, patrons and others at risk.

In a four-page letter sent to Governor J.B. Pritzker and Cook County commissioners, Bass took issue with state restrictions regarding the restaurant industry, saying he feared they would lead to income losses for owners and employees.

"The dangers of destroying businesses are as fatal as the pathogen on many levels," Bass wrote. "We should not kill our businesses through bankruptcy, along with our local economy, and ruin the state's food and beverage service industry, based on overreach, subjective measures and statistics that can be highly skewed and misrepresented."

Bass wrote he would not impose fines on local businesses.

"That is not acceptable given the hardships and crushing stress owners, operators and employees are living under," he wrote.

The Pritzker administration placed restrictions, including a ban on indoor dining, on the region that includes Cook County on Oct. 28. The governor noted at that time that [the rate of people testing positive for COVID-19 had doubled](#) during the month of October.

Sharp response

Bass's stance drew a sharp response from Pritzker spokeswoman Jordan Abudayyeh, who wrote in an e-mail that the governor has said repeatedly his top priority is keeping the people in the state safe and healthy.

"Hospitalizations have tripled since October 1st and positivity rates across the state have risen at alarming rates. It's unfortunate that there are local officials who are willing to risk overcrowding their hospitals and putting their residents' lives at risk," Abudayyeh wrote. "The Governor will continue to follow the advice of the public health experts who recommend implementing mitigations to spare more people getting sick and possibly dying."

Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin – whose district includes Lincolnwood – also maintained belief in the current safety measures.

"I admire the mayor for sticking up for local businesses, but we are in a pandemic and I think we are required to listen to the medical personnel who are giving us advice. Until the vaccine is here, I think the restaurants will have limited ability

to serve people,” Suffredin said. “We are doing it not to be mean or to hurt somebody, we are doing it to protect the lives of the citizens in our area.”

Suffredin wants to see additional money from Congress to assist restaurants and avoid risking the health of both employees, patrons and others.

Drs. Kiran Joshi and Rachel Rubin from the Cook County Health Department also expressed their support for the current mitigations.

“The financial strain experienced by the businesses and residents of our communities has been great, and we care very deeply about their experience of the pandemic,” they wrote in a statement. “We do not agree, though, that disregard of mitigation measures is the way to alleviate this burden. As difficult as they may be, we believe that the mitigation measures outlined by the state are necessary to stemming the rampant spread of COVID-19.”

Lincolnwood’s high COVID rate

After a large spike in [COVID-19 cases in Lincolnwood](#) from mid-October to mid-November, there has been a greater than 26 percent decrease in confirmed cases over the 14 days concluding Dec. 5, according to the county’s health department. However, the village’s case rate is still far ahead of the rest of suburban Cook County.

Lincolnwood had a rate of 11,183 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people on Dec. 14, while Morton Grove had a rate of 5,922 cases per 100,000 people, Niles had a rate of 8,482 and Park Ridge had a rate of 5,235.

Anthony Stefani, the managing partner of Lincolnwood’s Stefani Prime, said his restaurant has lost 70 percent of its business since the start of the pandemic.

He added tents have been installed outside his restaurant, but the success has been limited, especially in the cold weather.

“It is a losing battle because none of this is going to pay the bills,” Stefani noted.

He expressed frustration at the fact that restaurants were open in neighboring Indiana and Wisconsin. He also saw other signs that troubled him.

“People are still flying and they are eating and drinking on the flights, so there seems to be a double standard. And you see people eating at airport restaurants,” Stefani said. “It feels as if the restaurant industry was specifically targeted.”

Illinois has lost nearly 69,000, or almost 15 percent, of its restaurant jobs since February, according to the National Restaurant Association.



## **COVID-19 Vaccine: Cook County Health Argues Detainees Should Be Prioritized To Receive Vaccine**

By [Megan Hickey](#)

December 14, 2020 at 6:07 pm

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/14/covid-19-vaccine-detainees-prisoners-cook-county-health/>

After health care workers and those in nursing homes, many are asking who should get the COVID-19 vaccine next. One controversial population on the table is people behind bars.

More than 1,000 detainees at the Cook County Jail have tested positive since March. Since March, eight detainees died at local hospitals.

Cook County Health argues detainees and prison staff should be prioritized for the vaccine.

Detainee Jeremy Coleman called CBS 2 Investigator Megan Hickey from inside the jail. He was on speaker phone with his fiance Melonie Smith, who has been working hard since July to try to come up with his \$10,000 bond for a weapons possession charge.

“There’s 20 people in the day room right now. There’s no way we can socially distance,” Coleman said.

Smith said she has been worried sick for months.

“I don’t want to get a phone call saying that he’s been infected,” she said. “I understand that it is a jail system, but that doesn’t take away the value of his life or his health.”

So far only six states have specifically listed incarcerated people in phase 1 of their vaccine distribution plans. Cook County Health, which treats the jail’s detainees, told CBS 2 Monday that “the jail should be defined and prioritized as a congregate setting,” which would put detainees in Illinois in phase 2.

“Prisons are a special population,” said Lori Post, professor of emergency medicine at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine. “They’re at high risk. They don’t have a lot of rights. They don’t have a lot of options.”

Post said that while it might be controversial to some, 80% of people who died from COVID-19 in jail nationwide had not been convicted of a crime. They were incarcerated awaiting their hearings and were more likely to be too poor to afford bail.

They were incarcerated awaiting their hearings and were more likely to be too poor to afford bail.

“Just because someone has a prison sentence, it doesn’t mean we’re entitled to give them a cover death sentence, and it feels like that’s what we’re doing,” Post said.

Even if detainees are prioritized the same barrier of distrust may still exist. Coleman said he would not want the vaccine. He said he is very nervous about it.

Post emphasized that prison staff is just as vulnerable as the prison population. So far four correctional officers and one deputy have passed away as result of complications due to COVID-19.



Coronavirus Vaccine and Fertility: What We Know So Far

**Published December 14, 2020**

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/coronavirus-vaccine-and-fertility-what-we-know-so-far/2394119/>

As news of a coronavirus vaccine neared, questions and misinformation began surfacing about whether or not the vaccine could lead to fertility issues in women.

The concerns were sparked by an article spreading on social media, which experts have said includes false information, but many say there is still more research needed surrounding the vaccine and pregnancy.

Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious diseases attending physician and the Vaccination Coordinator for COVID-19 at Cook County Health, said there's currently no "suggestion that [the vaccine] could affect future fertility," but said the lack of data poses a challenge.

According to Illinois and U.S. medical experts, pregnant women were excluded from trials for the vaccine, leading some to recommend against vaccination for women who are pregnant or planning to be pregnant within three months of receiving their doses - until further testing can be conducted.

"We don't have any information actually in pregnancy. Women who were in the trial who became pregnant were removed from the trial so we can't give any information about pregnancy," said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike.

Ezike said that while people planning fertility may be advised against receiving the vaccine, she has not heard of "any adverse effects causing fertility issues for the people who got it."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if a woman is part of a group recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and is pregnant, she may choose to be vaccinated. A discussion with her healthcare provider can help her make an informed decision, the agency stated.

"There's a lot of conversation and controversy and advocacy around what to do with women who are pregnant or may become pregnant or breastfeeding," said Dr. Allison Bartlett, associate professor of pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Chicago. "And it's a really interesting issue because pregnant women were excluded from the study. And we understand because we sort of treat pregnant women as a special class, but so much of our health care workforce and our other frontline workers are women of childbearing age that to deny them the ability to get the vaccine just because we don't know is really putting them at a disadvantage."

Huhn said it is common that pregnant women aren't included in early trials for new vaccines.

Some social media users have been sharing a screenshot from an article titled "Head of Pfizer Research: Covid Vaccine is Female Sterilization" to claim the vaccine results in sterilization of women. The head of research at Pfizer has made no such claim, however.

Information in the article, carried by the blog "Health and Money News," is attributed to Michael Yeadon, a retired British doctor who left Pfizer nine years ago.

The article, which doctors have said includes false claims, says "the vaccine contains a spike protein called syncytin-1, vital for the formation of human placenta in women." It goes on to say "the vaccine works so that we form an immune

response AGAINST the spike protein, we are also training the female body to attack syncytin-1, which could lead to infertility in women of an unspecified duration.”

Pfizer spokeswoman Jerica Pitts confirmed to The Associated Press that their vaccine candidate has not been found to cause infertility.

“It has been incorrectly suggested that COVID-19 vaccines will cause infertility because of a shared amino acid sequence in the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 and a placental protein,” she said in an email. “The sequence, however, is too short to plausibly give rise to autoimmunity.”

Experts also say there is no evidence that the Pfizer vaccine would result in sterilization of women.

Rebecca Dutch, chair of University of Kentucky’s department of molecular and cellular biochemistry, said in an email that while syncytin-1 and the spike protein broadly share some features, they are quite different in the details that antibodies recognize.

Aside from the fact that COVID-19’s spike protein and syncytin-1 are viral fusion proteins that cause membrane fusion, they are not related at all, Dutch said.

Additionally, the vaccine being developed by Moderna, like the one being developed by Pfizer and BioNTech, relies on messenger mRNA, which tells the body how to make the spike protein and trains the immune system to identify the real virus. They do not contain syncytin-1.

"The protein that is manufactured by our immune system is a fragment of what's called the spike protein, which is the part of the virus that attaches onto the receptors on cells," Huhn said. "But that protein is not attached to anything related to any form of what we know is that causes disease and infection with the natural virus. And so, just with that small fragment of the spike protein particle that again, is manufactured as a protein that's recognized by our immune system, I do not believe that we would have any suggestion that it could affect future fertility."



# The Shot: Race for the Vaccine Town Hall with Dr. Jen Ashton

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/covid-vaccine-town-hall-with-dr-jen--/8697925/>

The FDA has granted emergency use authorization to the first COVID-19 vaccine heralded as a vital tool in saving lives and helping return life to normal in the United States.

But even with the anticipated arrival of the vaccines, the road ahead is still long and complicated, and the questions are many. Many of those concerns surround the vaccines themselves. The ABC Owned Television Stations group addressed these questions during a special digital Town Hall, "The Shot: Race for the Vaccine," hosted by Dr. Jen Ashton, ABC's chief medical correspondent.

Dr. Jen was joined by a team of experts on Dec. 14 for a discussion about the vaccines. The Town Hall streamed live at 6 p.m. Eastern/5 p.m. Central/3 p.m. Pacific on the websites and connected TV apps of the ABC owned stations: WABC in New York; WPVI in Philadelphia; WTVD in Raleigh-Durham; WLS in Chicago; KTRK in Houston; KABC in Los Angeles, KFSN in Fresno; and KGO in San Francisco.

Meet the panelists who joined Dr. Jen:

## **Jeffrey Rosa**

**ICU Nurse at Long Island Jewish Medical Center (Registered Nurse, CCRN Certification)**

**Location: New York**

At Long Island Jewish Medical Center (LIJMC), Jeffrey is known as "the go-to player," someone who has made it his business to know everything he needs to know about every patient in a unit where extra compassion, understanding and respect for what patients and families are going through are crucial. He is dedicated to inspiring and teaching new nurses to share his passion and expertise. He coaches, mentors and serves as a role model for his peers. Jeffrey lectures the hemodynamics portion of the nursing fellowship curriculum and shares his passion for work he does daily

## **Jennifer Jones Austin**

**Chief executive officer and executive director, FPWA**

**Location: New York**

Jennifer Jones Austin, a child and family advocate, is chief executive officer and executive director of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), an anti-poverty, policy and advocacy organization with 170 member human services agencies operating throughout New York City. Prior to joining FPWA, she served as Senior Vice President of United Way of New York City, Family Services Coordinator for Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Commissioner for the NYC Administration for Children's Services, Civil Rights Deputy Bureau Chief for Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, and Vice President for LearnNow/Edison Schools. She's also part of a task force to ensure Black New Yorkers get the Covid-19 vaccine.

## **Bing Chen**

### **Chairman and co-founder of Gold House**

#### **Location: Los Angeles**

Bing Chen is an entrepreneur, creator, and community builder. He is the general partner and co-founder of AUM Group, a multicultural film fund; and chairman and co-founder of Gold House, a collective of pioneering Asian founders, creative voices, and leaders dedicated to forging stronger bonds that enable the Asian diaspora to unlock more authentic, more successful, and longer lives for all.

## **Dr. Whitney Lyn**

### **Family medicine physician at Cook County Health**

#### **Location: Chicago**

Dr. Whitney Lyn is a Family Medicine Specialist in Chicago, Illinois. She graduated from University of Illinois at Chicago. She told us: "As a female African American physician at the busiest and largest public health system in the Midwest, I have seen first-hand how the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected communities of color. The 95% effectiveness found in the clinical trials proves that by getting the vaccine, you'll not only save your life, but the lives of your family and your community. Everyone asks me what it is like to be on the frontline during this pandemic, but I consider health care workers the last line. The community is the frontline and we are asking the community to help us battle this pandemic."



## **COVID Vaccine: 5 top questions about Pfizer's coronavirus shot, answered**

By [Chuck Goudie](#) and Barb Markoff, Christine Tressel and Ross Weidner

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/5-top-questions-about-pfizers-covid-vaccine-answered-/8783376/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Now that scientists have developed COVID-19 vaccines, experts are turning their attention to practical and difficult questions about access, safety and tracking vaccination success.

The I-Team has answers to five top questions about this next phase in fighting the pandemic.

Question #1: When will you get the vaccine?

The first wave of millions of vaccine vials have left the Pfizer headquarters and are either delivered or on their way to every state. It's now up to public health officials to execute vaccine plans.

"As these vaccines starts to roll out some states are going to progress much faster," said Josh Michaud, the Associate Director of Global Health Policy at the Kaiser Family Foundation.

In Illinois, health care workers will be first to get the vaccine. Then, it's likely to go to first responders and other essential front-line workers.

"The principles of allocation are: how do we do this equitably by your risk your individual profile, where you live, as well as other identifiers your race, your ethnicity, and your vulnerabilities," said Dr. Rebecca Weintraub, an Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School and Director of Vaccine Delivery at Ariadne Labs.

The federal government is distributing the first vaccine doses across the country by population. But from there, states and large cities begin to make their own decisions based largely on federal framework.

Experts say it'll likely be late spring before the vaccine begins to reach the general healthy population.

"It's really hard to predict how this will all come out in the end. And what your state does might be different from what your neighboring state does," explained Michaud.

Question #2: How do we know it's safe?

Federal health officials and drug manufacturers say no corners were cut and the vaccines are based on sound science and data.

An FDA analysis of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness on people aged 16 and older found "no specific safety concerns."

Mild to moderate side effects can include nausea, body aches, headaches and chills.

CDC officials said the symptoms are a sign the vaccine is working to rev up the body's immune response and are harmless.

Chicago area doctors who spoke with the I-Team are recommending the shots.

"We do not believe there are any serious side effects with the vaccine the benefit of getting the vaccine is so important, it's much worse to get COVID19 than to get a vaccine," said Dr. Robert Citronberg, the Medical Director of Infectious Disease at Advocate Aurora Health.

The head of Infection Prevention at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital agreed, saying: "I think everyone should get the vaccine and it should go to the patients that are at higher risk first but this is something we are going to have to do all because this virus is affecting everybody."

Question #3: Who could be excluded?

The FDA is instructing providers not to give the vaccine to those with a known history of severe allergic reactions to any of its ingredients.

It is not currently recommended for children under 16 - and while the FDA's guidance did not preclude offering the vaccine to pregnant women, experts say there isn't enough information to assess the risks versus benefits.

Dr. Gregory Huhn, an Infectious Disease Expert at Cook County Health and the lead coordinator for the vaccine's distribution among CCH's healthcare employees, explained further:

"So far there does not seem to be any harm from the vaccine itself, as safety signal as we call it. But, the studies did not recruit pregnant women and so we will not have that information and I believe the CDC recommendation would be if you're a pregnant woman then discuss the benefits with your healthcare provider -if you should receive the vaccine."

Question #4: If you've already had COVID-19, can you skip the vaccine?

Dr. Citronberg and Dr. Huhn believe that even if you've had the virus, you should still consider getting the shot.

"Within a 3 month period ..patients that have had COVID may have a level of protection, but we don't know the absolute level of protection. So the short answer is, those patients who have had COVID, they should still be eligible for the vaccine," said Citronberg. "We haven't seen all the data yet. Eventually people who have had COVID will be getting the vaccine, they are probably a lower priority than people who have not yet had the disease, but even if you've had it you will be eligible for the vaccine."

Question #5: When will we know if the vaccine is successful?

Dr. Manrique said: "I think that once we reach that 70% of the population receiving the vaccine when we will get to that herd immunity ..protection."

Individuals are expected to get some level of protection within a couple weeks after the first shot. Full protection may not happen until a couple weeks after the second shot.

A large amount of the US population needs to be vaccinated to reach what's called herd immunity -where the overall amount of the virus is lowered enough to stop the spread.

"It'll take a good six months, but by June of next year we expect that everybody in this country who wants a vaccine will be able to receive one," said Citronberg.

But vaccination is not a ticket to normal. Medical experts say masks and social distancing will still be necessary until an all-clear.

# Chicago Tribune

## Illinois schools have tallied more than 160 outbreaks of COVID-19. But what happens when they occur, and who decides if a school should close?

By KAREN ANN CULLOTTA

DEC 15, 2020 AT 5:00 AM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-covid-19-school-outbreaks-20201215-n24dblsp65hhhe273v72ecjw2u-story.html>

After a string of COVID-19 cases were reported at The School of Saints Faith, Hope and Charity in Winnetka last month, school officials dutifully notified the Cook County Department of Public Health and were soon delivered some troubling news.

The Roman Catholic elementary school had met the criteria for an outbreak, thrusting a thorny health and safety decision into the hands of the principal and the Archdiocese of Chicago about whether to halt in-person instruction.

“We decided to immediately pivot to e-learning for a temporary period, because first and foremost is the safety of our students and staff, and we just didn’t want to take the risk,” said Justin Lombardo, the leader of the archdiocese’s COVID-19 task force, who said students have been back in the classroom at the North Shore school since Nov. 30.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 163 such school-based outbreaks have been reviewed in the state, including nine reported Friday by the Illinois Department of Public Health. But while the state is now posting such numbers online — and health departments are assisting schools with surveillance of cases, contact tracing and guidance — it still falls to school officials to make the biggest decision: Does the school need to shut down again?

Instead of an outbreak triggering a mandated closure, the Cook County health department typically advises local education officials like those at the Winnetka school that while it would be ideal to return to remote learning, it’s up to them to decide. Five to 10 cases among both staff members and students were reported at Faith, Hope and Charity, according to state data.

At least one recent addition to the outbreak list, Wheaton Christian Grammar School in Winfield, remained open, with no plans to close before its holiday break begins next week, according to the person who answered the school’s phone on Friday. The school had five to 10 cases involving students only, according to the state data, which lists outbreaks by ranges of cases rather than specific numbers.

To be classified as an outbreak, a school must have five or more students or staff members who test positive for the coronavirus, are not from the same household and may have a shared exposure on school grounds or during a school activity like a sport.

The [state’s school COVID-19 data](#), which is updated weekly, includes outbreaks identified within the previous 30 days. IDPH is also posting numbers of cases among school-age children.

That such data is being reported, but does not come with specific actions that must be taken by school officials, prompted two of the state’s largest teachers unions last week [to demand clear metrics](#) and direction they say are imperative to ensure the safety of teachers and students.

But an IDPH official said Friday that while school closure decisions are ultimately the jurisdiction of local authorities, county and state health departments help schools navigate outbreaks every step of the way.

For example, once a school reports a positive COVID-19 case, the local health department immediately partners with the school to conduct contact tracing, IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said.

One common scenario is the local health department may ask a school to let them know if “Johnny” was in the same classroom at the same time as “Billy, Bobby, Mary and Sue,” as outbreaks are identified by cases being in the same time and space, Arnold said.

As to whether there’s a point at which the state would mandate a school closing — as Gov. J.B. Pritzker did statewide at the pandemic’s onset in March — Arnold reiterated, “Decisions regarding in-person or virtual learning are made by local school districts.”

She also noted that even if five unrelated students from the same school test positive for COVID-19, if they have never been in the same classroom or other school space at the same time, the cases do not qualify as an outbreak.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, a Cook County Department of Public Health senior medical officer, said when the department learns of a COVID-19 case related to a school, a staff member contacts the school administration and nurse to gather case-related information and exposure dates.

The details are then reviewed, and the school is given a date the student or staff member is cleared to return. The department and school also seek to determine if anyone else at the school was exposed to the infected person, with that defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 or more minutes over a period of 24 hours or less, Rubin said.

The county follows the state health department’s guidance on pausing in-person instruction but “does not make specific recommendations unless there’s an outbreak at the school,” Rubin said.

Yet despite the health departments’ diligence in contact tracing, local school officials are left to grapple with these decisions at a volatile time that has divided many suburban Chicago communities into two factions: parents demanding that schools remain open for those who choose to send their children back, and those who say remote learning is the only safe option as COVID-19 rates continue to surge.

At Thomas Middle School in Arlington Heights, which was on the state’s school outbreaks list last week with 11 to 16 cases among staff members and students, District 25 Superintendent Lori Bein, announced that the school’s roughly 940 students would shift to remote learning from Dec. 3 through Monday. Students were expected to return to the classroom Tuesday.

The superintendent’s decision did not require the support of the school board. However, the board did recently vote to continue in-person instruction districtwide, despite a recommendation from Bein that its nine schools move to remote learning until January due to soaring COVID-19 rates.

In Plainfield School District 202, while the vast majority of its 25,000 students have been engaged in remote learning this school year, the in-person classroom instruction for about 300 special education students was halted last month after just two weeks, following an outbreak at Plainfield North High School, district spokesman Tom Hernandez said. The school had five to 10 cases among staff members, state data showed.

One of two Chicago private schools that appeared on the state’s school outbreaks list this month, Yeshiva Tiferes Tzvi School, was closed Friday, and officials were not immediately available for comment.

But in a Dec. 3 statement to parents posted on the school’s website, officials said there were at that time four full classes and four partial classes in quarantine, with more than 100 students and 20 staff members temporarily out of

school, and more than 30 positive cases among the school's families and staff, though the state data only listed five to 10 cases among students.

"This is nearly 10% of our students and staff. ... The numbers are real and we cannot keep them from increasing without your help," officials said.

Indeed, with a growing number of studies finding that coronavirus transmission at schools is rare, some experts say what happens outside the classroom is as important as what's happening inside school buildings.

"Being careful outside of school is the way to be safe inside school," Dr. Ravi Kalhan, a professor of preventive medicine at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine said Thursday.

"The bottom line is, the risk of transmission at schools comes from bringing groups of people together to gather at a time when the prevalence of COVID-19 is high in the community," said Kalhan. "But at schools, particularly with younger kids, people are following the rules, wearing masks, social distancing and doing daily screenings ... doing all of the stuff known to mitigate the spread of the virus."

Kalhan said traveling to other states, and celebrating the holidays with large groups of family members and friends, is far more likely to lead to transmission of the virus than attending school, which he described as "a very controlled environment."

"Parents can't say in the same breath that they want schools to be open, but then do whatever they want outside of school," Kalhan added.

To be sure, the impossible task of controlling COVID-19 transmissions that occur outside of school buildings underscores the recent request from two statewide teachers unions that Illinois lawmakers "step in and set up clear enforceable COVID-19 metrics."

"Some districts aren't following their own plans, some districts aren't following the state's guidance, local health departments aren't following the guidance from (IDPH) to work with school districts to determine whether students should go remote or put new protocols in place," Kathi Griffin, the president of the Illinois Education Association, said Friday.

"In some cases local school boards are overriding the best advice of school superintendents," Griffin said, adding: "We need lawmakers to step in and help us with these safety measures so we can safely reopen all schools and keep them open."



# U.S. Inmates at Front – or Back – of Vaccine Line

By [Jamal Andress](#)

December 15, 2020

<https://www.newsy.com/stories/for-u-s-inmates-vaccine-chances-vary-widely/>

**Despite medical community guidance that prisons should be in Phase 1 of vaccinations, many states are pushing inmates to the back of the line.**

While health care workers and nursing home residents are universally first in line for COVID vaccinations, plans for inmates in America's prisons and jails vary from one extreme to the other.

"There's no way that prisoners are going to get it before members of the vulnerable population," Colorado Gov. Jared Polis said during a [press conference](#).

"I think congregate care settings where individuals are closely together, we know are a documented risk factor, not just for a single individual, but for large populations being exposed to COVID and becoming ill at the same time. From an equity perspective where people are together and at risk in the same situation, we felt it was really important to prioritize that group," Dr. Paul Biddinger, vice chairman for emergency preparedness in the Department of Emergency Medicine at Mass General, said while explaining Massachusetts vaccine distribution plan.

There are [six states](#) putting inmates in the first phase of vaccine distribution — pointing to jails and prisons being COVID hotspots throughout the pandemic.

So far, at least [1,600 prisoners](#) and 108 prison employees in state and federal prisons have died from COVID complications. And just this week, new infections increased by 10% reaching the [highest level](#) yet of positive cases for those behind bars.

"It's a basic tenet of public health to try and stop outbreaks at their source. And in many of these rural communities, the source is the prison," Johns Hopkins University's [Dr. Eric Toner](#) from the Center for Health Security said.

[Toner](#) is a senior scientist at Johns Hopkins — he co-authored a vaccine distribution recommendation report to help states craft their own vaccination plans.

"And so we absolutely need to vaccinate the people in the prison, whether they're staff or inmates, in order to protect everybody," Toner said.

[Toner's report](#) as well as reports from the [National Academy of Medicine](#) and the [Council on Criminal Justice](#) have all recommended that prison staff and inmates be included in the first phase of the vaccination process.

"We also have, you know, both a legal and moral obligation to provide health care to people that are incarcerated," Toner said.

Despite medical recommendations, the Prison Policy Initiative counts [seven states](#) that explicitly have corrections workers in their Phase 1 distribution plan but exclude the inmates until later phases.

In Chicago, two separate agencies are handling vaccine distribution at the local jail. The Cook County Health and Hospitals System will be vaccinating inmates and the sheriff's office will handle staff. While the staff are scheduled to be vaccinated during Phase 1, there's no definitive timetable for when inmates will receive a vaccination.

Cook County Jail, one of the largest single-site jails in the country, currently has [400 active](#) COVID cases.

In an email to Newsy, Cook County Health said, "We look forward to receiving sufficient supply to vaccinate our various populations from our employees to our patients [including detainees] to the larger community" but hasn't responded to an email asking for further clarification.

Toner said, "In our view, prison staff and the prisoners themselves should be treated the same. They are exposed to the same risks. Prisons and jails are locations where there have been large outbreaks, and those outbreaks in the jail tend to seed the community."

## **Some south and southwest suburban hospitals yet to receive vaccine; Will County gets 5,000 doses**

By MIKE NOLAN

DEC 16, 2020

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-south-suburbs-hospitals-vaccine-st-1217-20201217-f6tkbnrzcfn2naxczhziupese-story.html>

As Illinois expects to see its shipments of COVID-19 vaccines cut in half, some south and southwest suburban hospitals said Wednesday they are still waiting for doses to administer to their front-line workers.

Will County health officials said that nearly 5,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine arrived Wednesday and were delivered to hospitals, including Silver Cross in New Lenox.

But OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary in Evergreen Park, University of Chicago Medicine's Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey and Franciscan Health Olympia Fields said they had yet to receive shipments and were uncertain of when they might arrive.

Under the rollout of the vaccine, hospital workers who are most at risk of coming in contact with the coronavirus are the first in line to receive the vaccines, followed by residents and staff of long-term health care facilities such as nursing homes.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Wednesday anticipated deliveries of about 8 million and 9 million doses in the next two weeks both have been cut to 4.3 million.

Illinois was still expected to receive 109,000 doses of the vaccine this week, including allotments to Chicago and a handful of other health agencies.

Cook County Department of Public Health officials said earlier this week that 20,000 doses of the Pfizer-developed vaccine were expected to be delivered to 15 suburban hospitals this week.

Vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna require two injections, spaced roughly three weeks apart, with maximum protection against the virus coming about two weeks after the second dose, county health officials said.

The vaccines must also be stored at ultracold temperatures, and if no storage capacity is available the doses have to be administered within five days of arrival, health officials said.

Will County Board of Health members learned Wednesday that two medical-grade freezers are available to the county, at no cost, from a company in Chicago.

The freezers are expected to be delivered Monday, but board members also went ahead with a plan to purchase a freezer should the free ones not meet required specifications.

The county said it also plans to establish an online sign up by the end of this week or early next week for Will County residents to sign up for the vaccine when it is available to the broader population.

The initial phases include hospitals and residents and staff of long-term care facilities, following by people such as first responders and those being described as “critical infrastructure workers,” including employees of public utilities.

Cook County health officials said that just ensuring health care workers get the required two doses could take more than a month.

Rachel Rubin, the Cook County health department’s senior medical officer, said Monday the department has more than 200 long-term care facilities such as nursing homes and rehabilitation centers under its jurisdiction.

Health officials in both counties say they are also having to combat a fair amount of public skepticism about whether the vaccine is safe.

Surveys of Will County residents and county employees show that as many as half are reluctant to be first in line for a shot, said Susan Olenek, executive director of the health department.

Olenek said she would have no hesitation in getting the vaccine.

“I’m confident in the science, I’m confident in the scientists who worked through the trials,” she said.

While it could be several weeks or months before the vaccine is more widely available to the general public, Rubin said Cook County is working to ensure “there are no dead zones” as far as access, particularly in communities with limited access to health care facilities.

She said that mobile and drive-through sites are being looked at, along with schools and churches.

In a statement Wednesday, Olenek said the arrival of the first doses represents “the next stage of our fight against COVID-19.”

“It is great to have the vaccine out and being distributed, but it will take a long time before the general public is vaccinated,” she said, saying measures such as wearing masks and social distancing need to be maintained, particularly as the holidays approach.

“As we move through the various phases of the vaccination process we ask for the public to educate themselves and be patient,” she said.

# Suburban Cook getting batch of COVID-19 vaccine this week but wider rollout will take time

Bill Jones

December 16, 2020

<https://www.hfchronicle.com/article/2020/dec/16/suburban-cook-getting-batch-covid-19-vaccine-week-wider-rollout-will-take-time>

Suburban Cook County was expecting to get its first allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine from Pfizer this week, but under the state's tiered system it could still be months before it is available to the residents of Homewood and Flossmoor.

Cook County officials said during a conference call Monday, Dec. 14, that the suburbs were expecting to get 20,000 doses of Pfizer's vaccine out of 109,000 coming to Illinois in the first allocation from the Strategic National Stockpile. But a phased rollout across the state means the first batch is reserved for health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities.

Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead for the Cook County Department of Public Health, said that first allocation will cover 20,000 people, hopefully starting by Thursday, Dec. 17, at 15 hospitals in the county. While the existing COVID-19 vaccination requires a second dose roughly three weeks after the first, Joshi said the county expects another batch to cover the second round for those 20,000 people.

Even so, the allocation is not nearly enough to get through that first group. In all, the population is divided into four groups.

"It is not enough to cover 1A," Joshi said. "It is not enough to cover all the health care workers in hospitals in 1A. We anticipate it's going to be at least 4 to 5 weeks before we get through that first hospital-based wave."

Group 1A includes physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, environmental services, respiratory technicians, dentists, hygienists, long-term care staff, assisted living staff, home caregivers, morticians, funeral directors and coroner staff who are involved with the deceased.

There are more subsections of Group 1. Then vaccination goes to Groups 2 and 3 in the state's plan. Group 4 is when anyone in the general public who is not counted among the first three would have access to the vaccine.

Israel Rocha, CEO for Cook County Health, said they are not looking that far ahead just yet in their planning efforts. He noted that is also why Cook County has not started to offer registrations for the vaccine.

"What we want to make sure we're doing is that making sure we're releasing the appropriate time when the different phases are eligible," Rocha said. "If we get too far ahead and then there's a change between now and the time the community can register — we want to make sure we're giving people the factual steps they can take to register. We are being very cognizant that we don't want to create systems that will then have to require duplicative work."

Joshi said when the vaccine is ready for the general public, the county will likely utilize multiple methods of informing people and getting it to everybody.

“This is really going to be a team effort,” he said. “No one provider could vaccinate all 2.5 million residents in suburban Cook County. We will be looking to partner with health care providers, private systems, pharmacies — really wherever there is existing health care infrastructure to provide vaccines, we would want to leverage that.”

Cook officials said making sure underserved populations have access is going to be a big part of their focus. They highlighted areas in the southern and western suburbs they said have been hot spots for COVID-19 as areas they will target with the vaccine when it becomes widely available.

The state’s plan for vaccine distribution involves sending vaccines to 10 regional hospitals, where local recipients can then pick up their supply. But Cook County officials would not discuss specifics regarding locations and methods for pickup for security reasons.

Joshi said they have been “promised” weekly shipments following this first allocation. Once Moderna’s vaccine is approved in the next several day by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the numbers will increase as well.

Rachel Rubin, co-lead for the Cook County Department of Public Health, said when the vaccine becomes available to more people, they also intend to explore options for mobile and drive-thru sites in parking lots, community centers, schools and anywhere else that might accommodate them. Officials said they have an area of more than 700-square-miles to cover.

“This vaccine is safe and important and saves lives,” she said. “Every eligible person should get one.”

Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle started the call by addressing the importance of the vaccine’s rollout.

“This has been a challenging year,” she said. “As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, it is my sincere hope that today marks the moment where we look back and flag this day, Dec. 14, as the beginning of the end — the end of the pandemic that has taken too many of our friends, colleagues, family members and loved ones.”

With the celebration came a caution from Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer, who noted he has suffered much personal loss to the coronavirus in the last year. He said people need to remain steadfast in taking precautionary measures, because several thousand people in the country are still expected to die from the virus between now and Jan. 6.

As of Dec. 15, there have been 158,292 confirmed cases in suburban Cook County with 2,912 dead from causes related to the virus. There have been 507 cases in the Flossmoor 60422 zip code area, and 1,063 cases in the Homewood 60430 zip code area, according to Cook County data.

“Let’s not get too excited about the vaccine,” Deer said. “That does not mean it is OK for us to do what we want to do. We’re still not out of the woods with this yet.”

Rocha said the vaccine is important, but it is not everything at the moment. Social distancing, masks and limitations on large gatherings are still necessary.

“That rightfully provides us with hope,” Rocha said. “It is the vaccine coupled with patience that will make the difference for all of us.”

Officials know there are challenges ahead. Among them is making sure those reluctant to take the vaccine are educated about it and have access to it.

“The reluctance of many Americans to be vaccinated is understandable,” he said. “Our country has not always treated every American honestly and equitably, and we must recognize that. This pandemic has served as an example of the inequities in our nation. We have watched as minority communities suffer the brunt of the virus and be impacted with higher levels of mortality. The unemployment, food and housing insecurities that have resulted from the economic

challenges are disproportionately affecting these communities. At this moment, we will ensure that is not the story for the vaccine program.”

Rocha said the county intends to do that through effective communication of the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, with visits to schools, religious sites and other community locations planned to answer questions. He said he also hopes that success in the health care sector with the vaccine will help build trust in the entire community.

The vaccine will be free, and additional costs are generally covered by insurance, officials said. But Rubin said they are hoping federal funds will help drop barriers for those who do not have insurance.



# Some Chicago-Area Hospitals Still Waiting on Coronavirus Vaccine Shipments

Published December 16, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/some-chicago-area-hospitals-still-waiting-on-coronavirus-vaccine-shipments/2396128/>

As health care workers around the U.S. begin to receive the first vaccinations against the coronavirus, some hospitals across the Chicago area are still waiting on their shipments of the vaccine.

A spokeswoman for Loyola University Medical Center in suburban Maywood said Wednesday that the hospital system was told it would not receive its doses of the vaccine until as early as Thursday. The vaccine was produced by Pfizer and approved for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration last week, with shipments sent across the nation beginning Sunday.

Loyola leadership said its Maywood campus would be the vaccine hub for 10,000 health care workers at three hospitals on the front lines of the fight against the pandemic. Loyola expected to receive 3,000 doses of the vaccine in its first shipment, which will first go to bedside workers, intensive care and emergency room nurses and doctors, followed by testing site employees and outpatient workers.

While some doses have arrived in Chicago - and the first ones were administered on Tuesday - Loyola's shipment falls under the Illinois Department of Public Health's jurisdiction. Loyola's Regional Chief Clinical Officer said the hospital has proper storage facilities for the vaccine, which must be kept at ultra-cold temperatures, but the arrival is a matter of transport from the state's facility.

Dr. Richard Freeman said they are staying flexible, noting IDPH has never done anything like this before, but adding that he feels hopeful.

"We've been playing defense for the last 10 months and this is a chance to play offense," Freeman said. "So we're very excited - excited to start this process, then move on."

The first four people to get a dose at Loyola have already been chosen: a doctor, a nurse, a respiratory therapist and a member of the cleaning staff.

Edward Hospital, located in suburban Naperville, was notified Tuesday that it would receive its allotment of 1,950 doses of the vaccine on Thursday. A spokeswoman for the University of Chicago Medicine said early Wednesday that the hospital system had not received its shipment yet but planned to begin vaccinating staff on Thursday pending its arrival.

The Cook County Department of Public Health had also not received its supply of the vaccine, a spokeswoman said Wednesday, anticipating it would arrive Thursday.

Rush University Medical Center said Wednesday the hospital had not received specifics on when its shipment would arrive but a spokesman noted that when they do receive an arrival window, the hospital will have five hours notice before they can begin vaccinations. The spokesman also said if the shipment isn't on site by 1 p.m., that would push the vaccinations to the following day.

AMITA Health operates several facilities, including St. Alexius Medical Center Hoffman Estates where the first identified coronavirus case in Illinois and the second in the nation was treated. While vaccinations at that facility - some for staff that treated that first patient - were initially scheduled to begin Wednesday, a spokesman for AMITA Health said they would be pushed back until Friday morning.

AMITA Health's first vaccinations were slated to be held at Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet at 3 p.m., the spokesman said.

A spokeswoman for OSF HealthCare said Wednesday that the health system "experienced a delay" getting its doses of the vaccine to Little Company of Mary Hospital in Evergreen Park, noting they were "awaiting word from the state" on when the vaccine would arrive.

Meanwhile, Norwegian American Hospital in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood planned to conduct its first vaccinations on Thursday afternoon, inoculating five Latino health care workers. A spokeswoman for the hospital noted that it serves a majority-Latino population that has seen some of the highest positivity rates in testing in the city.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the existing disparities in our health care system that have severely impacted underserved communities like Humboldt Park," Norwegian's President and CEO José R. Sánchez said in a statement. "To control the spread of COVID-19, we must have a plan that makes including the Latino community a priority in this country."

Hospitals in Chicago, across Illinois and around the country began to vaccinate health care workers on Tuesday. The first shipment of Pfizer's vaccine arrived in Illinois on Monday, with thousands of doses then being processed to go to hospitals across the state, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said.

Pritzker's office said the first shipment, delivered to the Illinois Strategic National Stockpile, contained approximately 43,000 doses of the vaccine.

Chicago received a shipment on Monday as well, one of five local health departments to receive direct shipments independent of the state. The four others include: Cook County Department of Public Health, Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center, Madison County Health Department, and St. Clair County Health Department.

Chicago is slated to receive roughly 23,000 doses of the vaccine in the coming days, with more scheduled to arrive after the first wave. Those doses are part of the approximately 109,000 allotted to Illinois in the first round of shipments.

Chicago administered the first doses of Pfizer's vaccine to five health care workers on Tuesday in what city officials touted as an "historic" moment at Loretto Hospital on the city's West Side.

Dubbing the day "Vaccine Day" in Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said "we have finally and at long last officially taken our first steps in our long road toward COVID vaccination."

Chicago's top doctor called it "the beginning of what will be the end of COVID-19 in Chicago."

"There is nothing I wanted more for Christmas than a vaccine that looked like this," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said after witnessing the first vaccinations.

City officials thanked both the workers who received the vaccine and those who administered it.

"They are forever now part of history in the city of Chicago and I think they recognize how important it is for them and for our city," Lightfoot said.

Lightfoot praised the first vaccinations but noted Tuesday that "widespread community distribution of the vaccine is still months away."

"While we can see light at the end of the tunnel, we are still in the tunnel," Lightfoot said, noting she was quoting an unnamed doctor. "We still have places in our city where this terrible virus is ravaging the body, mind and spirit of so many. We will be here unfortunately for months to come."

Also Tuesday, the first doses to be administered outside of Chicago were given in Peoria, with Pritzker and Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike witnessing.

"This is a beginning for the state of Illinois," Pritzker said at the event.

When it comes to who will get the vaccine first, Chicago and Illinois health officials have long said they would follow federal public health guidelines to first vaccinate health care workers on the frontlines of fighting the pandemic. The city has said there are roughly 400,000 health care workers in the city, including doctors, nurses and other hospital staff.

"We will shortly, just within the next couple of weeks, be expanding to long-term care facilities, both staff and residents there," Arwady said. "Then we're expecting by approximately the end of year late December, early January to start also moving into the space of outpatient health care providers."

After frontline health care workers and residents and staff of long-term care facilities, the city says priority will be given to workers in essential and critical industries including emergency services personnel, people at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions and people ages 65 and older.

"We've already been at this for nearly a year and I think we're going to be at it for probably another year by the time we really get to the point where this is in the rearview mirror," Arwady said. "But it is within our power to keep this virus in control. You know the things that work - please continue to do them."



Shipments of COVID-19 Vaccine to Illinois Expected to be Cut in Half by Feds: Pritzker

**Pritzker says that the decrease in doses being shipped to Illinois will likely occur for each of the next two weeks**

**Published December 16, 2020**

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/shipments-of-covid-19-vaccine-to-illinois-expected-to-be-cut-in-half-by-feds-pritzker/2396432/>

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker says that state and local health officials are preparing for smaller shipments of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine in coming weeks, as federal officials have informed states that the original shipments of the treatment will be roughly cut in half.

Originally, an estimated 8.8 million coronavirus vaccine doses were set to be delivered to cities and states across the U.S., but that estimate has been cut in half for each of the next two weeks, Pritzker said.

“Per the direction of Operation Warp Speed’s General Perna, that estimate was tightened significantly down to 4.3 million doses shipped nationally next week. The following week, originally projected for another 8.8 million, is also now also scheduled to be 4.3 million,” Pritzker said.

As a result, the governor says that the move to cut the shipments in half will likely mean that the state and the city of Chicago will also see their own shipments halved as they begin the process of inoculating health care workers.

Pritzker and Dr. Ngozi Ezike, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, say that the shipments of the vaccine will continue, but cautioned that projections on how much of the vaccine that the state can anticipate receiving will continue to fluctuate based on the latest information from the federal government.

As for questions about whether the distribution of the vaccine is on schedule, Pritzker emphasized that the state has worked with the Illinois Hospital Association and other groups on a schedule for the vaccine to be delivered to various areas, but that the four counties in the state that have already received the vaccine were shipped that treatment directly by the federal government.

“(The rollout) has been done in coordination with the Illinois Hospital Association and the local public health departments working with their hospitals,” Pritzker said. “The schedule has been set for some time now, and the deliveries have ensued.”

Ezike said that the vaccine is expected to be delivered to long-term care facilities for administration beginning on Dec. 28. Those vaccines will be administered through a partnership between Walgreens and CVS and the federal government.

Ezike did warn that decreased allocations could impact the rollout to skilled nursing facilities, but said that it is unclear at this time whether that impact will take place.

Chicago received a shipment on Monday as well, one of five local health departments to receive direct shipments independent of the state. The four others include: Cook County Department of Public Health, Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center, Madison County Health Department, and St. Clair County Health Department.

Some hospitals, including Loyola University Medical Center in suburban Maywood and Edwards Hospital in suburban Naperville, are still awaiting their first doses of the vaccine to arrive, but Pritzker says that those deliveries remain on schedule.

The Cook County Department of Public Health had also not received its supply of the vaccine, a spokeswoman said Wednesday, anticipating it would arrive Thursday.

Pritzker's office said the first shipment, delivered to the Illinois Strategic National Stockpile, contained approximately 43,000 doses of the vaccine.

Chicago is slated to receive roughly 23,000 doses of the vaccine in the coming days, with more scheduled to arrive after the first wave. Those doses are part of the approximately 109,000 allotted to Illinois in the first round of shipments.



# Coronavirus Vaccine and Allergic Reactions: What We Know So Far

Questions surrounding the coronavirus vaccine and allergic reactions heightened this week after a health care worker in Alaska developed a severe reaction requiring hospitalization

Published December 17, 2020

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/coronavirus-vaccine-and-allergic-reactions-what-we-know-so-far/2397217/>

Here's what we know so far about the coronavirus vaccine and potential allergic reactions:

Should you get the vaccine if you have a history of allergic reactions?

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends anyone with an allergy to "any component" of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine not get the vaccine.

Those with a history of allergies, however, should consult with their doctor first, the agency said, calling "a history of severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis to any vaccine or to any injectable therapy... a precaution, but not contraindication, to vaccination."

"These persons may still receive vaccination, but they should be counseled about the unknown risks of developing a severe allergic reaction and balance these risks against the benefits of vaccination," the CDC's guidance [reads](#).

It also recommends such patients be monitored for at least 30 minutes, while those with no history be monitored for at least 15 minutes.

The U.K.'s Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency [updated its guidance last week](#) to advise people who have a history of "significant" allergic reactions to forgo the vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. The updated guidance came after two members of Britain's National Health Service experienced allergic reactions to the shot, though both are recovering well, according to the national medical director for the NHS.

"We know from the extensive clinical trials that this was not a feature, but if we need to strengthen our advice now that we have had this experience in vulnerable populations, the groups selected as a priority, we get that advice to the field immediately," Dr. June Raine, head of the MHRA, told a U.K. government select committee.

Vaccine expert, Dr. Paul Offit, who served on the Food and Drug Administration's vaccine advisory panel, said he believes the recommendations out of the United Kingdom were "premature and ill-considered."

"There are tens of millions of people in the United States who carry epipens because they have severe allergic reactions," Offit said. "So that [recommendation] has been modified to something far more sensible."

According to Offit, those who have vaccine allergy history or a history of reactions from injectable therapy would be at greatest risk.

"However, if you have a severe allergic response, otherwise - so for example, people commonly have peanut allergies or egg allergies, other food allergies - that you still can get this vaccine, you just need to wait for 30 minutes in the area

where you've gotten that vaccine so that if you do have an allergic reaction, somebody would be able to give you a shot of epinephrine to reverse it," he said. "And then we for everybody else, we make a recommendation we always make with vaccines, which is that whenever you get a vaccine, you should hang around for about 15 minutes to make sure you didn't have a severe allergic reaction because one out of every million doses roughly of vaccines is complicated by severe allergic reaction."

He noted that "we don't really know what happened in the United Kingdom."

"I really do think in the next couple months, we'll be able to dissect out what part of that vaccine may have been the problem," Offit said.

How are health officials preparing for the possibility of such reactions?

In Illinois, health experts have been prepared for the possibility of allergic reactions and have monitored health care workers who are among the first to receive the vaccine.

"Much has been made of a couple of recent cases documented in the United Kingdom of individuals who experienced severe allergic reactions," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, a senior medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Rubin said county guidance "will ensure that appropriate medical treatment is available to manage any immediate allergic reactions" and that all people who receive the vaccine will be monitored for at least 15 minutes after receiving the shot.

The Alaska worker's reaction is the first reported in the U.S.

During a media briefing Wednesday, health officials said a middle-aged woman at the Bartlett Regional Hospital in Juneau, Alaska [had to be hospitalized overnight](#) after she developed a severe reaction Tuesday evening, [NBC News reports](#).

The woman had no history of allergies and had never experienced anaphylaxis, a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction, health officials said.

Pfizer said in a statement that the company is "working with local health authorities to assess" the reaction that occurred in Alaska, and will "closely monitor all reports suggestive of serious allergic reactions following vaccination and update labeling language if needed."

Dr. Jay Butler, head of the COVID-19 response at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the Alaska case is the only allergic reaction to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine reported in the United States so far.

Are allergic reactions to vaccines common?

Allergies are always a question with a new medical product, but monitoring COVID-19 vaccines for any other, unexpected side effects is a bigger challenge than usual. It's not just because so many people need to be vaccinated over the next year. Never before have so many vaccines made in different ways converged at the same time — and it's possible that one shot option will come with different side effects than another.

The first vaccine beginning widespread use in the U.S. and many Western countries, made by Pfizer Inc. and Germany's BioNTech, and a second option expected soon from competitor Moderna Inc. both are made the same way. The Food and Drug Administration says huge studies of each have uncovered no major safety risks.

But the allergy concern "points out again the importance of real-time safety monitoring," [said Dr. Jesse Goodman of Georgetown University](#), a former FDA vaccine chief.

And authorities have multiple ways of tracking how people fare as these COVID-19 vaccines, and hopefully additional ones in coming months, get into more arms.

## Jackson wants Cook County Jail detainees, staff included in first round of COVID-19 vaccinations

The danger is not only to those inside the jail, but for the broader community as well, Jackson argued.

By Mitch Dudek

Dec 17, 2020

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/2020/12/17/22187571/coronavirus-chicago-cook-county-jail-detainees-staff-vaccinations-vaccine-priority-jesse-jackson>

The Rev. Jesse Jackson on Thursday called for detainees and staff at the Cook County Jail to be included in the first round of folks eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations in Illinois.

Currently, those vaccinations are reserved for front-line medical workers and people at long-term care facilities and assisted-living facilities.

Jackson argued staff and detainees who aren't able to socially distance, and who rotate in and out of the jail, present a danger to the broader community.

"It's an incubator for infestation and the spread of disease," Jackson said at a news conference outside the jail in the Little Village neighborhood on the Southwest Side.

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart is also calling for detainees and jail staff to be included in the first round of vaccinations, which began in Chicago and across the nation this week.

Dart was infected with COVID-19 last month and recently resumed working from home. He didn't attend the news conference but allowed it to be held on jail grounds.

Israel Rocha, CEO of Cook County Health, which operates Stroger and Provident hospitals and a slew of other county health facilities, including one inside the jail, agrees with Jackson.

"A failure to account for the enhanced risk that comes with congregate settings could lead to a greater public health hazard and unnecessary exposure to the community at large," Rocha said in a statement.

"It's a very transient place, with staff and detainees in and out every day," said Caryn Stancik, a spokeswoman for Cook County Health. "Vaccinating them all would protect the population inside the jail and it would absolutely protect the population outside the jail."

The Chicago Department of Public Health is following federal guidelines to determine the order vaccinations.

While jail employees do have some priority in receiving the vaccine, "we are concerned about the fact that jails have not been prioritized in the same way as other congregate settings," Stancik said.

Spokespersons for the city health department and Mayor Lori Lightfoot didn't immediately return requests for comment.

Cases at the jail peaked Dec. 7, with 370 detainees fighting the COVID-19. The previous high was 307 on April 10.

As of Thursday, about 270 detainees and 66 staff members were infected with the coronavirus.

Releasing more detainees through alternatives to incarceration, such as home monitoring, would be the quickest way to bring cases down again, and would protect not only detainees but also the community at large, advocates and public officials say.

However, previous attempts to release more detainees have been met with criticism that releasing inmates leads to spikes in crime, which sources said has made it difficult to take the same action now.

In February, the jail had about 5,500 detainees. In April, county officials reduced that to around 4,000 detainees, the lowest level on record, mostly through releasing detainees with health risks, or those determined to be a low risk to public safety.

Thursday, the jail population was 5,416.

Four corrections officers and eight detainees at the jail have died from COVID-19.



# A historic week: Hear from healthcare workers across Chicagoland as the COVID-19 vaccine arrives

## MEDICAL WATCH

by: [Katharin Czink](#), [Dina Bair](#)

Posted: Dec 18, 2020

<https://wgntv.com/news/medical-watch/a-historic-week-hear-from-healthcare-workers-across-chicagoland-as-the-covid-19-vaccine-arrives/>

It was a historic week. The arrival of the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine spread a sense of hope across the country. Doctors and nurses on the frontlines are calling the milestone the beginning of the end.

Some arrived before the sun. Others rolled in to applause.

It was history. And it came in a tiny bottle.

Tracy Everett is an emergency medicine nurse at Cook County Health's Stroger Hospital.

On the day she received her vaccination she said, "Today is a very happy day for me because today is light at the end of the tunnel. I come to work every day because this is what I signed up to do, to be a nurse, to take care of others, to take care of the underserved population that really needs my help. I'm very proud that I was able to survive and not get COVID myself and be here today to get the injection."

Dr. Jaime Moreno grew up near Mount Sinai Hospital. The emergency room physician has treated hundreds of COVID-19 patients.

"There's never a boring day at Sinai," Moreno said. "You see how entire families are affected. You've had multiple family members come in sick and multiple members pass away."

Moreno was "excited" to get the vaccine.

"We've all been wishing for this day. It's historic that it finally came and that it came so quickly," Moreno said. "It's a very welcome day. We needed something to turn the tide. We're not doing too well so this is a very big day."

Vaccinations ran late into the evening at Amita Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale.

"It's like Christmas," said certified nurse midwife Kelly Aten. "Everyone is on edge and excited and ready to get going with this."

Each injection was carefully documented on paper and for posterity.

"Every time I come into the hospital, you always wonder, 'Is today going to be the day I take my mask off at the wrong time? Or I rub my eyes in an inopportune time?'" Dr Leslie Sleuwen said. "And I go home to a family, and I'm always concerned am I bringing something home to them."

COVID has been a constant in their professional lives. But for some, it's personal.

Certified nurse midwife Jaci Noto's father Rick Bender was only 61-years-old when he passed away.

"My dad died one month ago today from COVID," she said. "I didn't get to see him. I didn't get to say goodbye. I'm often the support person for clients who can't have all the family they might want to attend the birth. But I couldn't go be the support person for my person. So anything we can do to reduce numbers is imperative."

"I think it's great Chicagoland has been able to get the vaccine and the healthcare workers are getting vaccinated so that we can continue on and take care of patients and not get sick ourselves," Sleuwen said.

"I believe this is hope," said Tracy Everett. "I'm very hopeful."



## Second COVID-19 Vaccine Could Be Added to Rollout in Coming Days

Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine could be added to the Illinois rollout in coming days if it is approved for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. NBC 5's Lexi Sutter reports.

December 18, 2020





# COVID vaccinations begin at Stroger, Roseland Community hospitals in Chicago

By [Liz Nagy](#) and [Sarah Schulte](#)

Thursday, December 17, 2020

<https://abc7chicago.com/covid-vaccine-vaccinations-chicago-cook-county-hospital/8856039/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- The first COVID-19 vaccines were administered at several Chicago area hospitals Thursday, where frontline health care workers were the first to receive the shots.

The shipment of the century rolled into Cook County Health Thursday morning loaded with anticipation. Every step had to be executed down to the second, carefully unloaded into ultra-cold storage. A few precious vials were left out to thaw.

"Today is different for me because it's almost a renewed hope, because we have this virus and it's almost like a light at the end of the tunnel," said Tracy Everett, who has spent months taking in the sickest patients at Cook County's Stroger Hospital. "The things that's going through my mind right now is just that I'm happy that we've come to this point."

Without hesitation, Everett rolled up her sleeve, and with 9 months of anticipation, got her first real shot of relief. Dr. Pilar Guerrero eagerly followed seconds later.

"It's not a lot of pain there, but I know something went in," Everett said. "But I feel great."

"It was exciting. I couldn't even talk," Dr. Guerrero said. "Someone tried to ask me questions afterwards and I was like, my stomach, just feeling it."

When they return to work in the emergency room this weekend, undoubtedly to treat more COVID patients, it will be the first time in months things feel just a little different.

"It lowers our stress level because this is a vaccination that will protect us from this virus. Not just the people I work with, but the people in the community that we service."

Cook county Health plans to begin mass vaccination on Friday, inoculating about another 80 employees. Several miles south in Chicago's hard-hit Roseland Community Hospital, the first COVID vaccines were injected into the arms of vulnerable hospital engineers and housekeepers.

The Far South Side hospital has enough doses to vaccinate all employees, but they are beginning with five.

Dan Moriarty, a hospital engineer responsible for converting regular patient rooms into COVID rooms, was among them.

"I'm a little nervous, but I'm kind of excited to start getting back to normal," Moriarty said.

Housekeeper Linda Seaverson helps clean COVID patients' rooms. She also is among the first to receive the vaccine.

"It's real important for everybody, from young to old," Seaverson said.

Because there has been some reluctance among employees to take the vaccine, Roseland CEO Tim Egan said it was important to begin vaccinating with a variety of workers so they can educate others.

"When you get to support services like our housekeeping, it shows that they are valuable like everyone else in this family providing services for patients," Egan said. They want to get vaccinated, too."

Doctors on the frontline are eager to get the vaccination ball rolling, especially since the Roseland community has been hit hard by COVID-19. The death rate is 67 percent higher than the city average.

A portion of the emergency room has been converted into an ICU. ER Dr. Tunji Lapido received the vaccine Thursday as well.

"People don't have all the facts," Dr. Lapido said. "We, as professionals, have to be able to get that information out to people. We have to convince people, we are determined to that."



**At Issue: Cook County Health adapts to reduced vaccine supply**

By [Craig Dellimore](#)

December 18, 2020

<https://www.radio.com/us99/news/local/cook-county-health-adapts-to-reduced-vaccine-supply>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- Cook County Health officials say they're concerned about getting far fewer doses of Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine than they were expecting.

Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-leader of Cook County's Public Health Department, said it's just the latest example of medical officials dealing with a fluid situation.

Distribution of the vaccine creates challenges because of requirements to store it in ultra-cold conditions.

Dr. Sharon Welbel, chair of infection control for Cook County's Health and Hospitals System, said officials were surprised to learn only about half of the promised doses of the COVID-19 vaccine would be available in the early months.

Cook County is coordinating with its partners to adjust.

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker this week said federal officials have not offered an explanation for the halving of the supply.

The Vaccine and the Health Systems are the focus of "At Issue," which airs 9:30 p.m. Sunday.



## What To Know About Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, And The COVID-19 Vaccine

by Kimberly Zapata

December 18, 2020

<https://www.scarymommy.com/pregnancy-breastfeeding-covid-19-vaccine/>

With the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine now in the hands (or, should we say, arms) of Americans, some are beginning to breathe a sigh of relief. After all, the vaccine — developed by Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE — is approximately 95 percent effective. That means there is hope. Potential. There may actually be an end to this crisis in sight. However, not everyone can take the vaccine. The inoculation was not approved for use in children, for example, and while those who have had a severe allergic reaction to a vaccine or injectable therapy may be inoculated, they should proceed with caution. But where does that leave pregnant people?

Here's everything we know about pregnancy, breastfeeding, and the COVID-19 vaccine.

### Can those who are pregnant receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

The COVID vaccine has not yet been tested in pregnant people. In fact, they were specifically excluded from Pfizer's clinical trials — and all of the trials thus far. Why? Well, because in general, drug and vaccine makers are reluctant to include pregnant individuals in these studies for fear of injuring the developing fetus and/or threatening the pregnancy. That said, there is hope.

The Society of Maternal Fetal Medicine and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology both support the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention believes the decision can (and should) be made circumstantially. Pregnant people should speak with their healthcare provider regarding the pros and cons, and Dr. Peter Klatsky, the co-founder of Spring Fertility, tells Scary Mommy that (so far) the benefits appear to outweigh the risks: "Given the molecular makeup of the virus, the risk of fetal harm is low."

Plus, by time the vaccine is available to the general public, more information should be available.

### How about those who are nursing? Can the virus be transmitted to your toddler or infant?

While it seems unlikely the COVID-19 vaccine will negatively impact those who are breastfeeding or nursing, the truth is we don't yet know. Pfizer didn't test the vaccine in expectant or lactating individuals. However, according to Klatsky, the risk is low.

"Since individuals who were and/or are infected with the virus have continued to breastfeed and there have not been any transmissions to date, we can therefore extrapolate that the vaccine is probably safe," says Klatsky. What's more, there's a good chance the vaccine will be beneficial, for the nursing parent and child.

"Much like other vaccines... it is likely that the COVID-19 vaccine will boost the mother's immunity to develop antibodies against the virus which she can share with her child through breast milk," Dr. Gan Eng Cern — a physician in Edinburgh, United Kingdom — tells Scary Mommy.

### Does the COVID-19 vaccine affect fertility?

While little is known about the long term effects of coronavirus and/or the COVID-19 vaccine, initial reports suggest the inoculation will not impact fertility. In fact, Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious diseases attending physician and the vaccination coordinator for COVID-19 at Cook County Health, told NBC 5 in Chicago that there is currently no “suggestion that [the vaccine] could affect future fertility” — though Huhn admitted the lack of data poses a challenge.

### **Is there an increased miscarriage rate and/or risk?**

According to Dr. Robert Atlas — the chair of obstetrics and gynecology at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, Maryland — the COVID-19 vaccine does not increase the rate (or risk) of miscarriage in pregnant people. “We do not believe there is any increased risk of early pregnancy loss associated with the vaccine or mild COVID-19 illness,” Atlas says. “Certainly, patients who get very ill and have severe respiratory issues or oxygenation may experience an increased risk of loss. However, in most situations, that is not the case.”

### **Can you take the COVID-19 vaccine if you are actively trying to become pregnant?**

Yes, you can take the COVID-19 vaccine if you suspect you are pregnant and/or are trying to become pregnant. In fact, anyone can. “Pregnant individuals and breastfeeding mothers can choose to get inoculated by the vaccine,” Cern says. “It’s totally up to you.” And while there have been no clinical trials done on expectant parents, about two dozen people who got the vaccine became pregnant while participating in said studies. No complications were reported.

### **Are there any known side effects or complications?**

According to the Food and Drug Administration, the most common side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are pain, redness and/or swelling at the injection site. However, fatigue, headaches, chills, muscle pain, and/or joint pain have also been reported.

That said, whether you receive the vaccine or not is your decision. No one can choose what is right for you or your body or baby. However, all individuals — pregnant or not — should continue to follow social distancing guidelines. Masks should be worn, properly and consistently, and even if you are vaccinated, you can and should continue to protect others.

## **COVID-19 numbers move in the 'right direction' in Illinois as vaccines distributed nationwide**

**Leslie Renken**

Journal Star

<https://www.pjstar.com/story/news/2020/12/19/pritzker-illinois-covid-19-metrics-moving-right-direction/3963073001/>

Some lawmakers put aside partisan politics this past week to show that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe and to encourage people to get it.

Early Friday morning, Vice President Mike Pence was vaccinated on a live television broadcast from the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

Republican Senator and majority leader Mitch McConnell got his shot a short time later, writing on Twitter that “vaccines are how we beat this virus,” according to the New York Times.

Democrat Speaker Nancy Pelosi was also recently vaccinated, and President-elect Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, are scheduled to receive an injection on camera on Monday.

### **Pritzker to halt daily COVID updates**

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker told media on Friday that he will stop having regular weekday press conferences about the coronavirus.

According to NBC Chicago, Pritzker said he would end the in-person COVID-19 updates and noted that coronavirus numbers are “moving in the right direction.” He also said the press conferences would happen “as-needed,” according to multiple media reports.

Pritzker had been giving updates about the pandemic Monday through Friday this fall, in addition to countless social media posts.

More than 15,000 people have died in Illinois because of the coronavirus, state officials said. As of Thursday night, 4,690 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, with 1,023 of those patients in intensive-care units and 589 on ventilators.

COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and test-positivity rates remain stable or are dropping, though the statistics are too high overall to justify the relaxation of Tier 3 restrictions on businesses statewide, Pritzker said.

### **Unclear how much vaccine is headed to Illinois**

With a massive distribution effort underway across the nation, frontline workers in Illinois received the first doses of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccinations this past week.

Shipments of vaccine were delivered first to hospitals deemed as Regional Healthcare Coalition Hubs, including OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. Subsequent shipments went to 45 counties and local health departments and 77 hospitals statewide, Pritzker said.

“As of this morning, about 3,500 vaccinations — all to healthcare workers — with many more scheduled for today and throughout the weekend,” Pritzker said on Thursday. “That’s just out of our initial statewide shipment, separate from Chicago. And today, 43,000 additional doses arrived from the federal government at Cook County Health.”

How much vaccine is coming next is still in question. On Wednesday, Pritzker said that projected numbers were likely half of what was first anticipated, an example of how fluid the distribution process is.

The governor said other states are in the same predicament.

### **Nursing home vaccinations will begin soon**

While the first doses of vaccine have been slated for the people caring for COVID-19 patients, nursing home patients are also near the top of the [Illinois Department of Public Health's Mass Vaccination Planning Guide](#).

Because nursing homes and long-term care facilities don't have the special sub-zero freezers needed to store the Pfizer vaccine, they will be receiving the Moderna vaccine, which went through the Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization process this week.

On Thursday afternoon, [Hendrickson announced](#) that vaccinations will likely begin the last week of December as shipments of that vaccine start arriving in the Tri-County area

"The goal is that, in the last week of December, they will start rolling out across the state and really pick up speed in the first part of January," she said.



## Jail, Prison Populations Must be Among First to Get COVID-19 Vaccine: Advocacy Groups

[Matt Masterson](#)

December 23, 2020 8:11 pm

<https://news.wttw.com/2020/12/21/jail-prison-populations-must-be-among-first-get-covid-19-vaccine-advocacy-groups>

Dozens of legal and community advocacy groups signed an open letter Monday urging the Illinois Department of Public Health to prioritize incarcerated individuals and staff working in jails and prisons in its COVID-19 vaccine rollout. More than 60 organizations signed the letter, which was sent to IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike, pleading with the department to include those in jails and prisons among the first groups to be immunized.

“Across the United States and specifically in Illinois, data has shown that incarcerated individuals are among the populations most vulnerable to be infected with and die from COVID-19,” the letter states. “We ask that IDPH acknowledge the high risk of COVID-19 exposure for people living in all forms of state custody and the staff who work with them and prioritize them for vaccinations.”

Alan Mills, executive director of the Uptown People’s Law Center — one of the groups that signed the letter — said that from March until August this year, there had been 368 coronavirus cases within the Illinois Department of Corrections. As of Monday, there are now more than 6,000 detainees who have tested positive for COVID-19, including nearly 1,200 who currently have the virus.

This morning, more than 60 organizations sent a letter to the Illinois Department of Public Health requesting that the state prioritize incarcerated people in its COVID-19 vaccination rollout plan.

Read the letter: <https://t.co/Lgv21kfTU3>

— Coalition to End Money Bond (@endmoneybond) [December 21, 2020](#)

---

Mills said the groups have three basic demands: that prisoners not be discriminated against or excluded from the vaccine rollout; that jails and prisons be recognized as congregate settings and given the highest vaccine priority; and that jail and prison staff not be prioritized over detainees and prisoners.

“Unlike the rest of the world, prisons have total control over who comes in and out of the prisons. They could have stopped the introduction (of COVID-19 into those facilities) entirely. They chose not to do that,” Mills said during a Facebook Live event Monday. “Well now there’s a second chance. Now we have a vaccine coming out, but the question is: Will prisoners again be forgotten or will this time prisoners actually be prioritized so we can stop this spread of COVID within the prison systems?”

Earlier this month, the union representing some 3,000 corrections officers at the Cook County Jail demanded its members be [at the front of the line for COVID-19 vaccines](#). The Cook County Sheriff’s Office also said it has been urging public health officials for months to ensure corrections officers are among the first to receive vaccinations.

Since the pandemic began, more than 1,150 detainees at the jail have tested positive for the coronavirus. Earlier this month, the number of active positive cases at the jail actually exceeded the peak from the initial outbreak in the spring, but that figure has declined in recent days.

At the jail, eight detainees, four corrections officers and one sheriff’s deputy have died after testing positive for COVID-19.

According to the letter, six states have already included incarcerated populations among the first groups to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. IDPH’s plan, released earlier this month, does not yet have a designation for when those groups could begin getting vaccines.

Given what they call Illinois’ “particularly dangerous experience” with coronavirus outbreaks in jails and prisons, the organizations claim it’s vital for state leaders to update that plan to include these groups in the first possible phase of vaccinations.

“Vaccinations of staff will not be enough to stop the spread of COVID-19 in correctional facilities,” the letter states.

“COVID-19 outbreaks are currently raging through our prisons and jails; it is imperative as a matter of fundamental human rights that we protect the lives of vulnerable individuals, whom the state has sentenced to serve time in these facilities, by offering them the option of COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible.”

# Chicago Tribune

**Oped: Toni Preckwinkle: Why I will take the COVID-19 vaccine**

**By TONI PRECKWINKLE**

DEC 23, 2020 AT 12:43 PM

[https://www.google.com/search?q=tribune+chicago+logo&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKewiDzcqyvvrDuAhXvi60KHZwRCjYQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=tribune+chicago+logo&gs\\_lcp=CgNpbWcQAzIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAIEB4yBggAEAgQHjIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAIEB46BggAEAcQHjoICAAQCBAHEB5QybnjAViNwuMBYMBd4wFoAHAAeACAAUmIAe4DkgEBOJgBAKABAaoBC2d3cy13aXotaW1nwAEB&sclient=img&ei=0MLYMPRI--XtgWco6iwAw&bih=610&biw=1018](https://www.google.com/search?q=tribune+chicago+logo&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKewiDzcqyvvrDuAhXvi60KHZwRCjYQ2-cCegQIABAA&oq=tribune+chicago+logo&gs_lcp=CgNpbWcQAzIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAIEB4yBggAEAgQHjIGCAAQCBAeMgYIABAIEB46BggAEAcQHjoICAAQCBAHEB5QybnjAViNwuMBYMBd4wFoAHAAeACAAUmIAe4DkgEBOJgBAKABAaoBC2d3cy13aXotaW1nwAEB&sclient=img&ei=0MLYMPRI--XtgWco6iwAw&bih=610&biw=1018)

On Dec. 17, I had the honor of witnessing Cook County Health's first COVID-19 vaccination at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital. Tracy Everett, an emergency nurse, was **first to receive the vaccine**. At the end of a year marked by despair and loss, there was a sense of relief and joy in the room as Everett received the shot. I saw tears in many of her colleagues' eyes as they clapped and cheered.

The vaccination of millions of people will require time and patience, but the arrival of the vaccine inspires hope when we need it most. This year has been challenging in ways we could never have imagined. More than 323,000 American lives have been lost; more than 7,800 in Cook County. Residents are out of jobs, struggling to pay bills, and small businesses are suffering. We have missed weddings, holidays and other cherished moments. We are longing for the normalcy we once took for granted, like a hug from a loved one or a nice meal out with a friend.

As the vaccine arrived in Cook County, I thought about growing up when nearly every child at school contracted measles, mumps and chickenpox. While most recovered quickly, there were the unfortunate exceptions of those who suffered long-term effects or succumbed to their illness. Over the years as the vaccines became routine, these viruses became much less common. I am confident that in due time, the same will be true for COVID-19. But to get there, we must encourage residents to get vaccinated.

Despite the misinformation or distrust many Americans have for vaccines, I will do my part and receive the inoculation when my turn comes.

My daughter is a nurse. Through her eyes, I've seen the demanding nature of the job, even in normal times. But this year, our health care workers — doctors, nurses, emergency medical technicians and hospital staff — have selflessly given so much under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. I am grateful that the heroes of our health care systems are the first to receive the vaccine so they can protect themselves as they continue to protect us.

Based on guidance from the federal government and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, local health departments will prioritize high-risk populations including emergency medical staff, residents of long-term care facilities and individuals with underlying chronic medical conditions to receive the vaccine first. But as supplies increase in the coming weeks and months, the time will come when ordinary residents can receive the vaccine. While I know that many will be eager to receive it, others are wary of the vaccine.

As a Black woman, I am aware of the historical racism in medicine and the exploitation of Black people for medical purposes. I also understand how our country's pervasive racism has too often prevented Black and brown communities from accessing the health care they need.

I am proud to say that Cook County has prioritized equity in our vaccine distribution plan. The Cook County Department of Public Health has developed a flexible, responsive vaccination program that can accommodate different vaccines. The vaccine will be free to residents. We are working closely with partners, such as hospitals, health care facilities, retail pharmacies and nursing homes, to ensure that residents can get the vaccine at a site convenient for them.

I urge residents to be mindful of vaccine information and to do their own research from trusted sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The bottom line is the vaccine is safe, effective and our best chance to protect ourselves and our communities. Studies indicate that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are as high as 95% effective.

When we contract COVID-19, we risk infecting those around us. But similarly, when we receive the vaccine, we are protecting those around us. When considering the vaccine, think not only of yourself, but of your elderly family members, your child's teacher or the bus operator on your morning commute.

For too many people, memories of 2020 will always be synonymous with tragedy and loss. But we know we are strong and resilient. I look forward to the days ahead as we return to some sense of normalcy. To get there, I urge Cook County to join me in taking the COVID-19 vaccine when our time comes.

*Toni Preckwinkle is president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners.*

*Submit a letter, of no more than 400 words, to the editor [here](#) or email [letters@chicagotribune.com](mailto:letters@chicagotribune.com).*



Chicago Opens First Mass COVID-19 Vaccination Site At Malcolm X College

By [Meredith Barack](#) December 29, 2020 at 11:09 am

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2020/12/29/chicago-mass-vaccination-covid-19-malcolm-x-college/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — Chicago’s first mass vaccination site opened Tuesday morning at Malcolm X College in the Medical District.

Dr. Allison Arwady received her Pfizer vaccine at the site Tuesday morning.

“I am really really pleased to be able to get my vaccine today, I have absolutely no hesitation about it,” Arwady said.

The site is only open to hospital workers and appointments are required.

The number of people vaccinated against COVID-19 in the Chicago area could soon surge. Already more than 113,000 of the shots have been given in Illinois, putting the state in the top five in distribution. Now there is a new push to get even more people vaccinated.

The City of Chicago is still in Phase 1A of vaccinations, meaning health care workers and long term care facility residents are the only ones who are getting shots, but Monday afternoon CBS 2 learned there will be a significant expansion that will allow thousands more to receive the vaccine.

“The city is standing up it’s first central mass vaccination clinic, which again will be focused only for outpatient health care workers by appointment,” said Dr. Allison Arwady, head of the Chicago Department of Public Health.

This comes as the Moderna vaccine is beginning to be widely distributed and more shipments of the Pfizer vaccine are delivered.

CBS 2 reached out to several area hospital systems, and many said that the vaccinations were going well. A spokesperson for the University of Chicago Health System said 4,500 people have received the vaccine or have an appointment to get one. They expect to get their next shipment Tuesday. Nearly 17,000 Advocate Health Care team members have been vaccinated in Illinois and Wisconsin, and Cook County Health expects to have all interested employees vaccinated by Jan. 15. Northshore has vaccinated more than 6,000 team members at its five hospitals. Edward-Elmhurst Health received a Moderna shipment with 2,800 doses Monday.

This all comes as Illinois Monday [surpassed 16,000 COVID-19 deaths](#).

WATCH LIVE: The Chicago Department of Public Health announces the launch of COVID-19 vaccine Points of Dispensing (PODs) at Malcolm X College and CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady receives her vaccine. [#ProtectChicago](#) <https://t.co/dAqL7YmC1I>

— ChiPublicHealth (@ChiPublicHealth) [December 29, 2020](#)



'Stay home and celebrate': CCDPH encourages safe New Year celebrations

By FOX 32 Digital Staff

Published December 30, 2020

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/stay-home-and-celebrate-ccdph-encourages-safe-new-year-celebrations>

**COOK COUNTY, ILL.** - The **Cook County** Department of Public Health said on Wednesday that they are strongly encouraging residents to celebrate the ringing in of 2021 safely and at home due to **COVID-19**.

CCDPH says the safest ways to celebrate are at home with the people who live with you, or virtually.

The public health department is also encouraging less travel to reduce the spread of the virus.

"To ensure a healthy and safe start to 2021, the best thing you can do on New Year's Eve is stay home and celebrate with the people who live with you," said Israel Rocha, Jr., Cook County Health Chief Executive Officer.

Additionally, the public health department is recommending that residents keep unnecessary guests from their homes and avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs.

Residents should also continue to:

- Wear a mask indoors and outdoors;
- Stay at least six feet away from others who do not live with you;
- Avoid crowded, poorly ventilated indoor spaces; and
- Wash your hands often.

"We are all eager to turn the page on 2020 and head toward the light at the end of the tunnel, but the truth is, if we don't continue to follow the expert guidelines, the tunnel will only get longer," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead, Cook County Department of Public Health. "Celebrate safely – for yourself, for your family, for your friends and for those you do not know. We're all in this together and if we do it right, we can return to normal much more quickly."



# Resolutions for New Year? Keep them modest, attainable, expert says

By [Rachel Pierson](#)

December 31, 2020 2:08 pm

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/keep-new-years-resolutions-modest-attainable-expert>

Many are eager to leave 2020 behind and look ahead to 2021, but the tradition of New Year's resolutions will look a bit different in the midst of a pandemic.

"We recommend focusing on resilience and wellness during this time of year," Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of Family and Community Medicine at Cook County Health, said Thursday as the year came to a close.

"Focusing on goals that will keep our families together and keep our psychological well-being in shape — those are the most important things."

Most people tend to set "stretch goals," thinking it will force them to achieve the goal. But when people fall short, they end up feeling disappointed.

"We've learned it's better to set a small goal, an easily attainable goal, and celebrate that success," Loafman said.

That could mean a physical resolution to maintain your weight or a mental goal of appreciating the things you have.

"We're asking folks to be kind to themselves. We've been through a lot and to be alive and well, right now, is a blessing," he said.



# Resolutions for New Year? Keep them modest, attainable, expert says

By [Rachel Pierson](#)

December 31, 2020 2:08 pm

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/keep-new-years-resolutions-modest-attainable-expert>

Many are eager to leave 2020 behind and look ahead to 2021, but the tradition of New Year's resolutions will look a bit different in the midst of a pandemic.

"We recommend focusing on resilience and wellness during this time of year," Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of Family and Community Medicine at Cook County Health, said Thursday as the year came to a close.

"Focusing on goals that will keep our families together and keep our psychological well-being in shape — those are the most important things."

Most people tend to set "stretch goals," thinking it will force them to achieve the goal. But when people fall short, they end up feeling disappointed.

"We've learned it's better to set a small goal, an easily attainable goal, and celebrate that success," Loafman said.

That could mean a physical resolution to maintain your weight or a mental goal of appreciating the things you have.

"We're asking folks to be kind to themselves. We've been through a lot and to be alive and well, right now, is a blessing," he said.



# 2020 Cook County deaths break records due to gun violence, opioid overdoses, COVID-19, ME says

Chicago crime statistics show shootings, murders up 50% in 2020; 2 shot by stray gunfire in South Chicago in first shooting of 2021

By [Jessica D'Onofrio](#) and [Craig Wall](#)

January 1, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/chicago-shootings-2020-shooting-crime-stats-statistics/9250374/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- 2020 was a very deadly year in Cook County.

While the pandemic took a heavy toll, COVID-19 is also being blamed for contributing to a record high number of deaths due to gun violence.

At 18-years-old, Nasee Minniefield just graduated from high school and had his whole life ahead of him, until he was shot and killed on Halloween.

"I really haven't been right since," said Nasee's grandmother, Donna Minniefield. "I'm numb, I'm sad, I'm hurting."

According to the Cook County Medical Examiner's office, Minniefield was one of 875 people who died from gun violence last year; 78% of the victims were Black.

"That is by far the highest total of gun-related homicides we have ever had. The only time we came anywhere near that was in 1994 when we had 838 homicides due to gun violence," said Natalia Derevyanny, Spokeswoman for the Cook County Medical Examiner's office.

"I see so many on TV and I've watched so many innocent children -- kids get killed and I never would have dreamed a day in my life that I would feel the pain that they feel," Minniefield said.

Gun violence deaths were not the only record-breaker for the year. Cook County also recorded a total of 16,049 deaths in 2020, which was also a record.

Those numbers were driven up by the 8,192 lives lost due to COVID-19 infection deaths.

Pandemic stress is also considered a contributing factor to the number of homicides during the unprecedented year.

Chicago police also released the final crime number for 2020 Friday which showed that shootings and murders jumped up by more than 50% in 2020.

In 2020, there were 769 murders, up considerably compared to the 495 murders tallied in 2019.

As for shootings, the city logged 3,261 last year, a big jump from 2,140 shootings in 2019. The number of shooting victims climbed to 4,033 in 2020, up from 2,598 in 2019.

This illustrating a skyrocketing year for violence after three years of progress where many innocent children were killed and some police also became targets of gunfire.

Nearly a quarter of the murders happened on the West Side.

City leaders and a new Chicago police superintendent were forced to tackle civil unrest amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing several community policing strategies amongst other tactics. But police say overall crime is down.

Police Superintendent David Brown is promising to make improvements when it comes to building up community partnerships and strengthening investigations.

"I think our savior is going to be the COVID vaccination," Dr. Faran Bokhari, Chief of Trauma at Cook County Hospital. "I think people are so tired of being indoors and not being able to do what they usually do."

Another sobering statistic is the all-time high number of deaths from opioid overdoses reported by the Cook County Medical Examiner's office. According to the ME, there are 1,599 confirmed cases so far, and potentially as many as 500 more pending toxicology results.

"Really, our worst fears were, you know, really, you know, imagined -- that we've seen the number of opioid fatalities just spike in a very troublesome way," said Dr. Steven Aks, Cook County Hospital ER Physician and Toxicologist.

But behind all the statistics, there are real families who have lost loved ones and who are hurting. These families carry the pain of 2020 into the new year as they hope for healing.

New year of crime

Two people were hit by stray gunfire just after they rang in the New Year.

At around 12 minutes past midnight, Chicago police said a man and a woman were sitting in the living room of a home when shots were fired from outside striking them.

The shooting occurred in the 8700-block of South Buffalo Avenue in the South Chicago neighborhood.

The 51-year-old man is now in critical condition with a gunshot wound to his head and a 51-year-old woman has a graze wound to her head. No one is in custody.

A 41-year-old man was killed in Chicago's first homicide of the new year.

Police said he was driving near 47th and King Drive in the city's Bronzeville neighborhood overnight when someone began shooting.

The man was shot in the neck and crashed his car.

Police have not made any arrests.

Friday morning, Superintendent Brown issued a statement saying:

*"2020 has been a perfect storm.*

*Public safety is an all-hands-on-deck effort that requires not only the police, but street outreach workers, faith leaders, the courts, community organizations, and residents all working together. The criminal justice ecosystem, however, was profoundly impacted and disrupted by the global coronavirus pandemic and the death of George Floyd.*

*The increase in fatal shootings and homicides is not unique to Chicago, as many major city chiefs and law enforcement executives are grappling with unprecedented levels of violence throughout the nation. Our Chicago Police officers faced an unprecedented set of circumstances in contending with a spike in violent crime, made even more difficult by having to contend with a health pandemic while facing extended periods of heightened civil unrest and looting.*

*Our officers have also been subject to violent crime themselves, as shots fired at CPD officers are up 558% since 2015. Since Jan. 1, 2020, 79 officers were shot at in 2020, with 10 officers having been struck by bullets.*

*As the rest of our city and nation grappled with a global pandemic, the Chicago Police Department also recorded over 2,450 confirmed cases of COVID-19 throughout the Department. Sadly, four of our CPD officers succumbed to COVID-related illnesses.*

*Over the summer, we pivoted our crimefighting strategy to a citywide approach toward deploying resources to areas experiencing high levels of violence. This strategic shift has had a positive impact on public safety and has decreased the pace of monthly murders that had accelerated during the first half of 2020. We've also dedicated more resources that will bolster our narcotics investigations into mid-level and upper-level drug dealers, who have proven to serve as major drivers of violence.*

*The best way to reduce crime and violence is to prevent it from happening in the first place by building bridges and trust in the community. Community engagement has become a central component of our public safety approach at the unit level, from the Detective Bureau to the citywide Community Safety Teams and Critical Incident Response Teams. This includes the Rollin' Rec events conducted over the summer in partnership with the Chicago Parks District, along with the upcoming launch of the Police Athletic and Arts League in 2021. We also expanded the Neighborhood Policing Initiative from two to five districts this past summer and will expand into additional districts in 2021.*

*As we close a tumultuous year and prepare for 2021, our Department's vision for a safer Chicago will be rooted in a five-pillar strategy for strategic change: Growing Community Trust, Transformational Change through Reform, Officer Wellness, Ensuring Public Safety and Strengthening Investigations.*

*The Chicago Police Department has a moral obligation to respect the dignity and sanctity of human life. That dignity and respect must be reflected throughout every aspect of how we function and must permeate every aspect of our organizational culture.*

*Lastly, I want to say how proud I am to be associated with the men and women of the Chicago Police Department. No matter the hardship, no matter the danger, they continue to report to duty every day and night to serve and protect this great city."*

# Chicago Tribune

**When will you get the COVID-19 vaccine? Illinois health systems may use electronic medical records to reach patients in next phases.**

By LISA SCHENCKER

JAN 01, 2021 AT 6:00 AM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-patient-vaccines-covid-20210101-m6k3vzcmnnbmhfgukzuhbmvwxi-story.html>

As Illinois hospitals and health systems race to vaccinate their workers, they're thinking ahead to an even larger task: vaccinating patients.

Some are not yet revealing how they'll do that, but several Chicago-area health systems and departments are starting to talk publicly about how they might approach a broader vaccination effort. Their early plans offer a glimpse of what vaccinations might look like for the next groups of people to qualify for COVID-19 vaccines — which will likely include seniors and essential workers.

“Every health care provider around here is developing a mass vaccination program,” said Dr. Don Hoscheit, chief medical officer at DuPage Medical Group.

DuPage Medical Group, which has about a million patients in the west and southwest suburbs, will likely use its electronic medical records to identify patients who are old enough to qualify for the next round of vaccines, Hoscheit said. It can then reach out to those people through MyChart, phone calls, text messages or emails to let them know it's their turn, he said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended that after health care workers and long-term care facility residents get the vaccine, the next groups include people ages 75 and older and essential workers, such as teachers, police and firefighters. After that, the CDC has recommended people ages 65 to 74 and those with certain underlying health conditions get vaccinated.

While distribution of the vaccine has been slower than expected nationally, Gov. J.B. Pritzker's administration has not set a timeline for the rollout in Illinois and has been cautious about projecting too far into the future when enough vaccines will arrive to immunize people beyond the top priority group. The governor has indicated more details could be released this month on [how further vaccine distribution will be prioritized](#).

As of Thursday, 143,924 people in Illinois had received their first doses of the vaccine, according to the governor's office, and as of Tuesday, 269,625 doses of vaccine had been delivered to Illinois, not including the share that went directly to the city of Chicago.

Some local health care providers say vaccines for the next groups of people, beyond health care workers and long-term care facility residents, could be weeks away.

Hoscheit urges patients who don't already use MyChart or similar online patient portals offered by their doctors to sign up for them “because I think that's how a lot of the health systems are going to do outreach.” He said about 60% of DuPage's patients are active on MyChart.

DuPage also plans to use its electronic medical records to identify high-risk patients, Hoscheit said. DuPage already has clinics specifically for patients who are at highest risk of needing hospitalization, meaning the medical group can contact them quickly once it's their time to be vaccinated, he said.

Amita Health, which has 19 hospitals in Illinois, may also turn to electronic medical records to help identify older and high-risk patients, said Dr. Michael Kelleher, who leads Amita's COVID-19 vaccine steering committee. Seniors and essential workers might be able to start receiving vaccinations in February, he said.

Kelleher noted, however, that it could be challenging because not all of Amita's hospitals use the same electronic medical record system. Also, many of Amita's doctors are not employed by Amita — rather they're independent members of the medical staff — meaning their patients' electronic medical records might not be easily accessible to the larger organization.

He said Amita will also likely reach out to doctors to help identify their highest-risk patients.

"The reality about most primary care providers is if you were to ask them who their top 100 highest risk patients are, they could probably name them for you because they're people who are in all the time," Kelleher said.

Amita may also work with the DuPage County Health Department to get seniors and others vaccinated, possibly setting up events at Amita hospitals, he said. And it may collaborate with state or local health departments to vaccinate essential workers, such as those who work at grocery stores or in public transportation.

"That's where it would be great to be able to work with the county or the state to say, 'We need you to figure out a way to verify that these people are who they say they are and qualify,'" Kelleher said.

The Lake County health department has started planning how to reach some of those essential workers. Lake County has [an online registration system](#) called [AllVax](#) where anyone who works or lives there can sign up to be notified when it's time to get vaccinated. As of Thursday, more than 150,000 people had registered, said Mark Pfister, executive director of the Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center.

The county vaccinated more than 660 people this week at a drive-thru site for health care and related workers, including dentists, coroner workers and morticians, he said. Those drive-thru vaccinations will likely continue during the next phase of vaccinations, he said.

The county is working with school systems to set up high schools as potential vaccination sites for educators, he said. It may also give vaccines to large corporations with essential workers, such as food processing companies. The county is considering contracting with large pharmacy chains, such as CVS Health or Walgreens, to administer vaccines to people who signed up through the county's registration system.

The Cook County Department of Public Health plans to have community vaccination sites but also partner with health care providers to vaccinate people in suburban Cook County, spokesman Don Bolger said in an email.

"There will be a validation process in place to confirm that individuals who receive the vaccine are front line essential workers, but we want to ensure that no one gets turned away," Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer and co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said in a statement.

The DuPage County Health Department is working with hospitals, health care providers, pharmacies and community leaders "to make vaccine available through as many locations as possible," spokeswoman Stephanie Calvillo said in an email. She said the department believes the next phase of vaccinations, beyond health care workers and long-term care residents, is likely "several weeks" away.

[Walgreens and CVS have said they expect the vaccine to be available to the public](#) during the spring, and patients will likely be able to make appointments at their pharmacies to get the shots.

Many older patients and essential workers are anxiously waiting to hear more about when it will be their turn.

Peggy Porter, who's in the older-than-74 group, said she's called Walgreens and her doctor to find out when she can get vaccinated, but has yet to get details. Porter, who lives in the Loop, has been careful to avoid public places.

"I'm not going to take the chances that more invincible people ... are taking," Porter said. She said she read about COVID-19 patients being put on ventilators and decided she didn't want to die that way. "I'd like to at least go into a grocery store, but until I have the vaccine, I don't think it's worth the risk."

Health care leaders acknowledge they have a lot of work to do to nail down how essential workers and patients will get vaccinated — and that it may be more challenging than vaccinating health care workers.

"Down the line, it's for everyone," Kelleher said of the COVID-19 vaccine. "You just have to figure out how you're going to do it."

<https://internewscast.com/2020-cook-county-deaths-break-records-due-to-gun-violence-opioid-overdoses-covid-19-me-says/>

CHICAGO (WLS) — 2020 was a very deadly year in Cook County.

While the pandemic took a heavy toll, COVID-19 is also being blamed for contributing to a record high number of deaths due to gun violence.

At 18-years-old, Nasee Minniefield just graduated from high school and had his whole life ahead of him, until he was shot and killed on Halloween.

“I really haven’t been right since,” said Nasee’s grandmother, Donna Minniefield. “I’m numb, I’m sad, I’m hurting.”

According to the Cook County Medical Examiner’s office, Minniefield was one of 875 people who died from gun violence last year; 78% of the victims were Black.

“That is by far the highest total of gun-related homicides we have ever had. The only time we came anywhere near that was in 1994 when we had 838 homicides due to gun violence,” said Natalia Derevyanny, Spokeswoman for the Cook County Medical Examiner’s office.

“I see so many on TV and I’ve watched so many innocent children — kids get killed and I never would have dreamed a day in my life that I would feel the pain that they feel,” Minniefield said.

Gun violence deaths were not the only record-breaker for the year. Cook County also recorded a total of 16,049 deaths in 2020, which was also a record.

Those numbers were driven up by the 8,192 lives lost due to COVID-19 infection deaths.

Pandemic stress is also considered a contributing factor to the number of homicides during the unprecedented year.

Chicago police also released the final crime number for 2020 Friday which showed that shootings and murders jumped up by more than 50% in 2020.

In 2020, there were 769 murders, up considerably compared to the 495 murders tallied in 2019.

As for shootings, the city logged 3,261 last year, a big jump from 2,140 shootings in 2019. The number of shooting victims climbed to 4,033 in 2020, up from 2,598 in 2019.

This illustrating a skyrocketing year for violence after three years of progress where many innocent children were killed and some police also became targets of gunfire.

Nearly a quarter of the murders happened on the West Side.

City leaders and a new Chicago police superintendent were forced to tackle civil unrest amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, implementing several community policing strategies amongst other tactics. But police say overall crime is down.

Police Superintendent David Brown is promising to make improvements when it comes to building up community partnerships and strengthening investigations.

“I think our savior is going to be the COVID vaccination,” Dr. Faran Bokhari, Chief of Trauma at Cook County Hospital. “I think people are so tired of being indoors and not being able to do what they usually do.”

Another sobering statistic is the all-time high number of deaths from opioid overdoses reported by the Cook County Medical Examiner’s office. According to the ME, there are 1,599 confirmed cases so far, and potentially as many as 500 more pending toxicology results.

“Really, our worst fears were, you know, really, you know, imagined — that we’ve seen the number of opioid fatalities just spike in a very troublesome way,” said Dr. Steven Aks, Cook County Hospital ER Physician and Toxicologist.

But behind all the statistics, there are real families who have lost loved ones and who are hurting. These families carry the pain of 2020 into the new year as they hope for healing.

### **New year of crime**

Two people were hit by stray gunfire just after they rang in the New Year.

At around 12 minutes past midnight, Chicago police said a man and a woman were sitting in the living room of a home when shots were fired from outside striking them.

The shooting occurred in the 8700-block of South Buffalo Avenue in the South Chicago neighborhood.

The 51-year-old man is now in critical condition with a gunshot wound to his head and a 51-year-old woman has a graze wound to her head. No one is in custody.

A 41-year-old man was killed in Chicago’s first homicide of the new year.

Police said he was driving near 47th and King Drive in the city’s Bronzeville neighborhood overnight when someone began shooting.

The man was shot in the neck and crashed his car.

Police have not made any arrests.

Friday morning, Superintendent Brown issued a statement saying:  
*“2020 has been a perfect storm.*

Public safety is an all-hands-on-deck effort that requires not only the police, but street outreach workers, faith leaders, the courts, community organizations, and residents all working together. The criminal justice ecosystem, however, was profoundly impacted and disrupted by the global coronavirus pandemic and the death of George Floyd.

The increase in fatal shootings and homicides is not unique to Chicago, as many major city chiefs and law enforcement executives are grappling with unprecedented levels of violence throughout the nation. Our Chicago Police officers faced an unprecedented set of circumstances in contending with a spike in violent crime, made even more difficult by having to contend with a health pandemic while facing extended periods of heightened civil unrest and looting.

Our officers have also been subject to violent crime themselves, as shots fired at CPD officers are up 558% since 2015. Since Jan. 1, 2020, 79 officers were shot at in 2020, with 10 officers having been struck by bullets.

As the rest of our city and nation grappled with a global pandemic, the Chicago Police Department also recorded over 2,450 confirmed cases of COVID-19 throughout the Department. Sadly, four of our CPD officers succumbed to COVID-related illnesses.

Over the summer, we pivoted our crimefighting strategy to a citywide approach toward deploying resources to areas experiencing high levels of violence. This strategic shift has had a positive impact on public safety and has decreased the pace of monthly murders that had accelerated during the first half of 2020. We've also dedicated more resources that will bolster our narcotics investigations into mid-level and upper-level drug dealers, who have proven to serve as major drivers of violence.

The best way to reduce crime and violence is to prevent it from happening in the first place by building bridges and trust in the community. Community engagement has become a central component of our public safety approach at the unit level, from the Detective Bureau to the citywide Community Safety Teams and Critical Incident Response Teams. This includes the Rollin' Rec events conducted over the summer in partnership with the Chicago Parks District, along with the upcoming launch of the Police Athletic and Arts League in 2021. We also expanded the Neighborhood Policing Initiative from two to five districts this past summer and will expand into additional districts in 2021.

As we close a tumultuous year and prepare for 2021, our Department's vision for a safer Chicago will be rooted in a five-pillar strategy for strategic change: Growing Community Trust, Transformational Change through Reform, Officer Wellness, Ensuring Public Safety and Strengthening Investigations.

The Chicago Police Department has a moral obligation to respect the dignity and sanctity of human life. That dignity and respect must be reflected throughout every aspect of how we function and must permeate every aspect of our organizational culture.

Lastly, I want to say how proud I am to be associated with the men and women of the Chicago Police Department. No matter the hardship, no matter the danger, they continue to report to duty every day and night to serve and protect this great city."

---

BECKER'S

# Hospital CFO Report

---

## 10 hospitals seeking CFOs

Ayla Ellison ([Twitter](#)) - Monday, January 4th, 2021 [Print](#) | [Email](#)

<https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/10-hospitals-seeking-cfos-010421.html>

Below are 10 hospitals and health systems that recently posted job listings seeking CFOs.

*Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Job listings were compiled from online job-seeker websites. Hospitals and health systems are listed in alphabetical order.*

1. [Bethany Medical Center](#) (High Point, N.C.)
2. [Boone Hospital Center](#) (Columbia, Mo.)
3. [Cheshire Medical Center](#) (Keene, N.H.)
4. [Cook County Health & Hospitals System](#) (Chicago)
5. [DeKalb Regional Medical Center](#) (Fort Payne, Ala.)
6. [DMC Sinai-Grace Hospital](#) (Detroit)
7. [Hendry Regional Medical Center](#) (Clewiston, Fla.)
8. [Pender \(Neb.\) Community Hospital](#)
9. [Putnam County Hospital](#) (Greencastle, Ind.)
10. [Wadley Regional Medical Center](#) (Texarkana, Texas)



## **'Relief on the Horizon': Some Health Care Workers Optimistic as US Rolls Out Vaccine**

[Marissa Nelson](#)

January 4, 2021 7:46 pm

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/01/04/relief-horizon-some-health-care-workers-optimistic-us-rolls-out-vaccine>

Health care workers have been among the first residents of Illinois to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

As front-line workers, many have feared contracting the potentially deadly virus or unknowingly [transmitting it to their families and communities](#).

Now, some of those concerns may be subsiding.

"That's been the element of fatigue here. We've been worried now for nine months or more, really," said Dr. Meeta Shah of Rush University Medical Center's emergency department. She received the Pfizer vaccine on Dec. 18.

"That worry can become a real burden mentally, physically," Shah said. "I have a family of my own. I have elderly parents with comorbidities ... It's been a real burden thinking about what impact you can have on someone else's life and not wanting to bring that virus into somebody else's life unintentionally."

She said the vaccine is providing some relief from those fears.

[Dr. Michael Hoffman](#), lead physician for Cook County Health's COVID-19 units, also got the Pfizer vaccine in December.

"There were a whole range of emotions that came about when it was time to get the first dose of the vaccine," Hoffman said. "It was exactly nine months to the day from when I helped to open the first COVID unit in the hospital that I received my first dose of vaccine. There's definitely a bit of hope and a bit of relief on the horizon."

[Some Americans appear hesitant](#) to get one of the new coronavirus vaccines, though Hoffman hopes people will sign up to get it when it's available to them.

"The evidence is there that this is a very, very safe vaccine. It's also very effective," Hoffman said. "We know that we need this herd immunity to really get beyond this pandemic."

Both Hoffman and Shah are set to get their second doses of the vaccine this week.

But vaccination doesn't mean physicians — or anyone else — can throw caution to the wind. Wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment, social distancing and wearing a mask are still necessary to contain the virus, Shah said — especially with a [new, more contagious strain](#) reaching the U.S.

"The amount of vaccine that has been distributed thus far is just not enough to control what's happening," Shah said. "We have to continue doing what we are doing. It's not the silver bullet. What is the solution here is not just the vaccine but everything else we've been doing."



## Cook County Opens Vaccine Registration Form

Cook County has developed an online vaccination registration form for people who would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccination.

Gillian Smith, Patch Staff

January 4, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/alsip-crestwood/cook-county-opens-vaccine-registration-form>

Cook County has developed an online vaccination registration form for people who would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccination. (Shutterstock)

COOK COUNTY, IL – Cook County has developed an online vaccination registration form for people who would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccination when it is widely available.

The [form](#), posted to the Cook County Department of Public Health website, is designed to gather information from those interested in receiving the vaccine with the goal of giving them regular updates about when and where they can receive it. The form is for individuals who are not affiliated with a healthcare organization.

On its website, the DPH advised that the vaccine supply is still limited, and vaccines are being prioritized for high-risk individuals at this time.

# Illinois reports 5,059 COVID-19 cases, 79 deaths as tests drop and cases rise on average after holidays

[Mike Ewing](#), [Judy Wang](#), [Tonya Francisco](#)

January 4, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-reports-5059-covid-19-cases-79-deaths-as-tests-drop-and-cases-rise-on-average-after-holidays/>

CHICAGO — Illinois continues to see a rise in COVID-19 positivity rates and new cases reported on average which began after the holidays, although the increase appears to be far less than spikes being seen in the worst-hit states.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 5,059 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases, 79 additional deaths and 48,254 new tests Monday.

This brings the state's 7-day average of new Covid infections to about 6,074, marking the fifth consecutive day this average has risen.

Officials said 8.6% of all tests performed from December 28-January 3 confirmed a new cases of COVID-19, as the state's case positivity rate has risen for the past week as well.

All this comes as the number of tests reported by the state remains far below the level seen before the holidays, when Illinois was averaging more than 90,000 daily tests over the course of a week. As of Monday, this average is around 70,500.

A dip in the number of tests and cases reported over the Thanksgiving holiday was followed by a spike in single-day totals as state officials received a backlog of data.

This makes determining the extent of the latest post-holiday rise in new cases difficult in Illinois, as it's unclear whether this drop is due to a decline in testing or delays in reporting. State officials have not provided any clarification other than to say "numbers may be low" due to the holidays.

Vaccine distribution continues across the United States, although the country fell short of its goal of administering 20 million doses by the end of 2020.

[Dr. Anthony Fauci said on Sunday](#) that 14 million doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have been distributed across the country and 4 million have been given to healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities.

Fauci said while the holidays, storage requirements and miscommunication caused delays, distribution will be ramping up in the coming weeks and the goal of administering 1 million doses a day seems to be realistic.

A form posted online by the Cook County Health Department caused confusion Monday as it appeared to offer any suburban resident the chance to register for notifications on where and when they may be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

But officials said the website is only for healthcare workers who are not affiliated with big hospitals or healthcare systems.

Illinois has seen a rise in new reported infections over the past week, but data from the CDC shows the increase is far below those being seen in other states, especially when population is taken into account.

Arizona averaged more than 120 cases per 100K residents over the past seven days, according to the CDC, while California, Tennessee and South Carolina all averaged more than 90 cases. Based on available data, Illinois averaged about 47.3 cases per 100,000 residents.

Hospitalizations in Illinois ticked up Monday although they have been trending down since late November, with IDPH reporting 3,948 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Sunday night including 816 in intensive care and 471 on ventilators.

The number of deaths reported in Illinois on average continues to decline as well, with the state averaging about 109 deaths a day over the past two weeks, although this is just below the highest level seen in the spring.

All of Illinois remains under Tier 3 coronavirus mitigation measures, which Governor JB Pritzker said would extend past the holidays due to fears of a surge in new COVID-19 cases, although he didn't provide exact criteria for lifting them.

While many regions have also seen a rise in their COVID-19 positivity rates and cases averages in recent days, [several remain below the state's original criteria](#) for moving to less-restrictive "Tier 2" mitigations.

This would include the reopening of entertainment venues like museums and movie theaters, as well as returning sports programs to earlier guidelines.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot [said in a tweet](#) Saturday that the City of Chicago has distributed more than 95% of vaccine doses the city has received from the federal government. According to City data, 33,607 of those doses have been administered in Chicago as of Sunday.

Special Education and Pre-K teachers are expected to return to Chicago Public Schools classrooms Monday, although the Chicago Teachers Union says [some members will continue working from home](#) as they believe buildings are not safe enough to return. The union has made several other demands and more than 30 aldermen called on CPS to set clearer criteria for reopening.

CPS officials say they will be following guidelines from health officials to minimize any risk to teachers or students.



# Illinois reports 5,059 COVID-19 cases, 79 deaths as tests drop and cases rise on average after holidays

Mike Ewing, Judy Wang, and Tonya Francisco

Posted: Jan 4, 2021 / 05:17 PM CST / Updated: Jan 4, 2021 / 05:17 PM CST

<https://fox2now.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-reports-5059-covid-19-cases-79-deaths-as-tests-drop-and-cases-rise-on-average-after-holidays/>

CHICAGO — Illinois continues to see a rise in COVID-19 positivity rates and new cases reported on average which began after the holidays, although the increase appears to be far less than spikes being seen in the worst-hit states.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 5,059 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases, 79 additional deaths and 48,254 new tests Monday.

This brings the state's 7-day average of new Covid infections to about 6,074, marking the fifth consecutive day this average has risen.

Officials said 8.6% of all tests performed from December 28-January 3 confirmed a new cases of COVID-19, as the state's case positivity rate has risen for the past week as well.

All this comes as the number of tests reported by the state remains far below the level seen before the holidays, when Illinois was averaging more than 90,000 daily tests over the course of a week. As of Monday, this average is around 70,500.

A dip in the number of tests and cases reported over the Thanksgiving holiday was followed by a spike in single-day totals as state officials received a backlog of data.

This makes determining the extent of the latest post-holiday rise in new cases difficult in Illinois, as it's unclear whether this drop is due to a decline in testing or delays in reporting. State officials have not provided any clarification other than to say "numbers may be low" due to the holidays.

Vaccine distribution continues across the United States, although the country fell short of its goal of administering 20 million doses by the end of 2020.

[Dr. Anthony Fauci said on Sunday](#) that 14 million doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines have been distributed across the country and 4 million have been given to healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities.

Fauci said while the holidays, storage requirements and miscommunication caused delays, distribution will be ramping up in the coming weeks and the goal of administering 1 million doses a day seems to be realistic.

A form posted online by the Cook County Health Department caused confusion Monday as it appeared to offer any suburban resident the chance to register for notifications on where and when they may be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

But officials said the website is only for healthcare workers who are not affiliated with big hospitals or healthcare systems.

Illinois has seen a rise in new reported infections over the past week, but data from the CDC shows the increase is far below those being seen in other states, especially when population is taken into account.

Arizona averaged more than 120 cases per 100K residents over the past seven days, according to the CDC, while California, Tennessee and South Carolina all averaged more than 90 cases. Based on available data, Illinois averaged about 47.3 cases per 100,000 residents.

Hospitalizations in Illinois ticked up Monday although they have been trending down since late November, with IDPH reporting 3,948 patients hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Sunday night including 816 in intensive care and 471 on ventilators.

The number of deaths reported in Illinois on average continues to decline as well, with the state averaging about 109 deaths a day over the past two weeks, although this is just below the highest level seen in the spring.

All of Illinois remains under Tier 3 coronavirus mitigation measures, which Governor JB Pritzker said would extend past the holidays due to fears of a surge in new COVID-19 cases, although he didn't provide exact criteria for lifting them.

While many regions have also seen a rise in their COVID-19 positivity rates and cases averages in recent days, [several remain below the state's original criteria](#) for moving to less-restrictive "Tier 2" mitigations.

This would include the reopening of entertainment venues like museums and movie theaters, as well as returning sports programs to earlier guidelines.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot [said in a tweet](#) Saturday that the City of Chicago has distributed more than 95% of vaccine doses the city has received from the federal government. According to City data, 33,607 of those doses have been administered in Chicago as of Sunday.

Special Education and Pre-K teachers are expected to return to Chicago Public Schools classrooms Monday, although the Chicago Teachers Union says [some members will continue working from home](#) as they believe buildings are not safe enough to return. The union has made several other demands and more than 30 aldermen called on CPS to set clearer criteria for reopening.

CPS officials say they will be following guidelines from health officials to minimize any risk to teachers or students.



# Cook County Releases COVID Vaccine Registration Form for Residents

January 4, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-releases-covid-vaccine-registration-form-for-residents/2407322/>

Suburban Cook County residents can now register for coronavirus vaccine updates, including when they will be able to receive their first shots and where as Illinois continues its rollout to administer doses.

According to the Cook County Department of Public Health's website, the new [registration form](#) will be used "to gather information from individuals who would like to receive regular updates about when and where they can receive the COVID-19 vaccination."

Though the department notes that vaccine doses remain limited and are currently being administered to prioritized populations, including health care workers and long-term care facility residents and staff, it asks any resident who is "not affiliated with a healthcare organization of any type" to fill out the survey.

Meanwhile, organizations with staff currently eligible to receive the vaccine can register to receive "updates regarding when their staff can receive COVID-19 vaccine" [here](#).

The form follows one [released by suburban Lake County last month](#). Lake County health officials [created a COVID-19 portal](#) called "AllVax," allowing residents to sign up for coronavirus updates, schedule appointments and register for the vaccine.

Last week, the city of Chicago also launched its first mass [COVID-19 vaccination](#) site for health care workers as it continues to roll out thousands of doses of vaccines against the deadly coronavirus.

But you can't simply walk into the vaccination site - known as a "point of dispensing" site or "pod" - to get your shot. You'll need an appointment, and only those who meet certain criteria can get appointments at this time.

Workers who meet the criteria - Arwady listed examples including a dental practice, an outpatient practice, a school nurse, a mortician's office or any other kind of health care worker in Chicago - will first need to make sure their practice is registered with the city.

The [city's website has a survey for health care providers](#) to detail the practice, staff and more information before city officials begin the process of either getting doses of the vaccine directly to the practice or by setting up appointments for employees at city sites or potentially locations run by pharmacy partners or hospitals.

As of New Year's Eve, 143,924 Illinois residents have received the COVID vaccine, according to a spokeswoman for Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

Those numbers come amid growing fears that the vaccine's slow rollout could prolong the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. According [to a recent study by NBC News](#), the federal government would need to vaccinate 3 million people per day in order to achieve its goal of 80% of the population being vaccinated by late June.

As of late December, only 2 million people had received the first dose, and at that pace, it would take 10 years to achieve the 80% vaccination threshold.

As concerns grow, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot criticized the federal government, saying that it could take more than a year to administer the vaccine [to all city residents at the current pace of dose shipments.](#)

In a social media post Saturday, Lightfoot said that the city's health department has administered more than 95% of the vaccine doses it has received so far from the federal government.

In the tweet, Lightfoot said that at the current rate of dose allocation, it would take 71 weeks to fully vaccinate all city residents.

"We need more vaccine. Now," she said.

# Confusion ensues as Cook County changes course on its online COVID-19 vaccination form, filled out by 40,000 people so far

By LISA SCHENCKER

JAN 04, 2021 AT 9:48 PM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-cook-county-vaccine-registration-website-20210104-mcieqi46jzgtldtjawdslqzcu-story.html>

A Cook County Department of Public Health website that collected information for potential COVID-19 vaccine distribution raised confusion Monday as the department twice changed its guidance about who was eligible to use the site.

A survey on the website initially appeared to be open to all Cook County residents, and many filled it out over the weekend and on Monday, thinking it might help them understand when it would be their turn to receive vaccines. But county health department spokesman Don Bolger told the Tribune early Monday afternoon that the survey was intended only for some health care workers.

A few hours later, the department appeared to reverse course, updating the [survey's](#) instructions to say that it was open to suburban Cook County health care workers, essential workers and residents.

The back-and-forth came amid a slower-than-expected national rollout of the vaccine that has left many people anxious for information.

"I think it's horrible," said Jennifer Stevens, 51 of Hoffman Estates, who filled out the form Sunday night after seeing a story about it on the news. She thought that by filling out the form, she would receive updates about potential availability and locations for vaccination, but now she's not so sure. "It shows just complete disorganization."

She said she and her husband, who both have health issues, have remained at home since February, getting their groceries delivered and avoiding takeout.

"I feel like this is never going to end because there is no plan and nobody is doing anything to put any thought into planning," she said. "I had a little bit of hope, and I feel like every day the hope is being taken away because things like this are happening."

Health care workers and long-term care facility residents are the first groups to receive vaccines. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended the next groups include people ages 75 and older and essential workers such as teachers, police officers and firefighters. After that, the CDC has recommended people ages 65 to 74 and those with certain underlying health conditions get vaccinated.

Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, apologized during a news conference Monday night for the confusion created by the website.

He said the department "soft launched" the survey last week intending to gather information from health care workers, but "we recently became aware of some confusion that the wording may have created, and we've been working really hard with our team to remedy that."

The site is not a place where people can register for vaccination appointments, and most vaccinations in Cook County will be given by health care providers, according to information released by the department Monday night. But the information individuals provide will be used to categorize them into vaccination phases.

“We want to know how many of each group of people are out there,” Joshi said. “That helps us decide how many providers we need to get signed up and how quickly.”

Everyone who completes the form will be sent weekly updates about vaccinations, Joshi said.

So far, about 40,000 individuals have filled out the form. Some people reported filling it out in recent days after seeing the link on Facebook or receiving it from friends and family.

The initial form said people who filled it out could “receive regular updates about when and where they can receive the COVID-19 vaccination.” Instructions said: “Please complete this survey if you are an individual, and not affiliated with a health care organization of any type.”

The form asked people for names, addresses, ages, ethnicity, contact information and to identify if they were essential workers such as those in education, corrections or grocery stores. It also asked people if they had any one of nearly a dozen high-risk medical conditions.

But Bolger said early Monday afternoon that the form was intended only for health care workers who were not affiliated with health systems.

The instructions for the survey were changed later Monday to clarify that it was for “individual health care and essential workers who live or work in suburban Cook County, as well as suburban Cook County residents to understand their interest in receiving the vaccine.”

“By completing the survey, individuals will be added to a list to receive updates on COVID-19 vaccine availability including the timing and scheduling,” the updated instructions said.

The instructions say the form is only for people who live or work in suburban Cook County, and essential workers and health care workers in Chicago should refer to the Chicago Department of Public Health’s website for guidance.

The department said that if residents outside of suburban Cook County fill out the form, their information will be forwarded to their own municipalities’ health departments.

Neighboring Lake County unveiled [a registration system](#) for all its residents and workers weeks ago, and as of last week had registered about 150,000 people.

Barb Tchaou, 71, of Glenview, filled out the Cook County form after hearing about it on Facebook.

Once conflicting information about the form started emerging, she called her doctor’s office for clarity. She said she and her friends are “champing at the bit trying to figure out when our turn is coming up.”

Tchaou’s husband had heart and kidney transplants in 2018, so she’s hoping they can get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“I don’t fault people for trying to get information out in a timely manner, however, in trying to do that if they’re not specific enough, they will confuse a lot of people like me, and like probably a lot of other people,” Tchaou said.



# Cook County unveils COVID-19 vaccination registration form for unaffiliated healthcare workers

[Diane Pathieu](#) and [Sarah Schulte](#)

Monday, January 4, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/coronavirus-vaccine-progress-covid-illinois-where-can-i-get-a-near-me-19/9341419/>

CHICAGO (WLS) -- Cook County unveiled a [vaccination registration form](#) for unaffiliated healthcare workers.

The [online form](#) will give healthcare workers the chance to register and receive information when a COVID-19 vaccine is ready for mass distribution in the county.

And with a limited supply, high risk individuals are being prioritized.

Until now, the Cook County Department of Public Health had opened a registry for healthcare workers outside of hospital settings and medical practices to get the vaccine, but the rollout has been under a cloud of confusion.

Originally the language on the county's website indicated the registry was for all residents, then the county corrected itself and said it's only for healthcare workers.

Now county officials have changed their tune again and announced the registry will be for all.

Rose Slowikowski, a registered nurse anesthesiologist who works as an independent contractor, got her vaccine over the weekend after a labyrinthine process.

"For independent contractors like myself, there has been no link to get the vaccine or register for the vaccine," she said. "The communication, the information just wasn't there for providers like myself."

County officials said to keep checking the county website for the latest information as the COVID vaccine rollout continues.

"This is a difficult time because we know that there's a lot of interest in the vaccine- we're seeing surges around the country," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, Senior Medical Officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health.

According to the CDC, Illinois has received roughly 400,000 doses of the vaccine.

Over the weekend, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said that is just not enough, and added that at the current rate it would take nearly one and a half years to fully vaccinate the city.

While health systems work to get their employees and first responders inoculated as quickly as possible [Will County is asking its residents to register online](#) to streamline the process once the vaccine is more widely available.



# Cook County Apologizes for COVID-19 Vaccination Survey Confusion

January 4, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-apologizes-for-covid-19-vaccination-survey-confusion/2407920/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health late Monday apologized for confusion surrounding a newly-released [survey regarding COVID-19 vaccination updates](#).

Early in the day, the health department's website stated that a registration form would be used "to gather information from individuals who would like to receive regular updates about when and where they can receive the COVID-19 vaccination."

The webpage encouraged people to complete a survey if they "were an individual, and not affiliated with a health care organization of any type."

The department, however, noted that doses remain limited and are currently being administered to prioritized populations, including health care workers and long-term care facility residents and staff.

Later in the day, Cook County DPH officials clarified that the survey is primarily meant for health care workers.

"We soft-launched late last week with the hopes of being nimble, agile and timely," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer and co-lead with the Cook County Department of Public Health. "Really the goal was to get information from our residents and to push information out. So with that, I suppose our enthusiasm was high. We learned from our error."

The survey itself is not a vaccine registry, according to officials. The CCDPH also cautions that it will likely take through January and into February to get all health care workers vaccinated in Phase 1A of the county's plan to distribute the vaccine, so it encourages residents to be patient as information is gathered and disseminated.

"We are going to be pushing out information that's health care focused," Joshi said. "That said, it's a public-facing survey, so anyone can sign up for information, and we'll push out information regardless."

As of Monday, more than 40,000 people have signed up to receive updates from the county.

Vaccines will be given through health providers, while the county will organize some vaccination drives and other events, according to a press release.



# Daywatch: COVID-19 vaccine confusion in Cook County, U. of I. saliva test moves closer to FDA approval and a real estate 'frenzy' in Illinois

Chicago Tribune staff

January 5, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/daywatch-covid-19-vaccine-confusion-120900506.html>

Good morning, Chicago. On Monday, Illinois health officials announced 5,059 new cases of COVID-19 and 79 additional fatalities. The numbers brought Illinois to its highest case positivity rate since mid-December.

Meanwhile, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Monday that drivers caught by automated speed cameras across Chicago going 6 to 9 mph over the limit will start getting tickets in the mail. Here's what you need to know about the new rule.

Here's more coronavirus news and other top stories you need to know to start your day.

For your smart speaker 5/8 Join our COVID-19 Facebook group 5/8 More newsletters 5/8 Puzzles & Games

Confusion ensues as Cook County changes mind on COVID-19 vaccination website

A Cook County Department of Public Health website that collected information for potential COVID vaccine distribution raised confusion Monday as the department twice changed its guidance about who was eligible to use the site.

A survey on the website initially appeared to be open to all Cook County residents, and many filled it out over the weekend and on Monday, thinking it might help them understand when it would be their turn to receive vaccines. But county health department spokesman Don Bolger told the Tribune early Monday afternoon that the survey was intended only for some health care workers.

A few hours later, the department appeared to reverse course, updating the survey's instructions to say that it was open to suburban Cook County health care workers, essential workers and residents.



# Everything Pregnant Women Need To Know About The COVID-19 Vaccine

Alexandra Sakellariou

JAN 5, 2021

[HTTPS://WWW.BABYGAGA.COM/PREGNANT-WOMEN-COVID-19-VACCINE-SAFETY/](https://www.babygaga.com/pregnant-women-covid-19-vaccine-safety/)

There are a variety of COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved in recent months, and in many countries, the vaccines are being distributed, starting off with the most high-risk groups. For example, in America, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first vaccine, made by Pfizer and BioNTech, which has been proven to be 95% effective. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, a second COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna was also approved for emergency use, with an efficacy rate of 94.1%. But given how quickly the vaccines were developed and approved, it's led many to wonder about the safety of the vaccines, especially for pregnant or breastfeeding women and their offspring.

There is currently limited research on the safety of the vaccines for expectant mothers, and even more, mixed suggestions from healthcare professionals about whether pregnant women should go ahead with the vaccines or wait. Below, we discuss the information known about the vaccines and their impact on pregnant women. More information is expected to be released in the coming months as the vaccines roll out, hopefully allowing women to make an informed choice for themselves and their families.

## There's A Lack Of Data Available

Considering how quickly the COVID-19 vaccines were developed and approved amid the global pandemic, there hasn't been a lot of research done on its effects on pregnant women. Pregnant and breastfeeding women were excluded from the COVID-19 vaccine trials, specifically the ones developed by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna, as researchers wanted to ensure the vaccines could be tolerated in people who were not pregnant first. While this doesn't necessarily suggest the vaccine is dangerous for pregnant women, it does mean that there may be side effects that are still unknown or understudied.

*Speaking to CBC, Jennifer Blake, the CEO of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, said this lack of data shouldn't let high-risk pregnant women stop them from pursuing the vaccine, if it is recommended by their doctor. "What we are telling pregnant women is the best advice we can give in the absence of that data," she explained.*

Blake said that pregnant women who are high-risk, so those who are working on the frontlines or have underlying health issues (including but not limited to high blood pressure, diabetes, lung and heart disease) should consider getting the vaccine. On the other hand, pregnant women who don't meet these qualifications are being told to wait until there is more research available to understand the effects of the COVID-19 vaccine on pregnant women and their offspring.

One thing that is known, however, is that pregnant women are at a higher risk of suffering from severe complications or side effects if they contract coronavirus. "Pregnant women or recently pregnant women who are older, overweight, and have pre-existing medical conditions such as hypertension and diabetes seem to have an increased risk of developing severe COVID-19," the World Health Organization explains on their website. "When pregnant women develop severe disease, they also seem to more often require care in intensive care units than non-pregnant women of reproductive age." For many expecting women, knowing the severity that a COVID-19 diagnosis can cause during pregnancy has been an impetus to get the vaccine.

## No Major Risks Have Been Identified So Far

One thing that should give expectant women comfort is knowing that no major risks or side effects have been linked to the COVID-19 vaccine in relation to pregnancy. While research is still underway, there has been no conclusive evidence as of yet to suggest that the vaccines pose a threat to a pregnant mother or her unborn baby's health.

The CDC confirms this on their website. "No safety concerns were demonstrated in rates that received Modern COVID-19 vaccine before or during pregnancy," they explained. "Studies of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are not going." However, be aware that these results are not based on tests performed on pregnant humans; research on pregnant women is still underway.

## Side Effects Of The Coronavirus Vaccine On Pregnant Women

So far, there has been no evidence to suggest that pregnant women experience adverse side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine. "Side effects can occur after receiving either of the two available COVID-19 vaccines, especially after the second dose," the CDC explained. "These side effects are not expected to be any different for pregnant people than for non-pregnant people."

According to the CDC's website, expectant women who receive the vaccine should expect to experience minimal side effects that can be observed in anyone who takes the vaccine, including but not limited to fever, muscle or joint pain, fatigue, and headache. However, the CDC warns that some people have reported experiencing allergic reactions after the vaccine in exceptional cases. They caution pregnant women to be transparent with their healthcare provider about any allergies, past or present, in order to make an informed decision about whether the vaccine is right for them.

## Studies On Pregnant Women Are Ongoing

When the vaccine trials first began, pregnant women were left out of the testing process, leading to insufficient data on how the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines may impact pregnant individuals. But now that the vaccines are being distributed, more research is underway, specifically to learn the effects of the vaccine on expectant women and their offspring. The CDC confirms that "studies in people are pregnant are planned," adding that "both vaccine manufacturers are monitoring people in the clinical trials who became pregnant."

## The Coronavirus Vaccine's Impact On Breastfeeding

Similar to pregnancy, there is no research to suggest that the COVID-19 vaccines may have an adverse impact on breastfeeding mothers and their offspring. "There are no data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or on the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or on milk production/excretion," the CDC explains. "mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant." In fact, CDC identifies breastfeeding women as part of the group recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, so we recommend speaking to your doctor if you're breastfeeding and are interested in being vaccinated.

## The Coronavirus Vaccine & Future Fertility

There has been a surge of misinformation circulating online that suggests the coronavirus vaccine may cause infertility. As of now, there's no research to suggest the vaccine has an adverse impact on fertility, but this could change as more information becomes available. "It has been incorrectly suggested that COVID-19 vaccines will cause infertility because of a shared amino acid sequence in the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 and a placental protein," Pfizer spokeswoman Jerica Pitts confirmed to The Associated Press. "The sequence, however, is too short to plausibly give rise to autoimmunity."

Similarly, Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious diseases expert as well as the Vaccination Coordinator for COVID-19 at Cook County Health, told NBC Chicago: "[There is no] suggestion that [the vaccine] could affect future fertility."

At this time, the American Society for Reproductive Medicine does not suggest avoiding the COVID-19 vaccine, even for women trying to become pregnant. They suggests that women undergoing fertility treatments should consider getting the vaccine as it becomes available and depending on their risk factors. Still, many public health officials are erring on the side of caution, with some doctors in the U.S. and Canada urging women to wait at least two months to become pregnant following the final dosage of the vaccine, as its full impact on pregnancy is still unknown, Global News notes.

### Should Pregnant Women Get Vaccinated? What Experts Say

There is no clear answer to this question. Many health professionals in both America and Canada are advising pregnant women to make their own decisions based on information available and potential risk factors. Experts and health organizations recommend that high-risk pregnant women – whether those with underlying health conditions or who are working on the front line – go ahead with the vaccine if they get the okay from their doctors. But for others, they have been recommended to wait.

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), which provides guidance to the Public Health Agency of Canada, for example, has cautioned that the vaccines should not be "routinely offered" to pregnant or breastfeeding women, CTV News explains. However, they have also said that people in high-risk situations should consider the vaccine, as its benefits outweigh the potential risks that a positive coronavirus diagnosis may bring. On the other hand, including the U.K., some countries have completely prohibited pregnant or breastfeeding women from getting the vaccine until more information becomes available.

*Ultimately, getting the vaccine will be an individual decision. "We know that pregnant women can be at risk for more severe illness and more severe outcomes with COVID-19 and based on that I think we can empower women to make informed decisions for themselves," Infectious disease specialist Dr. Isaac Bogoch told CTV News.*

Given that the vaccines are being distributed to the highest risk people first, namely frontline healthcare workers and the elderly, many pregnant women may not have the opportunity to opt for the vaccine until later this year, giving them time to consider information as its release to make a decision that is best for themselves.

In conclusion, getting the vaccine is an incredibly personal decision. There is no clear-cut answer to whether pregnant women should be lining up to receive the vaccine, but as further research is conducted, more information will likely become available soon. Speak to your doctor about the vaccine to weigh the pros and cons. And whether you become vaccinated or not, remember to adhere to social distancing protocols to mitigate your chances of incurring the coronavirus.



Cook County COVID-19 vaccination website causes confusion; officials say it is not for registration

By [Bernie Tafoya](#)

January 5, 2021 8:47 am

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-covid-19-vaccination-website-causes-confusion>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- Suburban Cook County residents are being offered a chance to take a survey about the COVID-19 vaccine and get regular updates about the vaccine.

The opportunity comes after some confusion arose when the Cook County Department of Public Health initially set up a COVID-19 vaccine survey for essential workers and health care professionals who were not linked to a hospital.

According to spokesman Don Bolger, some people understood the website to be a vaccine registration site. But Cook County public health officials want to make it clear that it is not a place to register.

However, the survey is now open to all suburban Cook County residents, as well.

The survey will be used to sort people into categories, so public health officials will know where and how much vaccine will be needed in the various distribution phases.

Everyone who completes the form will be sent weekly updates about vaccinations, said Dr. Kiran Joshi, colead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

On Monday night during a news conference, Dr. Kiran Joshi apologized for any confusion the Cook County Public Health Department may have caused.

# Cook County launches survey to assess COVID-19 vaccine needs

January 5, 2021

<https://www.hfchronicle.com/article/2021/jan/05/cook-county-launches-survey-assess-covid-19-vaccine-needs>

As the COVID-19 vaccine continues to be distributed throughout Cook County, the Cook County Department of Public Health is surveying individual healthcare and essential workers who live or work in suburban Cook County, as well as suburban Cook County residents to understand their interest in receiving the vaccine.

The survey responses will be used to understand demand and build appropriate capacity to vaccinate.

This is not a vaccine registry. It is a survey tool to assist in planning as additional vaccine is distributed. By completing the survey, individuals will be added to a list to receive updates on COVID-19 vaccine availability including the timing and scheduling.

The vaccine supply is still limited. High risk individuals as defined by the CDC are currently being prioritized.

For more information, see the CCDPH vaccination website: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-vaccine/>

If you have any questions about this survey, email [ccdphvaccination@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:ccdphvaccination@cookcountyhhs.org)

# Looking to 2021 in Northbrook, Glenview: Developments, lawsuits, staff turnover and vaccines

KAITLIN EDQUIST

JAN 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/northbrook/ct-nbs-northbrook-glenview-look-ahead-to-2021-tl-0107-20210105-24unhpmugzd5pjfvchzkzog464y-story.html>

Looking forward into 2021, Northbrook and Glenview residents can expect to hear more news about vaccine distribution plans, developments and lawsuits in town and village staff departures.

## Vaccine distribution

Glenview and Northbrook do not have their own health departments, so vaccine distribution will be handled by the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The Food and Drug Administration granted emergency use authorization of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 11 and of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 18.

Some health care workers and long-term care residents have begun receiving the first doses of the vaccine in recent weeks, including [staff at Glenbrook Hospital](#) and NorthShore University HealthSystem and [employees and residents at Covenant Living of Northbrook](#).

Vaccine supply is still limited, health officials said. Following health care workers and long-term care facility staff and residents, the county's phased approach tentatively lists certain essential workers and people at higher risk to receive the vaccine next.

"We are eager to vaccinate the 2.5 million residents in our jurisdiction as quickly as possible, but we must prioritize, plan and execute the program in an orderly fashion," reads a statement on the [Cook County Department of Public Health website](#).

The health department is surveying suburban Cook County residents to gauge their interest in receiving the vaccine. The [survey on their website](#) asks for basic contact information, work information and medical conditions that may make people high-risk.

It's not a registration form for the vaccine but instead a survey to help county health officials understand the demand so they can plan distribution. Those who sign up can also receive regular updates about when and where they'll be able to get the vaccine.

In addition to an election that will lead to turnover in elected leadership, Northbrook and Glenview have begun to and will continue to experience several staff departures throughout 2021.

As the communities deal with the financial fallout of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, both are working to save money by [offering voluntary separation programs](#). These programs are a type of incentivized early retirement or buyout plan for eligible staff.

Out of 42 eligible employees, nine had enrolled or had communicated an intent to participate in Glenview's separation program as of late November, officials said. No department heads had communicated an intent to take the offer at that point.

The deadline to submit an application is July 15, 2021. The window in which staff will be leaving under the early retirement plan is Aug. 31, 2020, to Aug. 30, 2021.

Over in Northbrook, the exits of several department heads, as well as the village manager and elected village president, will create a year of significant turnover for the community.

According to Madeline Farrell, assistant to the village manager, 20 employees are leaving under the program. Their last days are staggered throughout Oct. 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021, depending on each department's needs.

Among those leaving Northbrook are Director of Development and Planning Services Tom Poupard, Deputy Village Manager and Chief Financial Officer Jeff Rowitz, Police Chief Roger Adkins, Human Resources Manager Greg Van Dahm and Communications Specialist Cheryl Fayne-dePersio.

Officials said the departures of Village President Sandy Frum, who has held the seat since 2009 and was a trustee before that, and Village Manager Richard Nahrstadt, who served in the role since 2008 but worked for the village since 1991, are unrelated to the voluntary separation program.

### **Northbrook partners with service agencies, plans for climate change plan**

Northbrook leaders are working on several other initiatives into 2021, including downtown improvements, climate action plans and work with social service and mental health agencies, officials said.

The Village Board offered contributions to seven area agencies for new or expanded initiatives to help Northbrook residents with hardships caused by the pandemic, according to the [Northbrook Voice newsletter](#).

They're working with Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook, Northfield Township Food Pantry, North Suburban Legal Aid Clinic, Family Service Center, TotalLink2 Community, The Josselyn Center and Community Action Together for Children's Health, also known as CATCH.

"During the COVID crisis, we've seen our community's needs increase, so it is critical to respond to that call by providing resources to outstanding local agencies who provide our residents with additional assistance and those who stand at the ready to help their neighbors," Trustee Kathryn Ciesla said in a statement about the partnerships.

In other work continuing into 2021, Northbrook officials recently adopted a [long-awaited affordable housing plan](#) in the hopes of making the village more diverse, and that plan will be in action for any developers looking to bring housing to the area.

The plan aims to create better housing access and affordability to seniors, younger generations, people with disabilities and those who live and work in the community, Frum and trustees said.

Northbrook is also working to fight projected climate change impacts by creating a Climate Action Plan with the help of Minnesota-based sustainability consultation firm paleBLUEdot.

Consultants recently presented data about [Northbrook's current habits and suggested goals for moving forward](#). After further work with the firm and the village's Climate Action Planning Team, the final report is expected to be completed and brought back to the board for action in April or May, according to officials.

### **Glenview lawsuits continue through courts, new development properties up for sale**

Development and capital improvement will remain a large part of Glenview's story in 2021. Glenview officials have spent the last several months gathering input from the community about they want the town to look like through the [Glenview Connect initiative](#).

The final Glenview Connect report from the advisory firms, following further community engagement, is expected sometime in the late spring.

The village also remains a party to two ongoing lawsuits filed by Glenview residents. One involves the [former Hart property at the corners of Willow and Pfungsten roads](#) and has been in action since September 2019.

That case was initially dismissed but will now head back to circuit court following a recent Illinois Appellate Court reversal. The village announced to nearby residents in December that it will be rezoning the land to residential, to reflect the appellate court ruling.

The other case, [filed in June 2020](#), involves the former Bess Hardware site at 1850 Glenview Road, in which neighbors say the development is too big and dense for its location and ask the court to void the village's contract with developers.

Though that case is still moving through the courts, [demolition has begun](#) on the building that has sat vacant on the property for 10 years. Village officials said the building is unsafe and will ultimately need to be taken down whenever it's developed.

"I don't see us ever saving the existing building that's in that space," Trustee Mary Cooper said before the board approved a demolition bid. "It's too far gone."

Village President Jim Patterson mentioned at his [State of the Village address](#) in November that further work will be done to streamline the village's commissions in 2021 to create a more efficient and guided process, as well as work to evaluate and address options for affordable housing in Glenview.

"One of the biggest challenges with affordable housing is making sure people understand and comprehend what it is," he said. "What does it mean and how do we fit in?"

In 2021, the village will be funding several million dollars worth of road reconstruction and resurfacing, sidewalk installation and water main replacement, Patterson said. Work from the Illinois Department of Transportation can also be expected at the intersection of Willow and Pfungsten roads as well as on Shermer Road.

Possible development projects include the former Signode Industrial Group site, a 56-acre property at 3650 West Lake Avenue, and the former Pearson Education site, a 19-acre property at 1900 East Lake Avenue, which are both up for sale.



# Public Health Department Asks Healthcare Workers Of Suburban Cook County To Complete Vaccination Survey

January 6, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/palatine/public-health-department-asks-healthcare-workers-suburban-cook-county-complete>

## **Press release from the Cook County Health Department:**

**Forest Park, IL**—The Cook County Department of Public Health is asking health care workers in suburban Cook County to complete an online survey to help prioritize the next phases of COVID-19 vaccinations. The timing of vaccinations is based on the number of doses delivered to Cook County. The survey helps ensure that doses are administered as quickly as possible. The information collected from the survey will be used to provide regular updates about when and where COVID-19 vaccinations will be available. Read the Press Release [here](#).

# Adults 65 and Older Are Now in Phase 1b Group

Karen Larkin Young

Thursday, January 7, 2021 4:04 PM

<https://evanstonroundtable.com/Content/Art-Life/Art-Life/Article/Adults-65-and-Older-Are-Now-in-Phase-1b-Group/4/4/19220>

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced on Wednesday that individuals age 65 to 74 years old have been moved to the earlier vaccination Phase 1b from Phase 1c. About 9,000, or 12% of all Evanston residents are 65 years and older, according to the U.S. Census.

The Suburban Cook County Department of Public Health estimated vaccination of Phase 1b groups will start in February and vaccinations of the Phase 1c group could start in April. Evanston's public health department, which operates independently of Cook County, has not yet released a vaccination timetable. There are about 50 public health departments in Illinois.

In addition to individuals 65 years and older, the Phase 1b group includes frontline essential workers. Frontline essential workers include fire fighters, police officers, corrections offices, food and agricultural workers, USPS workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, teachers, educational support staff, and daycare workers.

Vaccination of Evanston Fire Department first responders began on Dec. 31.

Evanston Police Department Commander Brian Henry said roughly 200 police officers, detectives, supervisors and other department employees will receive the vaccine within the next two weeks.

The Phase 1c group includes other essential workers (logistics and transportation workers, food service employees, finance personnel, etc.) and individuals 16-64 years of age with underlying medical conditions. Phase 2 includes all other individuals over the age of 16.

At this time, children under the age of 16 may be among the last groups to be vaccinated. No vaccines have yet to be approved for children under the age of 16. However, Greg Huhn, infectious disease specialist and one of the leaders of Suburban Cook County vaccination program, said small-scale adolescent trials are underway and the FDA could approve use of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine in adolescents as early as mid-year.

## What to know about 'Phase 1b' COVID-19 vaccinations

**Marni Pyke**

January 8, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210107/what-to-know-about-phase-1b-covid-19-vaccinations>

Nearly 8% of Illinoisans have contracted COVID-19 since the pandemic began, with infections surpassing 1 million Thursday.

Meanwhile, officials are preparing for a second wave of vaccinations -- likely in late January or February -- that now will include those 65 and older after Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Wednesday expanded the pool from age 75 and up.

Health officials are pointing to county websites, listed below, where people can keep up-to-date on vaccination procedures and in some cases register for eventual vaccination. But many details are still being worked out for how mass vaccinations will work and when they will begin for those in the large "1b" group.

Public health departments are "developing systems to identify those in tier 1b and build the infrastructure," said physician Greg Huhn, Cook County Health's employee vaccination coordinator.

"It will include clinics, it will include large chain pharmacies. It may involve large venues," he said.

Under federal guidelines, front-line health care workers and long-term care facility residents are getting vaccinated first as part of Phase 1a. Next up are 3.2 million people in Phase 1b comprising anyone 65 and older and essential workers, meaning people who can't work at home or who must work closely with others.

First responders, teachers, transit workers, manufacturing employees, prison workers and inmates, postal workers, grocery store workers, and shelter and day care staff members are among those in this group.

"Illinois will be in Phase 1a for a few more weeks and then move to Phase 1b," Illinois Department of Public Health spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said Thursday.

Illinois ranks fifth in vaccinations compared to seven surrounding states, with 1,681 inoculations per 100,000 people, and Pritzker said he will activate the National Guard to assist.

The vaccination rate is 2,353 per 100,000 in Iowa, 2,114 per 100,000 people in Kentucky, 1,847 per 100,000 in Missouri, 1,839 in Indiana, 1,411 per 100,000 in Wisconsin and 1,381 per 100,000 in Michigan, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Latest numbers

The IDPH also reported 8,757 new COVID-19 cases Thursday, the highest since Dec. 11, and 177 more deaths, bringing total deaths to 17,272.

Total infections statewide stand at 1,008,045 -- and the largest segment of cases, people in their 20s, make up 18.5%, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. Those age 30 to 39 follow at 16%, then people in their 40s at 15.4% and 50-somethings at 14.9%.

Children and teenagers make up 14.5% of cases or 146,618, a number that has nearly quadrupled since early October.

More women than men get the disease, 51.6% to 46.6%; nearly 2% did not report gender.

Among the more than 1 million cases were the Del Mars of Palatine. Five out of eight family members, including a 5-year-old, contracted COVID-19 over the Christmas holidays. The family has largely recovered, but "the effects of the COVID-19 virus not only put my family through the physical pain and discomfort that come with being sick but also the stress and anxiety of the potential deadly effects that we read about every day," said Aaron Del Mar, Palatine Township roads commissioner.

Nearly 49% of people who die from the respiratory disease are 80 and older in Illinois.

In a partnership with the federal government, Walgreens and CVS pharmacies are providing vaccines to long-term care facilities. CVS has provided 12,807 shots in Illinois, excluding Chicago; Walgreens did not have tallies.

The staff and residents at Lutheran Home in Arlington Heights began getting vaccinated Wednesday.

"For senior living communities, these vaccines provide great hope," Corporate Communication Director Rex Paisley said. "Within Hearthstone assisted living on the campus of Lutheran Home, resident opt-in for the vaccine has eclipsed 95%, and may reach 100%."

The positivity rate for cases of COVID-19 stands at 8.5% based on a seven-day average.

Illinois hospitals were treating 3,921 patients with COVID-19 as of Wednesday night, the IDPH reported. That's higher than the seven-day average of 3,896.

"I'm looking forward to the next chapter as we double down with vaccinations ... to get to where we approach the end game for COVID-19," Huhn said. "I'm still in for the fight."

#### What you can do now

Local public health sites will offer updated information on the vaccine and how it will be administered, and in some cases people can register to be notified when they can be vaccinated.

- The Cook County Department of Public Health has information on vaccines at [cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-vaccine](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-vaccine).
- The DuPage County Health Department offers vaccine updates by email at [dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine](https://www.dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine).
- The Lake County Health Department offers a vaccine registry at [allvax.lakecohealth.org](https://www.allvax.lakecohealth.org).
- The McHenry County Health Department has vaccine information at [mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department](https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department).
- The Will County Health Department offers vaccine information and a survey at [willcountyhealth.org](https://www.willcountyhealth.org).



# COVID Concerns And The Effect On Health Care Workers

*January 7, 2021*

CBS 2's Steven Graves reports on the stories health care workers share regarding their struggles through the pandemic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMyjXQoOglA>

## 'A tragic milestone': Illinois coronavirus case count surges past 1 million

By JAMIE MUNKS

JAN 07, 2021 AT 6:21 PM

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-illinois-one-million-cases-20210107-dlxqavkrg5dp3euj56yth4ac5u-htmlstory.html>

The number of COVID-19 cases in Illinois since the pandemic began pushed past the 1 million mark on Thursday, double the case tally of less than two months ago.

The state on Thursday reported 8,757 new and probable cases, raising the total to 1,008,045.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker called it a "tragic milestone," and encouraged Illinois residents to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it's available to them.

"As this disease continues to wreak havoc on our nation — with the United States setting another record for the most COVID-19 deaths in a day just yesterday — it is critical that we take extra caution today and in the months ahead to reduce the spread, bring down hospitalization rates, and save lives," Pritzker said in a statement.

Illinois endured a strong surge of cases when the pandemic initially took hold last spring, but that was ultimately dwarfed by an aggressive fall and winter resurgence that has struck all corners of the state and drastically driven up the case tally.

The case count surpassed the half-million mark on Nov. 10, when it reached 511,183. That was more than double the number of cases that had been recorded just two months earlier, when the tally passed 250,000 on Sept. 7.

Since the initial spring surge, Illinois has massively expanded its capacity for testing, leading to significantly higher daily case counts. As of May 1, an average of 13,579 tests were being conducted daily. As of Wednesday, the daily average was more than 74,000 tests, and in late November the average surpassed 100,000.

The new cases reported Thursday came out of a batch of 105,518 tests processed during the previous 24 hours.

Almost 10 months into the pandemic, Illinois joined four more populous states — California, New York, Florida and Texas — that have passed the 1 million case bench mark.

As she has throughout the pandemic, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike urged people to continue following public health guidance, avoid gatherings and wear masks in public settings.

"As the vaccine rolls out, our hope, and goal, is that the number of new cases we see each day will decrease," Ezike said in a statement. "Reporting more than one million COVID-19 cases in Illinois seemed like an unlikely number at the beginning of the pandemic, and we've now all seen how devastating this disease can be."

As of Wednesday, the state, outside of Chicago, had received nearly 345,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines made by Pfizer or Moderna, and more than 207,000 doses had been administered.

Pritzker announced this week that the state would prioritize people 65 and older along with essential workers, in the next phase of vaccine distribution, lower than the 75-year-old bench mark the federal government has advised.

Pritzker was among a group of eight Democratic governors that sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Thursday calling on the federal government to begin immediately distributing vaccines that are being held in reserve.

Pritzker, in a statement, said vaccine delivery has been significantly slower than anticipated, and that the states “are ready to work alongside the federal government to expand vaccine distribution.”

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo were among those who also signed the letter, which asserts that more than 50% of currently produced vaccines are being “held back by the administration for reasons unknown.”

“The failure to distribute these doses to states who request them is unconscionable and unacceptable,” the letter states.



Nurse clinician Vicki Johnson gives ER nurse Tracy Everett her second COVID-19 vaccine at Stroger Hospital on Jan. 7, 2021. (Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune)

Illinois on Thursday also recorded 177 additional deaths, bringing the statewide death toll to 17,272.

Pritzker’s administration this week filed an emergency rule, extending a statewide mask mandate until June, after a previous rule expired.

Chicago and the suburbs were hit particularly hard in the initial surge of COVID-19 during the spring. Widespread restrictions, including a stay-at-home order and later a mask mandate, were implemented and by summer, the number of cases and deaths of people with COVID-19 dipped.

That led Pritzker’s administration to relax the rules, allowing limited indoor dining and larger capacity limits for gatherings.

The case numbers gradually ticked up through the summer under the looser rules, and by September, some regions of the state were again under tighter restrictions. Since November, the entire state has been under stricter rules for businesses and gatherings, with bans on indoor dining and bar service.

The governor said this week that starting Jan. 15, one incubation period after New Year's Day, a region that meets a state-set threshold as defined under his reopening plan can begin slightly easing restrictions.

To qualify for relaxed restrictions, a region must have a rolling coronavirus test positivity rate — the percentage of positive tests as a share of total tests — under 12% for three consecutive days. In addition, the region must have more than 20% of intensive care unit and hospital beds available and declining coronavirus hospitalizations for seven of last the last 10 days.

Based on the latest data available, several regions are not meeting those bench marks, including two regions comprising DuPage and Kane and Lake and McHenry counties.

In the regions that do qualify, indoor service at restaurants and bars would remain closed unless those regions show even more improvement in the COVID-19 data, such as maintaining a rolling test positivity rate of 6.5% or less for three days in a row.

As of Wednesday night, 3,921 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19. Of those, 783 patients were in intensive care units, while 450 were on ventilators.



# Preckwinkle Thanks Stroger Hospital Workers As Receive COVID-19 Vaccines

January 7, 2021 at 11:28 am

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/01/07/preckwinkle-thanks-stroger-hospital-workers-as-receive-covid-19-vaccines/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)**– Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle was on hand as health care workers at Stroger Hospital goth their COVID-19 vaccines.

She said health care workers are taking the lead and showing people the vaccine is “safe and effective.”

Some of the workers were receiving their second dose.

Preckwinkle thanked them for all their hard work and said 2021 is bound to be better than 2020.



# Stroger nurse first to receive second dose of COVID vaccine in Chicago

[Bernie Tafoya](#)

January 7, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/chicago-nurse-first-to-receive-second-dose-of-covid-vaccine>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- The second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine has been given to the Cook County Health nurse who was the first to receive the first dose.

Tracy Everett is an emergency department nurse at Stroger Hospital of Cook County who received her first shot of the Pfizer vaccine 21 days ago.

She said she's just as excited and humbled now as he was then.

"It doesn't feel like a super power, but it is a sense of relief for us, because, I'll still continue to do what I need to do to protect others and myself against the virus," she said.

Everett said she had been leery about whether to get vaccinated, at first. Then she did research and realized the benefits outweigh the risks. Not only that, though. She said, "I believe science."

Everett has been a nurse for 17 years, 11 of them at Stroger Hospital, and said of taking the vaccine, "I feel like I'm also doing it in honor of all the people who didn't survive."

Infectious disease Dr. Gregory Huhn is the COVID-19 vaccination coordinator for Cook County Health. He said the distribution of the second dose is big symbolically, as well as practically.

"We're now doubling down on our end game that we face this year with hope and solidarity towards this defeat of this terrible pandemic," he said.

"We've been on the front lines. We've witnessed the struggle, the suffering, and this will really give us hope and empower us, as well. This is sort of the force behind the mask that will get us to the other side of COVID-19."

Dr. Huhn said all Cook County Health workers who want the vaccine should be able to get their first dose by the middle of the month.

The doctor said he's scheduled to receive his second dose of the Pfizer vaccine Friday.



## People In Jails, Prisons Will Be Vaccinated In Next Phase, State Confirms After Advocates' Push

### Pascal Sabino

January 8, 2021

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/01/08/people-in-jails-prisons-will-be-vaccinated-in-next-phase-state-confirms-after-advocates-push/>

LITTLE VILLAGE — People incarcerated in Illinois will be among those vaccinated against coronavirus during the next phase, according to a newly released state plan.

People incarcerated in jails and prisons will be prioritized for vaccines along with people who are 65 and older, certain essential workers and people experiencing homelessness or residing in shelters, according to [the plan released Dec. 31 by the state health department](#). They'll all be given access to vaccines during the next phase, known as Phase 1B.

But it will be several weeks, if not months, before Phase 1B of vaccinations start. The state is currently focused on vaccinating health care workers and people living and working in long-term care facilities, like nursing homes.

People detained in Cook County Jail awaiting trial will be among those vaccinated during Phase 1B, said Erica Duncan on behalf of the Chicago Public Health Department, which will help implement the immunization plan at the jail.

The prioritization of detainees and prisoners in the vaccine rollout comes after [more than 60 community groups and advocacy organizations](#) sent an open letter to the state's health department demanding jails and prisons get access to the immunizations early.

In early December, [the state's vaccination plan](#) was more vague, only saying Phase 1B would possibly include essential frontline workers and other groups. The state was waiting for more guidance from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, a group of experts who are making recommendations for how states and major cities should prioritize people for vaccinations due to the limited supply of vaccines.

That committee released [updated recommendations](#) in mid-December, saying corrections officers should be among frontline workers prioritized for vaccines during Phase 1B.

But Illinois' plan appears to take things a step further than the committee's recommendations by also including people who are incarcerated in Phase 1B — something advocates have argued was necessary since prisons and jails have seen massive outbreaks that endanger the people incarcerated and working there.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had also said incarcerated people could be prioritized for vaccines since they're in such close contact with people working at prisons and jails.

The updated guidelines are "a huge victory," said Alan Mills, executive director of the Uptown People's Law Center, one of the groups that led the push.

"They live in congregate settings. They can't socially distance. They're constantly being exposed to people outside their group. There's guards coming in and out of the prison every day. ... It's impossible for prisoners to stay isolated so they should be vaccinated quickly," Mills said.

At Cook County Jail, 100 detained people are currently positive for coronavirus, records show. Since March, more than 2,000 detainees and correctional officers have tested positive for the disease.

Vaccinating inmates along with guards could have a huge impact on community spread of coronavirus, Mills said.

A [study by a University of Chicago researcher](#) found 16 percent of all Chicago coronavirus cases in the spring were linked to Cook County Jail. The researchers suggested people cycling into the jail then back out into their communities may have contributed to community spread. The Sheriff's Office and the city's public health department have contested the findings of the study.

"It makes even more sense for jails than prisons ... because so many people come in and out of jail. In prisons, they tend to stay longer. But in jails, they come in, get exposed, and 48 hours later they leave," Mills said.

Westside Justice Center, a Garfield Park-based legal support and education group, joined in on demands to give prisoners and detainees access to the vaccines. Executive Director Tanya Woods said despite the victory, their work isn't done.

"We're still waiting to see how this will be rolled out," Woods said.

Advocates and loved ones of people who are incarcerated must stay vigilant to make sure officials effectively distribute the vaccines among inmates, whose voices are often silenced and who have little control over what happens to them, Woods said.

"While we might get an idea of how it's supposed to be executed, we won't really know until we actually see and hear from people who are on the inside," Woods said.

Woods plans for the Westside Justice Center to work with other groups to host public forums on the vaccines to give advocates, attorneys and loved ones of inmates a chance to share their stories and report experiences "so that we can hold these institutions accountable for doing what they are going to do."

"If there's anybody that ends up not getting [the vaccine] ... that's supposed to get it, I think you're going to see a huge outcry," Woods said.

The plan for administering vaccines in jails and prisons is supported by Ramon Williams, president of the Teamsters Local 700 union, which represents correctional officers at Cook County Jail. Williams said the plan is "a step in the right direction" after the union previously [clashed with the county](#) over putting jail staffers at risk.

Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart — who tested positive for coronavirus in November — also supported efforts to include detainees at the jail in the early phases of the vaccine rollout, spokesman Matthew Walberg said.

"Sheriff Dart has publicly advocated for staff and detainees at the jail to receive vaccinations as quickly as possible, because providing vaccinations for staff without obtaining them for detainees limits the effectiveness of the vaccinations at protecting both groups of people," Walberg said.

The sheriff and the county health department plan to do an education campaign to inform detained people about the vaccines and the benefits of choosing to be immunized, officials said.

But due to the challenges incarcerated people face when trying to access quality medical care, Mills anticipates overcoming skepticism toward the vaccine will be a tremendous hurdle.

"There's a lot of distrust of medical personnel in both the jails and prisons because of the years of bad care that's been given," Mills said.

Prisoners and detainees must be allowed to speak with medical professionals so they have thorough information about the benefits and risks to getting immunized, Mills said. Correctional facilities should also have trusted peer educators on each tier of the jail, since “peer education works much better than top-down education,” Mills said.

“Things are never explained to people who are detained,” Mills said. “You can’t just walk up and down a cellblock and say, ‘Who wants the vaccine?’”

## Hospital en el condado de Cook busca concientizar a los latinos sobre la importancia de vacunarse contra el coronavirus

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wgbo/hospital-en-el-condado-de-cook-busca-concientizar-a-los-latinos-sobre-la-importancia-de-vacunarse-contr-el-coronavirus-video>



La doctora Pilar Guerrero, especialista del hospital Stroger, asegura que, basada en las estadísticas, es claro que los hispanos son los más afectados en medio de la pandemia. Por esa misma razón, extiende la invitación a toda la comunidad a que se inmunice una vez tenga la oportunidad, ya que así se disminuyen los riesgos latentes por el virus.



# Improving The Outlook For Opioid Overdoses In 2021

Cook County's chief medical examiner says she anticipates a 75% increase in the number of opioid deaths in 2020 compared to the prior year.

[Bianca Martin](#)

January 11, 2021

<https://www.wbez.org/stories/improving-the-outlook-for-opioid-overdoses-in-2021/42a29840-5c6e-46b8-b981-4038ce2200f7>

Cook County had its highest ever number of fatal opioid overdoses in 2020.

*Reset* brings on two county health officials and a national drug policy expert to unpack the possible contributing factors and offer potential solutions to the overdose crisis in 2021.

## **GUESTS:**

Dr. Ponni Arunkumar, chief medical examiner of Cook County

Dr. Steven Aks, chief of toxicology for Cook County Health; emergency room physician at John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital

Sheila Vakharia, deputy director of the Department of Research and Academic Engagement for the Drug Policy Alliance



# North Riverside woman, 67, is village's 4th COVID fatality

January 12, 2021

[Bob Uphues](#)

<https://www.rblandmark.com/News/Articles/1-12-2021/North-Riverside-woman,-67,-is-village%27s-4th-COVID-fatality/>

A 67-year-old woman who died on Jan. 11 became the fourth North Riverside resident to die from complications of COVID-19, the Cook County Medical Examiner reported on Monday, and the first since last July.

Meanwhile, the Cook County Department of Public Health reported 15 new confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 in North Riverside for the week ending on the morning of Jan. 12, bringing the total number since the pandemic began last March to 426.

That weekly total was less than the 23 reported the week before, but North Riverside has seen its cases numbers seesaw during the past month, giving no clear indication of which way numbers are trending.

In Riverside, the number of new cases remained almost flat, with 28 reported for the week ending on the morning of Jan. 12, compared to an average of 27.6 cases during the three-week period preceding it.

Since the pandemic began, 701 Riverside residents have been reported confirmed or probable for COVID-19 and three residents have died from the disease.

The number of confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases swelled to 1,455 in Brookfield after 82 new cases were reported by the Cook County Department of Public Health for the week ending on the morning of Jan. 12.

Eleven residents of Brookfield have died from COVID-19 since the pandemic began last March, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner, with seven of those fatalities coming since Nov. 26, 2020.

## Governor may loosen restrictions

Some regions of the state could see loosened COVID-19 restrictions as early as Friday as some counties have already transitioned to the next phase of vaccine distribution, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced on Jan. 11.

Although the state remains in Phase 1A of its vaccine distribution plan, some communities which have substantially completed Phase 1A have moved to the early stages of Phase 1B.

"We want to make sure any available vaccine is administered quickly to the priority groups that we've laid out," Pritzker said. "Let's get those out to Phase 1B people. ... Even though we haven't moved everybody into the next phase, we don't want any of these vaccines sitting around."

Those in Phase 1A, who are receiving vaccines, include health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities. Phase 1B would extend vaccine priority to non-health-care essential workers and residents age 65 or older.

This early transition has been authorized by the Illinois Department of Public Health, but local health departments determine the phase transition on a county-by-county basis, depending on Phase 1A progress. It is not clear which counties have already started Phase 1B.

Pritzker said he expects to make a formal announcement later this week regarding when the entire state will move into Phase 1B.

"But I want to urge patience," Pritzker said. "Phase 1B will take many weeks to complete."

Tier 3 mitigations will begin to be lifted come Friday in regions that meet certain metrics. The timeline represents a 14-day incubation period following New Year's Day.

In order to transition from Tier 3 to Tier 2, a region must experience a positivity rate below 12 percent for three consecutive days. It must also have greater than 20 percent available intensive care unit and hospital bed availability and declining COVID hospitalizations for 7 of the last 10 days.

Regions began hitting Tier 2 restrictions in November, with statewide Tier 3 mitigations announced on Nov. 20. No region has been able to move back to Tier 1 restrictions after reaching Tier 2.

Even in Tier 2, bans on indoor dining and drinking at bars and restaurants will continue, although locally the ban has been flouted widely with few apparent consequences.

Local officials continue to be reluctant to impose any enforcement action on establishments who defy the ban, but some have also been cited by the Cook County Department of Public Health.

"The village of Brookfield, along with most other Chicagoland suburbs, have taken the approach that there should be no strict enforcement of such an order," Brookfield Village President Kit Ketchmark said in an email. "Instead in our case, when our police department witnesses or receives a complaint of restaurants/bars operating in violation of the order, we issue a notice to the restaurant/bar of the order, and in the case of repeat cases, the village notifies the county and state health departments informing them that certain businesses are violating the order."

All of those receiving citations from the county are in Brookfield and include Sebastian's Ale and Whiskey House, Brookfield Breakfast, Phil's Sports Bar and Grill, Ryan's Public House, Cordial Inn, Gosia's Coffee Shop and Mary's Morning Mix-up.

According to Don Bolger, a spokesman for the Cook County Department of Public Health, penalties for establishments that continue to defy the ban "may include fines and other actions following due process."

Four of the seven establishments, said Bolger, have received violation notices via certified mail. If an establishment is found to be out of compliance after a re-inspection, Bolger said, "We will send a second notice to the facility and refer the matter to the State's Attorney."

The statewide COVID-19 rolling positivity rate remained below 8 percent for the second consecutive day Monday at 7.6 percent. Illinois reported 4,776 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 on Monday, with 53 additional virus-related deaths.

The state is reporting a total of 1,033,526 cases with a total of 17,627 deaths across the state's 102 counties. *Grace Barbic of Capitol News Illinois contributed to this report.*

## Illinois looks toward 2nd phase of COVID-19 vaccinations, though still weeks away for many. Data shows 1 in 45 have had at least 1 shot so far.

Madeline Buckley and Joe Mahr

January 12, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-when-will-illinois-seniors-get-shots-20210120-y76mmt5dfc55ikn25x7fqib2u-story.html#nt=pf-double%20chain~unnamed-chain-1~flex%20feature~curated~seniors-thu-930a~Y76MMTD5DFC55IKN25X7FQIB2U~1~1~3~5~art%20yes>

Though COVID-19 vaccines could be available soon for essential workers and older people throughout the state, most county health departments in the Chicago area are still working to vaccinate those included in the initial phase — health care workers, and those working and residing in long-term care facilities.

Data released on Tuesday shows that roughly 1 in 45 Illinoisans has gotten at least the first shot of a vaccine, with wide variations across the state.

The new batch of data — the state's first broad release of COVID-19 vaccination numbers since vaccinations began about four weeks ago — comes a day after Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said [county health departments can begin vaccinating people in phase 1b](#) if they have already run through people in the initial phase who want the inoculation, so as not to leave doses sitting on the shelf. The state as a whole remains in phase 1a.

The [data](#) comes as Illinois grapples with how best to roll out the vaccine, including when and where to expand vaccinations to senior citizens and front-line essential workers. The state's 1b phase includes people 65 and older, and workers such as first responders, teachers, grocery store workers and public transit workers.

"Throughout the pandemic we have used data to guide our decisions and actions and we will continue to do so for vaccine administration," IDPH's director, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, said in a [news release](#). "Illinois is a very diverse state, geographically and in the makeup of its population. It is important to track where we are seeing both high and low vaccination rates. These data will help us understand what actions we can take to end this pandemic as quickly as possible."

In Chicago and the surrounding area, that start of phase 1b is likely still weeks away.

In the city, vaccinations for outpatient health care workers who aren't affiliated with a hospital, like dentists and physical therapists, are still underway, said Chicago Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady on Tuesday.

"Our mass points of dispensing are not ready to be open for older Chicagoans, but soon," Arwady said.

Arwady said vaccinations may be available for essential workers around February or March, and also noted that Chicago's health department is in communication with other departments in northern Illinois to coordinate as a region as much as possible.

Suburban Cook County also remains in phase 1a, a Cook County Health Department spokesman said, and other area health departments report the same.

Though still inoculating people in phase 1a, the McHenry Public Health Department is asking people who may fall in phase 1b and 1c to fill out [an enrollment form](#) to help the department determine the need for the next groups.

The 1b phase also includes manufacturing workers, inmates and people who work at shelters. Phase 1c includes people with medical conditions that make them high risk, like cancer and diabetes, as well as people working in food service, the legal profession, media and financial roles like bank tellers.

“I think there are a lot of people who are eager for this, whether they are in 1b or 1c,” said Lindsey Salvatelli, a spokesperson for the McHenry County Public Health Department.

Salvatelli said the enrollment sheets will help the county prepare for the next wave of vaccine rollout, even though they are still vaccinating people in the 1a group.

In Kane County, health departments hope to begin administering vaccines to people in phase 1b within two weeks, [the Beacon-News reported](#). The department said it would soon provide information about this next step.

Lake County officials hope to vaccinate teachers, administrators and staff [as soon as early February](#).

[DuPage](#) and Will counties are both still inoculating people in the 1a group, health officials said.

Will County Health Department spokesman Steve Brandy said vaccinations for the first group are taking longer than anticipated.

“For now, we just ask for patience, Brandy [told the Daily Southtown](#). “2021 is going to be the vaccine year that we will remember for a long time.”

Will County residents can fill out a [form](#) to receive information about the vaccine.

Current daily average: 25,000 shots

Meanwhile, the newly released state vaccine data shows shots ramping up from about 10,000 a day two weeks ago to approaching 25,000 a day now, based on a rolling seven-day average.

But those shots have been distributed differently across the state. In Sangamon County, the seat of the state capital, more than 4% of the population has gotten at least one dose. In Alexander County — on Illinois’ southwestern tip — just 0.3% have gotten a dose, or 16 people out of more than 6,000 residents.

The data — which is current as of Monday — also shows that more than 72,000 Illinois residents have gotten both shots, or about 1 in 175 Illinoisans.

Vaccinations [began](#) a month ago for health care workers and long-term care residents, and the data shows there is plenty more to dole out.

The state says it’s received nearly 870,000 doses in the past month and has administered roughly 350,000 of them. That’s about 41% of doses received. Similar CDC data shows the state’s rate of vaccination ranks 25th in the nation as of Monday, according to a Tribune analysis.

Some of the delay can be traced to a subset of the vaccination program — the shots for long-term care residents — in which the federal government is partnering with pharmacies to deliver the shots. The state data shows that less than 18% of those 230,000 doses have been administered.

State officials have said previously that they believe more shots have been delivered than recorded, because those giving the shots have 24 hours to input the data into computers. They've also said it can take time to ship the vaccine to places that are vaccinating people.

Illinois became one of the last states in the country to release vaccination data, and it's not as complete as the data many other states are offering online to their citizens.

States including [North Dakota](#) and [Mississippi](#) already are releasing numbers based on race, age and ethnicity. That's considered key information to ensure the vaccine gets spread fairly. Illinois' data also does not contain detailed records of each place within the state that's gotten vaccines, as [Georgia](#) and [Pennsylvania](#) have done, and what each place has done with their shipments, as in [Michigan](#) and [South Carolina](#).

The state health department said in the news release that it would release more detailed data when it could.

# State's positivity rate decreases again, remains below 8 percent

Grace Barbic

January 12, 2021 Updated January 14, 2021

[https://qctimes.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/state-s-positivity-rate-decreases-again-remains-below-8-percent/article\\_fdd4dfe5-10b5-5c95-aa98-4df0bd03b61a.html](https://qctimes.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/state-s-positivity-rate-decreases-again-remains-below-8-percent/article_fdd4dfe5-10b5-5c95-aa98-4df0bd03b61a.html)

SPRINGFIELD — The statewide seven-day rolling COVID-19 case positivity rate remained below 8% for a third consecutive day Tuesday after decreasing for a fourth straight day.

Tuesday's seven-day rolling positivity rate was 7.5%, a decrease of one-tenth of a percentage point from Monday.

The state reported 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 Tuesday, with an additional 117 deaths recorded over the previous 24 hours. The state has reported 1,040,168 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, and the death toll climbed to 17,743 across the state's 102 counties.

As of Monday night, 3,554 COVID-19 patients were reported to be in the hospital, an increase of 14 from the day before, and 757 patients were in intensive care unit beds, a decrease of two from the day before. There were 409 patients reported to be on ventilators, an increase of eight from the day before.

The state reported 93,491 test results over the previous 24 hours for a total of more than 14.2 million tests completed since the pandemic began. That made for a one-day positivity rate of 7.1%.

On Tuesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health began reporting data regarding the delivery and administration of vaccines on its website.

As of Monday, 638,159 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines had been delivered to the state in addition to 231,475 doses that had been allocated to the federally mandated Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care program aimed at vaccinating people in congregate settings in Illinois.

A total 353,791 doses had been reported administered as of Friday, including 41,075 as part of the pharmacy partnership.

Gov. JB Pritzker said Monday that health care providers had up to 72 hours after administering a vaccination to report the data according to federal guidelines, so the number of vaccines reported administered lags behind the number of vaccines reported distributed.

Over the past seven days, the state reported averaging 24,232 vaccines administered daily.

IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike on Tuesday received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

On Monday, Ezike stressed the importance of being vaccinated as a variant of the coronavirus that has been tracked in the United Kingdom becomes a potential threat in the U.S.

"If it's not here yet it's only a matter of time," Ezike said. "It is likely already in the state, but it's probably circulating at such low numbers right now that we have not identified the significance."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating globally. The CDC reported a new variant has emerged in the UK with an unusually large number of mutations.

This variant was first detected in September and is now highly prevalent in London and in southeast England, the CDC reported. It has since been detected in numerous countries around the world, including the U.S.

Two cases of the UK variant COVID-19 were identified in Maryland as of Tuesday, according to multiple news reports. The variant is believed to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, but there is no evidence that it causes more severe illness or increased risk of death, according to the CDC.

Ezike warned that this new variant could quickly become the dominant strain of the virus in the states.

# State's positivity rate decreases again, remains below 8%

GRACE BARBIC *Capitol News Illinois*

January 13, 2021

<https://www.cantondailyledger.com/story/news/2021/01/13/states-positivity-rate-decreases-again-remains-below-8/4144918001/>

SPRINGFIELD—The statewide seven-day rolling COVID-19 case positivity rate remained below 8 percent for a third consecutive day Tuesday after decreasing for a fourth straight day.

Tuesday's seven-day rolling positivity rate was 7.5%, a decrease of one-tenth of a percentage point from Monday.

The state reported 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 Tuesday, with an additional 117 deaths recorded over the previous 24 hours. The state has reported 1,040,168 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, and the death toll climbed to 17,743 across the state's 102 counties.

As of Monday night, 3,554 COVID-19 patients were reported to be in the hospital, an increase of 14 from the day prior, and 757 patients were in intensive care unit beds, a decrease of two from the day prior. There were 409 patients reported to be on ventilators, an increase of eight from the day prior.

The state reported 93,491 test results over the previous 24 hours for a total of more than 14.2 million tests completed since the pandemic began. That made for a one-day positivity rate of 7.1%.

Tuesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health began reporting data regarding the delivery and administration of vaccines on its website.

As of Monday, 638,159 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines had been delivered to the state in addition to 231,475 doses that had been allocated to the federally mandated Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care program aimed at vaccinating people in congregate settings in Illinois.

A total 353,791 doses had been reported administered as of Friday, including 41,075 as part of the pharmacy partnership.

Gov. JB Pritzker said Monday that health care providers have up to 72 hours after administering a vaccination to report the data according to federal guidelines, so the number of vaccines reported administered lags behind the number of vaccines reported distributed.

Over the past seven days, the state reported averaging 24,232 vaccines administered daily.

**Your stories live here.**

Fuel your hometown passion and plug into the stories that define it.

IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike on Tuesday received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

Monday, Ezike stressed the importance of being vaccinated as a variant of the coronavirus that has been tracked in the United Kingdom becomes a potential threat in the U.S.

"If it's not here yet it's only a matter of time," Ezike said. "It is likely already in the state, but it's probably circulating at such low numbers right now that we have not identified the significance."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating globally. The CDC reported a new variant has emerged in the UK with an unusually large number of mutations.

This variant was first detected in September and is now highly prevalent in London and in southeast England, the CDC reported. It has since been detected in numerous countries around the world, including the U.S. Two cases of the UK variant COVID-19 were identified in Maryland as of Tuesday, according to multiple news reports. The variant is believed to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, but there is no evidence that it causes more severe illness or increased risk of death, according to the CDC.

Ezike warned that this new variant could quickly become the dominant strain of the virus in the states.

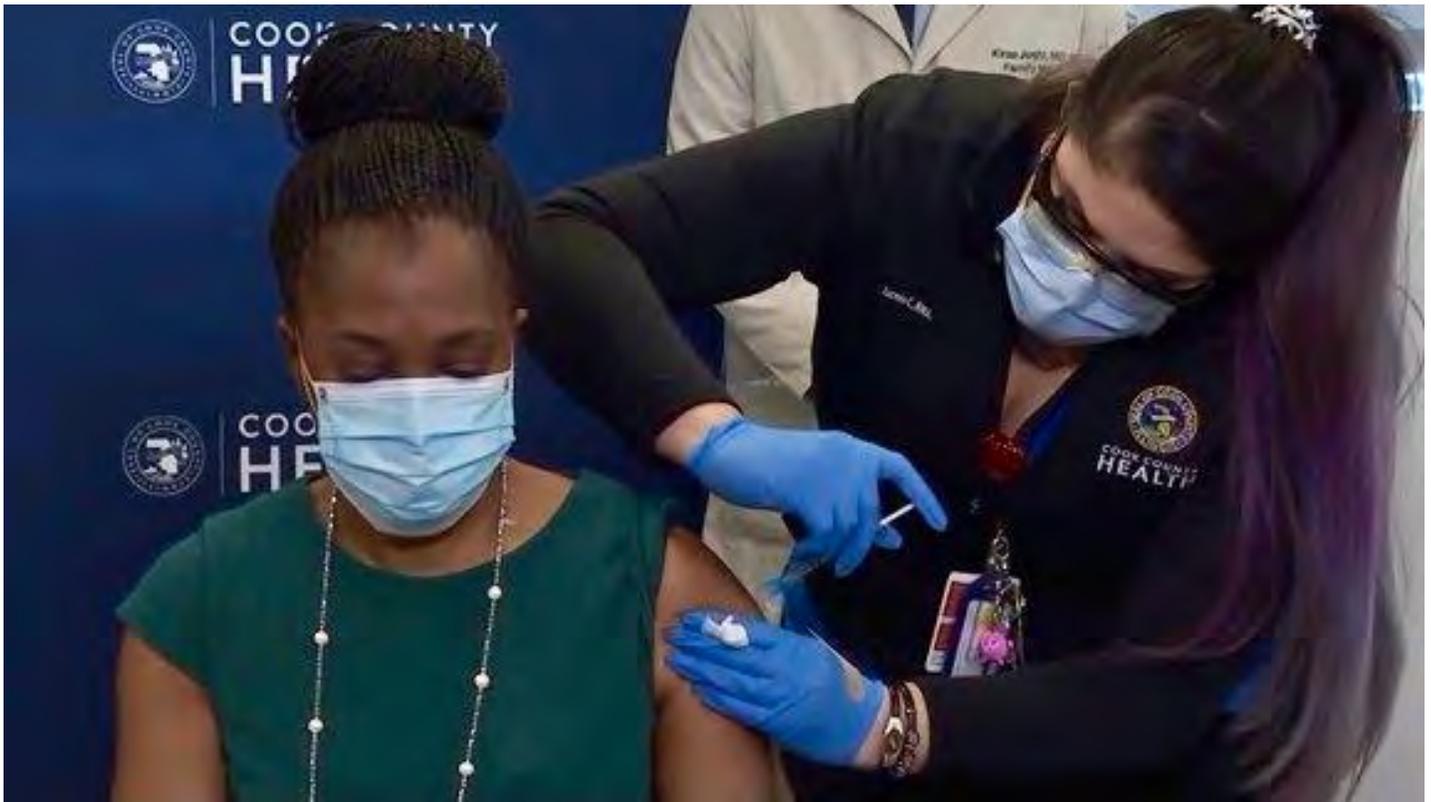
# State's positivity rate decreases again, remains below 8 percent

Vaccine distribution data now updated daily on state website

By Grace Barbic

January 12, 2021

<https://capitolnewsillinois.com/NEWS/states-positivity-rate-decreases-again-remains-below-8-percent>



*Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike receives her first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside. (Credit: @GovPritzker on Twitter)*

SPRINGFIELD – The statewide seven-day rolling COVID-19 case positivity rate remained below 8 percent for a third consecutive day Tuesday after decreasing for a fourth straight day.

Tuesday's seven-day rolling positivity rate was 7.5 percent, a decrease of one-tenth of a percentage point from Monday.

The state reported 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 Tuesday, with an additional 117 deaths recorded over the previous 24 hours. The state has reported 1,040,168 cases of COVID-19 since the pandemic began, and the death toll climbed to 17,743 across the state's 102 counties.

As of Monday night, 3,554 COVID-19 patients were reported to be in the hospital, an increase of 14 from the day prior, and 757 patients were in intensive care unit beds, a decrease of two from the day prior. There were 409 patients reported to be on ventilators, an increase of eight from the day prior.

The state reported 93,491 test results over the previous 24 hours for a total of more than 14.2 million tests completed since the pandemic began. That made for a one-day positivity rate of 7.1 percent.

On Tuesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health began reporting data regarding the delivery and administration of vaccines [on its website](#).

As of Monday, 638,159 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines had been delivered to the state in addition to 231,475 doses that had been allocated to the federally mandated Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care program aimed at vaccinating people in congregate settings in Illinois.

A total 353,791 doses had been reported administered as of Friday, including 41,075 as part of the pharmacy partnership.

Gov. JB Pritzker said Monday that health care providers have up to 72 hours after administering a vaccination to report the data according to federal guidelines, so the number of vaccines reported administered lags behind the number of vaccines reported distributed.

Over the past seven days, the state reported averaging 24,232 vaccines administered daily.

IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike on Tuesday received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

On Monday, Ezike stressed the importance of being vaccinated as a variant of the coronavirus that has been tracked in the United Kingdom becomes a potential threat in the U.S.

"If it's not here yet it's only a matter of time," Ezike said. "It is likely already in the state, but it's probably circulating at such low numbers right now that we have not identified the significance."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that multiple COVID-19 variants are circulating globally. The CDC reported a new variant has emerged in the UK with an unusually large number of mutations.

This variant was first detected in September and is now highly prevalent in London and in southeast England, [the CDC reported](#). It has since been detected in numerous countries around the world, including the U.S.

[Two cases of the UK variant COVID-19 were identified in Maryland](#) as of Tuesday, according to multiple news reports. The variant is believed to spread more easily and quickly than other variants, but there is no evidence that it causes more severe illness or increased risk of death, according to the CDC.

Ezike warned that this new variant could quickly become the dominant strain of the virus in the states.



**Dr. Ezike to receive COVID-19 vaccine on Tuesday**

[Andrew Carrigan](#)

January 12, 2021

<https://wrex.com/2021/01/12/dr-ezike-to-receive-covid-19-vaccine-on-tuesday/>

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (WREX) — One of the state's top doctors is set to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Dr. Ngozi Ezike, the Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, is scheduled to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at 12 p.m. Tuesday.

Dr. Ezike will be joined by leaders of the Cook County Health Department in Riverside, Illinois.

Along with receiving the vaccine, Dr. Ezike will be encouraging other people to get the vaccine.



## Illinois health director receives COVID-19 vaccination

January 12, 2021

<https://chronicleillinois.com/coronavirus/illinois-health-director-receives-covid-19-vaccination/>

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike on Tuesday, Jan. 11 received her coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

Partnering with the Cook County Department of Public Health and Cook County Health, Ezike received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

"I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care personnel receive the vaccine first because they have a higher risk than me of being exposed to COVID-19," she said. "But I want to show people, and not just tell them, that I trust this vaccine and I want them to have confidence in the vaccine so they will get vaccinated when they are eligible."

Ezike added the more people who get vaccinated and sooner schools can reopen and life can gradually start getting back to some pre-COVID-19 levels,

"Vaccination gets us closer to the safe playing of sports and it gets us closer to be able to share love with warm embraces and not just air hugs."

The IDPH encourages people to share photos of when they get vaccinated on social media and use the hash tag #VaxUpIL. The more people who see others getting vaccinated, the more people will choose to get vaccinated, the IDPH stated.

More information about COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>.



## **IDPH director gets COVID-19 vaccine**

**January 12, 2021**

<https://www.wcia.com/news/idph-director-gets-covid-19-vaccine/>

COOK COUNTY, Ill. (WCIA) — Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike got her COVID-19 vaccination on Tuesday.

In a news release, IDPH officials said Dr. Ezike received the first round of the Pfizer vaccination at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

Dr. Ezike said she waited until her physician colleagues and other healthcare workers got the vaccine because of their higher risk of exposure. She wanted to get the vaccine to show people that she trusted it and that they should get vaccinated when they are eligible.

"I am taking this vaccine for my husband who gave me the scare of my life when he collapsed at the dinner table in front of me and our children in May," said Dr. Ezike. "After being rushed to the hospital and learning of his diagnosis, it became intensely personal to never forget that this virus preys on people with pre-existing medical conditions. I am getting vaccinated for my children who have struggled like many of us."

# Ezike says she's showing trust in the COVID-19 vaccination

January 12, 2021

<https://www.theintelligencer.com/news/article/Ezike-says-shes-showing-trust-in-the-COVID-19-15864930.php>

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike received her coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination Tuesday at the Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

Partnering with the Cook County Department of Public Health and Cook County Health, Dr. Ezike received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

"I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care personnel receive the vaccine first because they have a higher risk than me of being exposed to COVID-19," said Dr. Ezike. "But I want to show people, and not just tell them, that I trust this vaccine and I want them to have confidence in the vaccine so they will get vaccinated when they are eligible.

"I am taking this vaccine for my husband who gave me the scare of my life when he collapsed at the dinner table in front of me and our children in May. After being rushed to the hospital and learning of his diagnosis, it became intensely personal to never forget that this virus preys on people with pre-existing medical conditions. I am getting vaccinated for my children who have struggled like many of us.

"We've seen people suffer with anxiety and depression. We've also seen grades fall as students struggle with home learning and the missing connection with friends and teachers. Being vaccinated gets us one step closer to children being educated in school without fears of contracting this virus. Vaccination gets us closer to the safe playing of sports and it gets us closer to be able to share love with warm embraces and not just air hugs."

More information about COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>.



## Dr. Ezike receives COVID-19 vaccination

January 12, 2021

Neil Doyle

<https://www.wjbc.com/2021/01/12/dr-ezike-receives-covid-19-vaccination/>

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike on Tuesday received her first dose of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine.

Ezike got the shot at the Cook County Health’s North Riverside Health Center in Riverside.

“I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care personnel receive the vaccine first because they have a higher risk than me of being exposed to COVID-19,” said Ezike. “But I want to show people, and not just tell them, that I trust this vaccine and I want them to have confidence in the vaccine so they will get vaccinated when they are eligible.”

“I am taking this vaccine for my husband who gave me the scare of my life when he collapsed at the dinner table in front of me and our children in May. After being rushed to the hospital and learning of his diagnosis, it became intensely personal to never forget that this virus preys on people with pre-existing medical conditions. I am getting vaccinated for my children who have struggled like many of us.”

Ezike is encouraging people to share photos of when they get vaccinated on social media and use the hash tag #VaxUpIL. More information about the COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination can be found *here*.

## **COVID-19: State's top public health doctor gets vaccine; Illinois to allow local health departments to start vaccinating those 65 and older, plus teachers and other essential workers**

January 12, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/ct-trump-sign-villegas-kinzinger-schneider-trump-impeachment-spin-20210113-ql63grgd3zhs3cmcdt267imj4m-story.html>

The state's public health doctor, Dr. Ngozi Ezike, got her first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine today: "Most people survive this illness, but some don't," she said. "I don't want to gamble with my life and I don't want anyone else to gamble with theirs." Read the [WTTW-Ch. 11 story here](#).



# Dr. Ngozi Ezike Received Her Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Vaccination

January 12, 2021

<https://www.riverbender.com/articles/details/dr-ngozi-ezike-received-her-coronavirus-disease-covid19-vaccination-46990.cfm>

**SPRINGFIELD** – Today, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike received her coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination at the Cook County Health’s North Riverside Health Center in Riverside. Partnering with the Cook County Department of Public Health and Cook County Health, Dr. Ezike received her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

“I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care personnel receive the vaccine first because they have a higher risk than me of being exposed to COVID-19,” said Dr. Ezike. “But I want to show people, and not just tell them, that I trust this vaccine and I want them to have confidence in the vaccine so they will get vaccinated when they are eligible.

“I am taking this vaccine for my husband who gave me the scare of my life when he collapsed at the dinner table in front of me and our children in May. After being rushed to the hospital and learning of his diagnosis, it became intensely personal to never forget that this virus preys on people with pre-existing medical conditions. I am getting vaccinated for my children who have struggled like many of us.

“We’ve seen people suffer with anxiety and depression. We’ve also seen grades fall as students struggle with home learning and the missing connection with friends and teachers. Being vaccinated gets us one step closer to children being educated in school without fears of contracting this virus. Vaccination gets us closer to the safe playing of sports and it gets us closer to be able to share love with warm embraces and not just air hugs.”

We want to encourage people to share photos of when they get vaccinated on social media and us the hash tag #VaxUpIL. The more people who see others getting vaccinated, the more people will choose to get vaccinated. More information about COVID-19 vaccine and vaccination can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>.



# Illinois' Dr. Ngozi Ezike gets COVID-19 vaccine at Chicago area clinic

AP NEWS

January 12, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/illinois-dr-ngozi-ezike-gets-covid-19-vaccine-at-chicago-area-clinic>

**CHICAGO** - Illinois' top doctor received a COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday at a suburban Chicago clinic after delivering an emotional address about the difficulties of the pandemic for health care workers and her own family.

Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said she was getting vaccinated for her children and her husband, who was diagnosed earlier this year with a medical condition that put him at a higher risk. She added that she wanted to see family members again for real hugs, not virtual ones.

"I hugged and cried with my mother in person during my father's burial in February and I am desperate to touch and hold and kiss my sweet mother again," she said before getting the shot at a Cook County clinic in North Riverside. "I can't wait until we have enough for every single person so we can put this nightmare behind us."

Illinois officials said Tuesday that the state has received roughly 870,000 vaccine doses. Nearly 640,000 have been delivered to providers and about 231,000 are going to long-term care facilities through a federal government partnership. The state is currently offering the shots to health care workers and residents and employees of nursing homes. The next phase will include essential workers and residents age 65 and older.

Also Tuesday, public health officials said Illinois had logged another **6,642 new confirmed and probable cases** and 117 additional deaths. Overall, Illinois has reported more than 1 million cases and 17,743 deaths.



# Ezike receives COVID-19 vaccine as rollout continues; 6,642 new cases, 117 additional deaths reported

**Brenden Moore**

January 12, 2021

<https://www.sj-r.com/story/news/2021/01/12/ezike-receives-covid-19-vaccine-rollout-continues-6-642-new-cases-117-additional-deaths-reported/6643731002/>

Illinois' top public health official received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday.

Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) director received her first dose of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine at a health facility in Cook County.

"I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care personnel receive the vaccine first because they have a higher risk than me of being exposed to COVID-19," Ezike said. "But I want to show people, and not just tell them, that I trust this vaccine and I want them to have confidence in the vaccine so they will get vaccinated when they are eligible."

She said getting vaccinated "gets us one step closer to children being educated in school without fears of contracting this virus" and "to the safe playing of sports and it gets us closer to be able to share love with warm embraces and not just air hugs."

The rollout of the vaccine has initially focused on health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities. Once those groups are taken care of, the next in line will be Illinois residents age 65 years or older and non-healthcare frontline essential workers.

The vaccine represents light at the end of a deep, dark tunnel. More than 1.04 million cases, including 17,743 deaths, have been reported in Illinois since the beginning of the pandemic.

According to data from IDPH, 869,625 doses have been administered and 72,458 state residents have been fully vaccinated, or about 0.57% of the population. Only Winnebago and Knox counties have more than 1% of their populations fully vaccinated.

In Sangamon County, 8,950 doses have been administered. Only 992 county residents have been fully vaccinated, which is just 0.51% of the population.

Sangamon County public health officials plan to release a local vaccine plan Wednesday morning that will outline next steps as more health care workers and other frontline workers get vaccinated.

IDPH reported 6,642 new cases statewide and 117 additional deaths.

The state's seven-day-rolling positivity rate is 7.5%. As of Monday night, 3,553 in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 757 were in the ICU and 409 were on ventilators.

In Region 3, which includes Springfield and much of west-central Illinois, the positivity rate is 7.5%. Hospital bed and ICU capacity have also improved to the point where, if the region's numbers hold, it would be eligible to have some mitigations lifted on Friday.

Gov. JB Pritzker announced last week that any region that meets metrics to rollback from Tier 3 to Tier 2 mitigations would be able to do so starting Jan. 15.

Meanwhile, Sangamon County reported 54 new cases of COVID-19 Tuesday, bringing the county's total to 14,076, including 187 deaths. The county's seven-day-rolling positivity rate was 6% as of Saturday.

There were six new cases reported in Menard County, bringing the total to 828, including six deaths.

The Winchester school district returned to remote learning on Tuesday because of a number of COVID-19 cases with staff members and students.

The district will be in remote learning through at least Jan. 19, according to a Facebook post from district administration.



## **IDPH Director Ezike Gets 1st Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine**

[Kristen Thometz](#)

January 12, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/01/12/idph-director-ezike-gets-1st-dose-covid-19-vaccine>

As the state continues its rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, Illinois' top doctor rolled up her sleeve Tuesday to receive her first dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike says she has studied everything she can about COVID-19 and was excited to be vaccinated.

"Most people survive this illness but some don't," she said. "I don't want to gamble with my life and I don't want anyone else to gamble with theirs."

Ezike said she's also getting vaccinated for her family.

"I am taking this vaccine for my husband who gave me the scare of my life when he collapsed at the dinner table in front of me and our children in May. After being rushed to the hospital and learning of his diagnosis, it became intensely personal to never forget that this virus preys on people with pre-existing medical conditions," she said. "I am getting vaccinated for my children who have struggled like many of us."

Her husband's condition was not disclosed, but Ezike says it puts him in a higher risk category should he contract the virus.

As of Monday night, 353,791 vaccinations have been administered, including 41,075 in long-term care facilities, [according to IDPH data](#). Of the state's more than 12 million residents, less than 1% — 72,458 — have been fully vaccinated, according to state data.

Currently, the vaccine is only available to health care workers as well as staff and residents of long-term care facilities. While the state could soon [expand its rollout to include residents ages 65 and older](#), it will be months before it is widely available.

Ezike says she can't wait for the vaccine to become available to everyone and that it is "going to give us our normal lives back."

"We have a race against the clock because people are dying every single day," she said, acknowledging the concern over a new variant of the virus that is already "potentially here" in Illinois.

IDPH reported 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday and 117 additional deaths. Since the first infection was reported in Illinois nearly a year ago, there have been 1,040,168 cases and 17,743 deaths across the state.

As of Monday night, 3,553 people were hospitalized with COVID-19, and of those, 757 patients were in the ICU and 409 patients were on ventilators, according to state health officials.

Ezike acknowledged the decision to be vaccinated is "intensely personal" and that some people will never choose to do so, but she believes more people will opt in as the number of first and second doses administered rises.

“I hope that will move the needle – pun intended. We will continue to put that education out. I want you to continue asking questions,” she said, adding IDPH and local public health departments are hosting town halls about the vaccine. “Hopefully after you get the facts, you will get the vax,” she said.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases is 7.5%, — down from 8.5% a week ago, [according to IDPH data](#).

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity is 8.6%, according to state health officials. That number is higher in both suburban Cook County (9.8%) and Chicago (10.1%), [according to IDPH regional data](#).

# Illinois' top doc gets COVID-19 shot at Chicago area clinic

By SOPHIA TAREEN

January 12, 2021

<https://apnews.com/article/public-health-health-illinois-chicago-coronavirus-pandemic-259c42a9dcc98c790fc1cccf6d4d8085>

CHICAGO (AP) — Illinois' top doctor received a COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday at a suburban Chicago clinic after delivering an emotional address about the difficulties of the pandemic for health care workers and her own family.

Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said she was getting vaccinated for her children and her husband, who was diagnosed earlier this year with a medical condition that put him at a higher risk. She added that she wanted to see family members again for real hugs, not virtual ones.

"I hugged and cried with my mother in person during my father's burial in February and I am desperate to touch and hold and kiss my sweet mother again," she said before getting the shot at a Cook County clinic in North Riverside. "I can't wait until we have enough for every single person so we can put this nightmare behind us."

Illinois officials said Tuesday that the state has received roughly 870,000 vaccine doses. Nearly 640,000 have been delivered to providers and about 231,000 are going to long-term care facilities through a federal government partnership. The state is currently offering the shots to health care workers and residents and employees of nursing homes. The [next phase](#) will include essential workers and residents age 65 and older.

Also Tuesday, public health officials said Illinois had logged another 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases and 117 additional deaths. Overall, Illinois has reported more than 1 million cases and 17,743 deaths.



# Dr. Ezike receives first dose of COVID-19, delivers emotional speech

Jan 12, 2021

CHICAGO (AP) — Illinois' top doctor has received a COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic in suburban Chicago. Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike gave an emotional address Tuesday before getting the shot saying she was getting vaccinated for her family and hopes vaccinations are soon widespread.

She calls the vaccine the next step toward "getting our normal lives back."

The news comes as public health officials logged 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases Tuesday and 117 additional deaths. Overall, Illinois has reported more than 1 million cases and 17,743 deaths.

Beginning Tuesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is now reporting coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination data on its website, with data to be updated daily and additional data to be provided as available.

"Throughout the pandemic we have used data to guide our decisions and actions and we will continue to do so for vaccine administration," said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. "Illinois is a very diverse state, geographically and in the make-up of its population. It is important to track where we are seeing both high and low vaccination rates. These data will help us understand what actions we can take to end this pandemic as quickly as possible."

Data on the IDPH website include the number of doses administered, the vaccination rate per population, and what percent of the population is fully vaccinated. These data are broken down by county. Additionally, the website includes information on the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI), also broken down by county.

The CCVI looks at indicators such as socioeconomic status, household composition, type of housing and transportation, epidemiological facts, as well as access to health care. Additional data and means to track vaccination rates will be added as available.

Vaccination data can be found on the IDPH website at [www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinatedata](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinatedata).



# The Latest: Fla. lawyer in tobacco cases dies from COVID-19

The Associated Press  
January 12, 2021

CHICAGO — Illinois' top doctor has received a COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic in suburban Chicago.

Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike gave an emotional address Tuesday before getting the shot saying she was getting vaccinated for her family and hopes vaccinations are soon widespread.

She calls the vaccine the next step toward "getting our normal lives back."

The news comes as public health officials logged 6,642 new confirmed and probable cases Tuesday and 117 additional deaths. Overall, Illinois has reported more than 1 million cases and 17,743 deaths.

## Illinois reports 117 more COVID-19 deaths, 6,642 new cases

**Jake Griffin**

January 13, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210112/illinois-reports-117-more-covid-19-deaths-6642-new-cases->

Saying she was taking the COVID-19 vaccine in hopes she could soon hug her mother again, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike received her first dose today at a Cook County Public Health Department clinic.

"I waited to let my physician colleagues and other health care workers receive the vaccine first because they did have a higher risk of getting infected by going into the hospital every day; going into the clinic every day where they were taking care of people with known COVID and suspected COVID diagnoses," Ezike said before receiving the shot. "But we all now know hundreds, if not now thousands, of individuals that didn't end up in a hospital, that don't work in a hospital and also contracted this deadly virus."

An emotional Ezike said she was taking the vaccine for her family's well-being and to eventually again hug her mother, whom she hasn't been able to embrace since her father's funeral in February. She also urged others to be inoculated as well when the vaccine is made available to them.

"I can't wait until we have enough for every single person so we can put this nightmare behind us," she said.

IDPH officials announced today that 117 more Illinois residents have died from COVID-19, while 6,642 new cases were diagnosed.

That brings the state's death toll from the respiratory disease to 17,743, while 1,040,168 residents of the state have been infected throughout the pandemic.

The state's seven-day average case positivity rate is at 7.5%, the fourth straight day it has declined. The rate is used to determine the level of spread throughout a specific population, and health officials use a seven-day average to smooth out any daily anomalies in new cases and test results.

For the second day in a row, the state is averaging fewer new cases of the virus, based on a seven-day average as well. IDPH figures show the state is averaging 6,921 new cases a day over the past week. That figure had been on the rise since just after Christmas, peaking Sunday at an average of 6,990 new cases a day.

Throughout the state, 3,553 patients are hospitalized with the virus, and 757 are in intensive care, according to IDPH records. The hospitalization figures are increasing slightly for two consecutive days, which was expected after the state experienced the rise in cases beginning a couple weeks ago. That's because hospitalizations are a lagging indicator, which means it can take a week or two before new cases of the virus result in hospitalizations, medical experts have said throughout the pandemic.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports on its [vaccine distribution tracking website covid.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/downloads/#vaccine-distribution-tracking-website), that Illinois has received 903,000 doses of the vaccine and the most recent figures show 347,005 people have received at least one dose of the two-dose vaccines.

Currently, residents and workers of long-term care facilities are eligible for vaccination, as well as hospital workers and other health care professionals, such as Ezike.

Ezike's inoculation took about six minutes to perform. Before taking the shot, patients must acknowledge they understand the risk of possible side effects, which takes about two minutes to go through. Then, patients are asked a series of questions about their medical history, which takes about two minutes more. An additional two minutes is needed to prep the vaccine and needle for injection and sterilize the patient's arm.

In a moment of levity at Ezike's inoculation, after acknowledging she was aware of the side effects and answering the medical history questions, the IDPH director joked, "Now do I get to kiss the vaccine?"

Ezike will receive her second vaccine dose in 21 days. She noted Monday that roughly 12,000 people who were inoculated with their first dose three weeks ago have received the second dose. She is hopeful those who might be skeptical of the vaccine will see how well those who were vaccinated are doing and get inoculated as well.

"You will continue to see people who have gotten their doses and are doing well, and I hope that will help move that needle, pun intended," Ezike said.



# Second Dose of COVID Vaccine Could Provide More 'Intense' Symptoms, Ezike Says

January 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/second-dose-of-covid-vaccine-could-provide-more-intense-symptoms-ezike-says/2414915/>

Illinois' top doctor said Tuesday that the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine could provide recipients with more "intense" symptoms.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said that with the second dose of the coronavirus vaccine, some people have experienced "a more intense reaction."

"People who said, 'I didn't feel anything on the first,' some of them are saying, 'Yeah, I felt some headache. I felt more pain,'" Ezike said. "So there is a more robust immune response that is manifest in that second dose"

Ezike added that people should not be alarmed when individuals have reported more symptoms with the second shot, and should know the reactions are expected.

Ezike received her coronavirus vaccination Tuesday at noon at North Riverside Health Center, sending a message to Illinois residents that the vaccine is safe and effective.

In her remarks before receiving the vaccination, she said her choice to take the vaccine was "deeply personal" and that though many survive the coronavirus, others have not experienced the same outcome.

"I don't want to gamble with my life, and I don't want anyone else to gamble with theirs," Ezike said.

She said the pandemic became personal for her specifically when her husband collapsed at the dinner table in May and was diagnosed with an unnamed health condition, making him at higher risk of having a severe reaction to the virus.

"It became intensely personal to me then, that this virus preys and can prey on people with pre-existing medical conditions," Ezike said. "Like the one my husband was diagnosed with."

Ezike added that she is also receiving the vaccine for her four children who have "struggled and suffered in common and unique ways" as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

She said after crying with her mother during her father's burial in February, she can't wait to hold her mother again when they are vaccinated. Ezike said she is also getting the vaccine for "team IDPH," who she said has worked to ensure the health and safety of all Illinoisans during the pandemic.

After officially receiving the vaccine, the crowd gathered around Illinois' top doctor gave a round of applause and cheers.

"I just I want this for everyone and I just want you to know, this is a safe and effective vaccine that's gonna give us our normal lives back," Ezike said.



# Health officials push for faster vaccine rollout as seniors over 65 are next in line in Illinois

[Dana Rebik](#)

January 13, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/health-officials-push-for-faster-vaccine-rollout-as-seniors-over-65-are-next-in-line-in-illinois/>

CHICAGO — The COVID-19 vaccine rollout is moving along in Illinois and across the country Wednesday, but at a much slower pace than many had hoped.

The priority for now in Illinois remains frontline healthcare workers and long-term care residents in the Phase 1A group.

A total of 350 seniors were vaccinated at Smith Village in Chicago Wednesday, making up one of the largest groups given the shot in a single site on a single day.

CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady says starting next week, city residents over 65 will be able to start receiving the vaccine through their current health care providers, starting with the oldest and most vulnerable patients.

While efforts are progressing, Arwady is among many experts critical of the pace of the vaccine rollout.

“Both last and this week we have gotten between 32 thousand and 34 thousand doses which is honestly not enough,” Arwady said. “No vaccine is being wasted, period.”

If the pace of vaccinations doesn't increase, Northwestern Medicine's Dr. Robert Murphy says it could take 1,000 days to achieve herd immunity in Illinois using two-dose vaccines.

Seniors are already being vaccinated in Florida on a first-come-first-serve basis by waiting in line and even camping overnight at vaccine sites.

Officials in Illinois say that is not the way to go, saying they're confident those 65 and older will get access in the coming weeks by making an appointment at local pharmacies, hospitals and doctors offices.

Dr. Rachel Rubin with Cook County Public Health said she doesn't think it will take as long to achieve herd immunity as some expect, and she expects Phase 1B to start in early February in suburban Cook County.

“If we were doing vaccinations at the pace of even last week it would take a long time but even as of this week we are getting more vaccinations online that's just as critical as having the vaccine,” Rubin said. “Both my parents just passed away from Covid so this is extremely personal to me.”

Many counties are now posting forms to fill out online to register and receive alerts when it's your turn.

Rubin says the key is not only the number of vaccines distributed to Illinois, but having enough people to give them. To speed things up, officials are asking [nurses and nursing students to sign up to help](#) administer vaccines.

## Here's how to get more information on COVID vaccines in your county

Caroline Hurley

January 15, 2021

Illinois has been following a phased plan to distribute available COVID-19 vaccine doses since the first vaccine was approved on Dec. 11. So far, the FDA has approved the vaccine developed by Pfizer-BioNTech, and the one developed by Moderna.

The state's distribution plan aligned with federal guidelines for prioritizing healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities. Governor Pritzker [announced on Jan. 6](#) that the state would break with federal guidelines and begin vaccinating residents over the age of 65. Federal recommendations have since been updated to include people over 65.

Illinois' plan contains two phases, which are broken down into sub-phases based on supply and who is eligible for a shot. Phase 1, when there remains a limited supply of doses available, contains sub-phases 1a, 1b, and 1c.

The [first vaccine shipment](#) arrived in Illinois on Dec. 14, and phase 1a [began the next day](#) with vaccinations of healthcare workers across the state.

Phase 1b expands eligibility to residents over the age of 65, along with essential workers such as firefighters, grocery store workers, teachers and inmates.

Phase 1c, still during the limited supply of vaccines, extends eligibility to people between the ages of 16 and 64 with high-risk health conditions. It also includes additional categories of essential workers.

Once supply increases sufficiently, vaccination will open up to the remaining population of Illinois over the age of 16. Use of COVID-19 vaccines in young children has not yet been approved.

An outline of the state's plan, with detailed explanations of who might be eligible in each stage of phase 1, [is available here](#).

So far, most local health departments and the Illinois Department of Public Health are not providing specific estimates for when people might be able to receive vaccines. Public health departments in Chicago and its collar counties have released varying degrees of surveys and registration tools. For information on each of these tools, see the links for each county below.

### [City of Chicago](#)

The city of Chicago is currently vaccinating healthcare workers, but officials [announced on Jan. 8](#) that they would move forward with vaccinating residents over the age of 65. So far, no surveys or registration tools have been released for non-healthcare workers in Chicago.

Officials with healthcare clinics not associated with a hospital system are encouraged to [fill out the city's survey](#) to get more information about where and when they can be vaccinated.

## Cook County

If you are a healthcare worker or other category of essential worker, and either live or work in suburban Cook County, you can fill out [this survey](#) to indicate interest in receiving the vaccine. Cook County Department of Public Health will provide more information on vaccination timing when it is available.

If you are an administrator or director of a healthcare facility or otherwise essential workplace, Cook County Department of Public Health has released a separate survey to gauge interest among employers about vaccinating their workforces. You can [access that survey here](#).

Once the vaccine supply increases, Cook County will follow state guidelines on opening up vaccinations to the broader public. Most of these vaccinations will be conducted at hospitals, clinics, and retail pharmacies.

## DuPage County

The DuPage County Health Department is following the state's phased vaccination guidelines. While the first phase is limited to essential workers, seniors and high risk individuals, officials expect vaccinations to open up more broadly in phase 2 when there is a greater supply.

If you are an essential worker, over 65 years of age or under 65 but have a high risk medical condition, the DuPage County Health Department asks that you [fill out this survey](#) to receive weekly updates on when a vaccine appointment will be available. Please note that this does not count as signing up for or scheduling a vaccination appointment.

## Kane County

Kane County residents can [fill out a survey](#) to be provided with updates and information on when vaccines will be available to them. The survey is not limited to healthcare providers or other essential workers.

## Lake County

All Lake County residents can use the county's [online registration system](#) to be notified when the COVID-19 vaccine is available to them.

The county released their [AllVax portal](#), which differs from the surveys that other counties are offering. The Lake County system allows residents to enter their information, and if they are eligible for a vaccine they will be immediately able to schedule an appointment. Otherwise, they will be notified when they become eligible.

Lake County says it has already had over 175,000 residents register via their portal, or about 25% of the county's population.

## McHenry County

McHenry County's [vaccine survey](#) is only for healthcare providers living and working McHenry County. The form does not count as registration for a vaccine, and only signals interest in more information when it is available.

If you are an essential worker but not a healthcare provider, over the age of 65, or have a high risk medical condition, McHenry County has a [separate survey to fill out](#). This survey also signifies interest in the vaccine but is not a registration form.

Finally, if you are a McHenry County resident but do not fall into either of the categories above, the health department has a different form that you can fill out to receive updates on the vaccine and notification when it is available to you. [That form can be found here](#), about halfway down the page.

## Will County

The Will County Health Department is also adhering to the state's phased vaccination approach, but they explicitly say that any Will County residents should [fill out this survey](#).

Once someone qualifies to be vaccinated, based on the phased plan, Will County Health will contact those who have filled out the survey to schedule an appointment.

"Please be patient, we will contact you when it is your turn," the department says on its website.

## Veterans

Chicago-area veterans who meet eligibility requirements can now get the coronavirus vaccine at local Veterans Affairs hospitals.

Edward Hines, Jr. VA hospital in suburban Maywood is offering coronavirus vaccines to veterans over the age of 65, or those who have existing medical conditions that put them more at risk. Veterans must be Hines-enrolled patients.

To see the criteria for receiving a vaccine from Hines, [click here](#). If you meet the criteria, call Hines VA at 708-202-2707 or 708-202-7000 to schedule your vaccine appointment.

Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago is also offering coronavirus vaccines to veterans 65 and older, or those in high-risk health categories. Patients at Jesse Brown who [meet this criteria](#) will be contacted to schedule appointments.

Veterans served by Lovell Federal Health Center in Lake County are eligible to be vaccinated if they are 75 years or older, or if they are chemotherapy, dialysis or transplant patients. Lovell will call patients who [meet the criteria](#) to schedule vaccine appointments.

# New \$150 million state fund to address health care disparities: 'It's literally going to save lives'

Brett Chase

January 13, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/1/13/22229842/illinois-state-health-medical-health-disparities-south-side-project-west-underserved-inequities>

A pair of coalitions of hospital, community and church leaders hope to tap tens of millions of dollars in just-approved state money to fund initiatives aimed at addressing health care inequities like those that have long plagued the South and West sides.

A measure passed by the Illinois General Assembly Wednesday provides \$150 million in state Medicaid money for each of the next seven years to fund new innovative community initiatives that aim to improve health and medical care in the most needy areas of the state, including large parts of Chicago's Black and Latino neighborhoods that have also been hit hard by COVID-19.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services will review applications in coming months, and at least two coalitions from Chicago are already well along with plans for hiring doctors, community health care workers, upgrading medical record technology and a number of other actions.

"It's literally going to save lives," said the Rev. Julian DeShazier, senior pastor at University Church in Hyde Park and an advocate of the South Side project. "We're grateful for the money. Now we have to go get it for the South Side."

Plans for the [South Side Health Transformation Project](#) sprung last year from the [failed merger](#) of four money-losing community hospitals, known as safety-net providers. The merger itself was directed at fixing disparities in predominantly Black communities.

The South Side project hopes to win at least \$30 million from the state to hire about 130 doctors and at least 250 community health workers, said Charles Holland, chief executive of St. Bernard Hospital.

St. Bernard, along with University of Chicago, Advocate Trinity and Holy Cross Hospital has been working with health clinics, community organizations and church leaders to form a plan they hope will begin to reverse a decades-long trend of poor access to medical care.

The West Side Collaborative also plans to seek about \$30 million to hire community health care workers and pay for a number of health-related initiatives, including programs focused on nutrition and housing.

The West Side group includes safety-net providers such as Mount Sinai Hospital, The Loretto Hospital, Norwegian American Hospital but also includes AMITA Health, Cook County Health, University of Illinois Health and Rush University Medical Center.

"If we're really going to transform health care, we need support to do that," said Karen Teitelbaum, chief executive of Sinai Health System.

Teitelbaum is part of both of the city's collaborations as Holy Cross and Mount Sinai are part of her hospital system.

“This new plan will help the communities hardest hit by health care disparities add new services, expand access and help hospitals and community-based organizations collaborate,” Illinois House Majority Leader Greg Harris, D-Chicago, said in an email.

The aim is to “find innovative solutions that address health disparities in distressed communities,” Healthcare and Family Services Director Theresa Eagleson said in a statement. Her agency pushed for the program.

A study prepared last year for the state agency identified South and West Chicago, suburban Cook County and the East St. Louis area as communities with the greatest need for better health care.

Illinois Hospital Association Chief Executive A.J. Wilhelmi praised the program saying he hopes it will “reduce health disparities and inequities that have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in communities of color.”

# Health officials push for faster vaccine rollout as seniors over 65 are next in line in Illinois

[Dana Rebik](#)

January 13, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/health-officials-push-for-faster-vaccine-rollout-as-seniors-over-65-are-next-in-line-in-illinois/>

CHICAGO — The COVID-19 vaccine rollout is moving along in Illinois and across the country Wednesday, but at a much slower pace than many had hoped.

The priority for now in Illinois remains frontline healthcare workers and long-term care residents in the Phase 1A group.

A total of 350 seniors were vaccinated at Smith Village in Chicago Wednesday, making up one of the largest groups given the shot in a single site on a single day.

CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady says starting next week, city residents over 65 will be able to start receiving the vaccine through their current health care providers, starting with the oldest and most vulnerable patients.

While efforts are progressing, Arwady is among many experts critical of the pace of the vaccine rollout.

“Both last and this week we have gotten between 32 thousand and 34 thousand doses which is honestly not enough,” Arwady said. “No vaccine is being wasted, period.”

If the pace of vaccinations doesn't increase, Northwestern Medicine's Dr. Robert Murphy says it could take 1,000 days to achieve herd immunity in Illinois using two-dose vaccines.

Seniors are already being vaccinated in Florida on a first-come-first-serve basis by waiting in line and even camping overnight at vaccine sites.

Officials in Illinois say that is not the way to go, saying they're confident those 65 and older will get access in the coming weeks by making an appointment at local pharmacies, hospitals and doctors offices.

Dr. Rachel Rubin with Cook County Public Health said she doesn't think it will take as long to achieve herd immunity as some expect, and she expects Phase 1B to start in early February in suburban Cook County.

“If we were doing vaccinations at the pace of even last week it would take a long time but even as of this week we are getting more vaccinations online that's just as critical as having the vaccine,” Rubin said. “Both my parents just passed away from Covid so this is extremely personal to me.”

Many counties are now posting forms to fill out online to register and receive alerts when it's your turn.

Rubin says the key is not only the number of vaccines distributed to Illinois, but having enough people to give them. To speed things up, officials are asking [nurses and nursing students to sign up to help](#) administer vaccines.

# Covid-19 Vaccine: What You Need to Know When You Get the Shot

By Alina Dizik

January 23, 2021

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-vaccine-what-you-need-to-know-when-you-get-the-shot-11610895600>

Those getting ready to roll up their sleeves for a Covid-19 vaccine shot will take part in the most ambitious vaccination effort in U.S. history. As efforts ramp up, here's advice from doctors involved with the vaccine rollout on how to prepare and what to expect.

## What's involved in getting the first dose?

Many people will register for a timed appointment, aimed at keeping wait times and the potential for crowds to a minimum—although the patchwork rollout so far has also meant many waiting in long lines. After filling out consent forms and receiving the shot, you'll be monitored for adverse reactions for 15 or 30 minutes depending on your allergy history. In the case of a timed appointment, the entire process should take around an hour, says Julie Boom, co-chair of the Covid-19 Vaccine Task Force at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston, which is now vaccinating eligible patients that already have records within the hospital system. Afterward, some people choose to go home and rest.

## What should you bring with you to the vaccine site?

In most cases, you'll simply need your photo ID and proof of your appointment. Some places may require additional documents, such as employee badges for first responders to show they are eligible. Those getting vaccinated generally shouldn't be asked to pay, so do ask questions if payment is requested.

## Should you consider differences between the [Pfizer](#) -BioNTech and Moderna vaccines?

For now, the two vaccines available in the U.S. are found to be similarly safe and effective, says Wafaa El-Sadr, professor of epidemiology and medicine at Columbia University in New York. Eventually, choosing one vaccine over the other may come down to scheduling conflicts, she says. The second dose of the Pfizer vaccine is offered 21 days later, while Moderna is offered 28 days later. "The only thing I would consider is convenience," says Dr. El-Sadr.

## Do you need to fast or avoid any certain food or drinks before the vaccination?

No food precautions are required. Staying well hydrated prior to the vaccine is encouraged for people who tend to feel lightheaded with vaccines or blood draws, says Gregory Huhn, vaccination coordinator for Cook County Health, a hospital system in Chicago.

## Before the vaccination, should you take a fever-reducing drug?

Even if you are worried about side effects, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention doesn't recommend taking fever-reducing drugs (known as antipyretics) before a vaccine shot. However antipyretics, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, can be used following vaccination to treat any fever or local discomfort, the CDC says.

## **Is there a risk of being exposed to the coronavirus while waiting for the vaccine?**

In any public setting, there's a possibility of being exposed to the virus. The vaccine dose received that day won't offer additional protection, Dr. Huhn says. However, vaccine-site organizers are aware of the risks and take precautions throughout the process, which includes floor decals and furniture spaced at least six feet apart, along with strict masking and capacity limits, he says.

## **What happens after you get the shot?**

People are asked to stay at the site to be monitored for adverse effects, including allergic reactions, though these are rare. Those experiencing any post-vaccine sensations can call over a medical professional to address concerns. The monitoring occurs "within the line of sight of our nurses," Dr. Huhn says. In some cases, Dr. Boom notes, feelings of faintness can relate to nervousness over getting the shot rather than side effects relating directly to the vaccine.

While those vaccinated are asked to stay between 15 and 30 minutes, it is possible to have an allergic reaction or worrying side effects after returning home, Dr. Huhn notes. "Anaphylaxis can occur hours after exposure," he says. If that happens, immediately seek medical help.

## **Will you get a record of your vaccination?**

Adults will receive a vaccination card that includes the lot number and name of the administered vaccine along with a reminder to get their second dose. Those going for their second dose will need to bring this card with them. Your vaccination data is also recorded by the vaccine provider and stored electronically, Dr. Boom says. Later, you may need your vaccine document for work or travel purposes.

## **Do some people experience more side effects?**

While many experience no side effects at all, some younger people with more robust immune systems often have a stronger immune response to the vaccine, which can take the form of side effects including fatigue, muscle aches and soreness at the injection site. In previous research, "those over age 55 had less reactogenicity, because their immune systems aren't as vigorous as those of younger individuals," Dr. Huhn says. Those who have previously had Covid may also have a stronger immune response, he adds.

## **How protected am I after the first shot alone?**

Doctors say there is likely some protection from the first shot but, as the majority of participants in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine trials received two doses, there isn't yet enough data to say definitively how much protection and how long it lasts.

## **What is the purpose of the second shot?**

The second dose enables the immune system to provide long-lasting protection. Doctors strongly advise getting both shots, in the recommended time frame.

## **How long does it take for the full vaccine protection to kick in?**

It takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination, the CDC says, and the vaccines that require two shots may not protect you until a week or two after your second shot. "The protective effect begins to be observed from two weeks after the second vaccine injection," Dr. El-Sadr says. She notes that the minimum follow-up for vaccine study participants was eight weeks and that information will evolve over time on the duration of protection.

## **Is it necessary to wear a mask and social distance after completing the vaccination?**

Precautions including mask-wearing and staying away from others are important even after you've been fully vaccinated, as the vaccines aren't 100% effective, Dr. El-Sadr says. Late-stage trials showed Pfizer has 95% effectiveness while Moderna has 94.1%. Additionally, it is possible that even those who have been vaccinated [can carry the virus without showing symptoms and pass it onto others](#). Research on this is still under way.



# Here's Who Can Get the Coronavirus Vaccine in Illinois During Next Phase

January 15, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/heres-who-can-get-the-coronavirus-vaccine-in-illinois-during-next-phase/2417201/>

Illinois health officials will begin the next phase of COVID-19 vaccinations at the end of January, aiming to vaccinate over 3 million residents statewide.

Phase 1b will center on residents age 65 years and older and "frontline essential workers," including first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers, and more.

The age requirement in Illinois is 10 years lower than the recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, "in order to reduce COVID-19 mortality and limit community spread in Black and Brown communities," the governor said.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Friday that Phase 1b of the state's vaccination plan will begin on Jan. 25.

Here's a look at who will be included in Phase 1b:

**Residents age 65 and over**

Frontline essential workers, which means "residents who carry a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure because of their work duties, often because they are unable to work from home, and/or they must work closely to others without being able to socially distance. This includes:

**First responders:** Fire, law enforcement, 911 workers, security personnel, school officers

**Education:** Teachers, principals, student support, student aids, day care worker

**Food and agriculture:** Processing, plants, veterinary health, livestock services, animal care

**Manufacturing:** Industrial production of good for distribution to retail, wholesale or other manufactures

**Corrections workers and inmates:** Jail officers, juvenile facility staff, workers providing in-person support, inmates

**USPS workers**

**Public transit workers:** Flight crew, bus drivers, train conductors, taxi drivers, para-transit drivers, in-person support, ride sharing services

**Grocery store workers:** Baggers, cashiers, stockers, pickup, customer service

**Shelters and day care staff:** Homeless shelter, women's shelter, adult day/drop-in program, sheltered workshop, psycho-social rehab

Phase 1B will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Pritzker said beginning next week, the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard will be activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies. He said that before Phase 1B begins, the state will launch the Illinois' COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan website to give residents information on finding a nearby vaccination site and how to make an appointment.

As of Thursday, 995,000 doses of the vaccine had been delivered to providers and long-term care facilities across the state, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. A total of 447,348 of those doses had been administered statewide since vaccinations of predominantly health care workers began last month.



# Pritzker Announces When Illinois Will Move to Phase 1B of Vaccinations

January 15, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/pritzker-announces-when-illinois-will-move-to-phase-1b-of-vaccinations/2417171/>

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Friday that the state will begin its next phase of vaccinations against the coronavirus later this month, moving forward with vaccinating residents age 65 and older.

Phase 1B of the state's vaccination plan will begin on Jan. 25, Pritzker announced in a COVID-19 briefing.

Phase 1B will center on residents age 65 years and older and "frontline essential workers," including first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers, and more.

The age requirement in Illinois is 10 years lower than the recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, "in order to reduce COVID-19 mortality and limit community spread in Black and Brown communities," the governor said.

Phase 1B will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Here's a look at who will be included in Phase 1B:

**Residents age 65 and over**

Frontline essential workers, which means "residents who carry a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure because of their work duties, often because they are unable to work from home, and/or they must work closely to others without being able to socially distance. This includes:

**First responders:** Fire, law enforcement, 911 workers, security personnel, school officers

**Education:** Teachers, principals, student support, student aids, day care worker

**Food and agriculture:** Processing, plants, veterinary health, livestock services, animal care

**Manufacturing:** Industrial production of good for distribution to retail, wholesale or other manufactures

**Corrections workers and inmates:** Jail officers, juvenile facility staff, workers providing in-person support, inmates

**USPS workers**

**Public transit workers:** Flight crew, bus drivers, train conductors, taxi drivers, para-transit drivers, in-person support, ride sharing services

**Grocery store workers:** Baggers, cashiers, stockers, pickup, customer service

**Shelters and day care staff:** Homeless shelter, women's shelter, adult day/drop-in program, sheltered workshop, psycho-social rehab

Pritzker said beginning next week, the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard will be activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies. He said that before Phase 1B begins, the state will launch the Illinois' COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan website to give residents information on finding a nearby vaccination site and how to make an appointment.

As of Thursday, 995,000 doses of the vaccine had been delivered to providers and long-term care facilities across the state, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. A total of 447,348 of those doses had been administered statewide since vaccinations of predominantly health care workers began last month.

## It's 'confusing,' but it's coming. The latest on COVID-19 vaccinations for suburban seniors.

Marni Pyke

1/17/2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210116/its-confusing-but-its-coming-the-latest-on-covid-19-vaccinations-for-suburban-seniors>

It's not just the waiting that's the hardest part for seniors eager to be vaccinated against COVID-19. It's the uncertainty over when, where and how they can get inoculated.

More than 2 million Illinoisans age 65 and older along with essential workers, such as police, are next in line to get shots once the first round of health care workers and long-term care residents is substantially complete.

"We would like to get the vaccine because at Christmas it was all Zoom meetings," said Ellen Kessler, an Antioch resident in her 80s. "We have a few great-grandchildren we haven't got to hug yet." But the lack of information "is very confusing," she said.

On Friday, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced a major initiative to accelerate vaccines across Illinois and a plan to start inoculating seniors on Jan. 25 on a limited basis, depending on supplies from the federal government. The governor also is calling up the Illinois National Guard to expedite shots.

In the suburbs, county health department officials estimated that ramping up a vaccination program for seniors could take two weeks in Kane County, "several weeks" in DuPage County, and an unspecified number of weeks in Cook and Will counties. Lake County officials expect to start in February.

Even one state lawmaker admitted he couldn't get a straight answer on vaccine details.

"The information that's coming out is a little sketchy," said Democratic state Rep. Marty Moylan of Des Plaines, who is 70 and has asthma.

That scattershot approach troubles AARP Illinois State Director Bob Gallo.

"We have a logistics problem here as well as a supply problem, and we've been unprepared at every step along the way," Gallo said.

Here's what we know so far.

- Two COVID-19 vaccines by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. are approved for use in the U.S. Both require two doses, several weeks apart.
- Federal rules require health care workers and long-term care residents (Phase 1a) to be vaccinated first. That group of about 850,000 people is still getting shots.
- Phase 1b is next. The group contains 3.2 million essential workers, like firefighters or teachers who can't work remotely during the pandemic, and everyone 65 and older. Pritzker dropped the age to 65 from 75 earlier this month because of high death rates among seniors in Black and Hispanic communities.

- Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will counties' health departments have vaccination outreach programs listed below.
- Seniors are also advised to check with their doctor's office to see if they have arrangements for vaccinations.
- Pritzker has promised vaccinations at mass sites, mobile sites, hospitals, urgent care centers, and "ultimately doctors' offices and large employers." Pharmacy partners would include Walgreens, Jewel/Osco and CVS.
- The state will launch a vaccination website before Jan. 25 with information about where and how to get shots. DuPage Medical Group, one of the state's largest practices, is sending texts out to patients about the status of the vaccine.

"We have already begun identifying our most vulnerable senior patients and will use a number of methods to ensure they receive information about the vaccine and are able to schedule an appointment when the state moves to Phase 1b of vaccine distribution," Chief Medical Officer Donald Hoscheit said.

Numerous seniors aren't comfortable using the internet or may not have a computer or a smartphone to access information, Gallo warned. To bridge the technology gap, state and local leaders need to offer vaccine telephone help lines that are staffed appropriately and don't leave seniors on indefinite hold, he said.

Here's what local health departments are saying about the second phase of shots.

- Cook County Department of Public Health leaders "look forward to expanding to Phase 1b as soon as feasible," spokesman Don Bolger said.

"Each week, we are expanding the capacity of vaccinators in suburban Cook County, and with ample vaccine and vaccinators, look forward to expanding to Phase 1b as soon as feasible. Planning is under way for vaccination sites in suburban Cook County."

The county is asking residents to complete a COVID-19 vaccination survey that will add them to a list to receive regular updates at [cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-vaccine](https://cookcountypublichealth.org/communicable-diseases/covid-19/covid-vaccine).

- The DuPage County Health Department is "diligently working to expand COVID-19 vaccine access and capacity, as Phase 1b is expected to begin in the coming weeks," spokeswoman Stephanie Calvillo said.

"The Health Department is encouraging anyone living or working in DuPage interested in being vaccinated to sign up for updates on our website at [www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine](https://www.dupagehealth.org/covid19vaccine) but also recognizes this solution may not work for everyone.

"Currently, no Phase 1b appointments are available since DCHD is focused on vaccinating eligible persons in Phase 1a. As DuPage County moves closer to Phase 1b and appointments start to become available, DCHD will provide more information about how to access information via telephone support and online."

- The Kane County Health Departments expects "vaccines for seniors 65 and older will begin shortly," spokeswoman Susan Stack said, adding that could be within two weeks.

"Watch our website for updates on appointments and clinics. This vaccine drive is a huge operation and we are progressing as quickly as we can with the priority groups, and dealing with vaccine supply uncertainty."

Kane offers a vaccine information sign up at [kanehealth.com/Pages/COVID-Vaccine](https://kanehealth.com/Pages/COVID-Vaccine).

- Lake County expects "to begin 1b in February," health department spokeswoman Hannah Goering said. "Timing is uncertain as we continue to vaccinate our health care worker population as efficiently as possible, and much is dependent on our vaccine supply.

"When 1b begins in Lake County, we will notify people to schedule appointments in batches as vaccine supply arrives. Not everyone will be asked to schedule at the same time."

Lake County was the first to offer a vaccination registration program at [allvax.lakecohealth.org](http://allvax.lakecohealth.org).

People who need technical assistance should contact the Health Department at (847) 377-8130.

- The McHenry County Health Department has vaccine information at [mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department](http://mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department).

- Will County Health Department spokesman Steve Brandy said there's no definite date for the vaccine rollout but officials are working with partners to offer a robust program. "A lot of good things will be happening soon," Brandy said.

He urged residents to complete a survey that puts them on a list to be contacted when inoculations begin at [willcountyhealth.org/covid-19/covid-vaccine](http://willcountyhealth.org/covid-19/covid-vaccine). Seniors who need assistance with the survey can call Senior Services of Will County at (815) 723-9713 for help.



# Chicago Health Care Providers Can Begin Modified Next Phase of COVID-19 Vaccinations Monday

January 18, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/chicago-health-care-providers-can-begin-modified-next-phase-of-covid-19-vaccinations-monday/2418124/>

Health care providers can begin giving coronavirus vaccines to people over age 65 who live or work in Chicago starting Monday in a modified next phase of the city's vaccination plan.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady announced the shift last week alongside Mayor Lori Lightfoot at a news conference from a new mass vaccination site.

Hospitals and outpatient sites enrolled as COVID-19 vaccine providers are instructed to continue to prioritize health care workers, particularly non-hospital based health care workers in Phase 1A, per the city's updated vaccination plan.

But beginning Monday, if providers have doses of the vaccine available and do not have health care workers scheduled for vaccination, they can move to a new Phase 1B that allows those over age 65 to get the vaccine.

Prioritization will be given to those over age 75 or those over age 65 who have significant underlying conditions, Arwady said.

Officials also announced last week that the city will be opening six more Points of Dispensing (PODs) mass vaccination sites but noted that those sites will continue to focus only on Phase 1A health care workers, by appointment only.

Arwady noted that those who qualify, namely those over 65, for vaccinations in this next modified phase do not have to register anywhere and that health care providers will be the ones primarily administering the vaccines.

"I don't want to give people the impression that they can sign up for an appointment just yet," Arwady said, but added that that option would be available "very soon."

While the move is not the full Phase 1B initially planned for the city, it comes on the heels of a request from federal officials who this week asked states to vaccinate people age 65 and over and those under 65 with underlying health conditions that put them at high risk.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker also announced last week that the state will begin its next phase of vaccinations, also known as Phase 1B, on Jan. 25.

Phase 1B will center on residents age 65 years and older and "frontline essential workers," including first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers, and more.

Phase 1B will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Here's a look at who will be included in Phase 1B:

Residents age 65 and over

Frontline essential workers, which means "residents who carry a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure because of their work duties, often because they are unable to work from home, and/or they must work closely to others without being able to socially distance. This includes:

**First responders:** Fire, law enforcement, 911 workers, security personnel, school officers

**Education:** Teachers, principals, student support, student aids, day care worker

**Food and agriculture:** Processing, plants, veterinary health, livestock services, animal care

**Manufacturing:** Industrial production of good for distribution to retail, wholesale or other manufactures

**Corrections workers and inmates:** Jail officers, juvenile facility staff, workers providing in-person support, inmates

**USPS workers**

**Public transit workers:** Flight crew, bus drivers, train conductors, taxi drivers, para-transit drivers, in-person support, ride sharing services

**Grocery store workers:** Baggers, cashiers, stockers, pickup, customer service

**Shelters and day care staff:** Homeless shelter, women's shelter, adult day/drop-in program, sheltered workshop, psycho-social rehab

Pritzker said Friday beginning that this week, the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard will be activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies. He said that before Phase 1B begins, the state will launch the Illinois' COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan website to give residents information on finding a nearby vaccination site and how to make an appointment.



# Cook County officials say suburban residents will have more vaccine information by week's end

[Steve Miller](#)

January 18, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/officials-residents-will-have-more-vaccine-information-soon>

**CHICAGO (WBBM NEWSRADIO)** -- Cook County Public Health officials say that by the end of this week, residents of suburban Cook County may be getting more useful information about making appointments for a COVID vaccine.

Group 1B is on-deck, and that means about 370,000 people 65 and over in suburban Cook County, plus about 200,000 essential workers are next in line to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Right now, there's a survey on the [Cook County Public Health website](#): a step toward gauging interest in the vaccine.

And Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior public health medical officer at the county health department, said the website should be more "robust" by week's end - giving suburban Cook residents 65 and older and essential workers a more tangible answer to the question: How soon can I make an appointment to get the vaccine?

"If you fill out the form, especially if you wait until the end of the week when we have a better system up, if you sign up - or if you sign up for your 85-year-old father or great aunt, that's great. You can sign up for them. And then they will be getting information about when they would be eligible to make an appointment," she said.

Dr. Rubin said it might be a few days to get an appointment - or it might be a few weeks. She said it depends on vaccine supply and the availability of vaccine sites.

Dr. Rubin said Cook County Health will have three mega vaccination sites with help from the National Guard ramping them up one at a time beginning next week.

# 4 New COVID-19 Vaccination Sites Open in Cook County

[Kristen Thometz](#) |

January 19, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/01/19/4-new-covid-19-vaccination-sites-open-cook-county>

Four new coronavirus vaccination sites opened in suburban Cook County on Tuesday, according to an announcement by Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

The sites will provide vaccinations to health care workers this week and will begin vaccinating residents ages 65 and older as well as front-line essential workers starting Monday as the state moves into the next phase of its vaccination rollout.

“Illinois is moving forward with an aggressive vaccination plan that centers equity and focuses communities which have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a statement. “Standing up these sites is a pivotal first step of a plan that coordinates our 97 local health departments statewide – who operate clinics already and will open up more as vaccine supply grows.”

The new vaccination sites are located at:

- County Health’s North Riverside Health Center, 1800 S. Harlem Ave. in North Riverside
- Cook County Health’s Robbins Health Center, 13450 S. Kedzie Ave. in Robbins
- Cook County Health’s Morton East Adolescent Health Center, 2423 S. Austin Blvd. in Cicero
- Cook County Health’s Cottage Grove Health Center, 1645 Cottage Grove Ave. in Ford Heights

The vaccination sites will be open from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday and will provide vaccinations to those eligible by appointment only, according to the press release.

On Monday, Cook County officials said they had expanded their network of vaccination sites to 78 to meet increased demand as more people become eligible for the vaccine. By Tuesday that number increased to 91, according to a spokesperson for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

In addition, the Illinois Department of Public Health is partnering with large pharmacies to launch hundreds of vaccination sites in communities across the state.

Information about additional vaccination locations and how to make appointments will be available before the state begins the next phase of its rollout, according to the governor’s office.



# COVID Vaccination Sites Open in Cook County to Aid Completion of Phase 1A

January 19, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/covid-vaccination-sites-open-in-cook-county-to-aid-completion-of-phase-1a/2418863/>

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced the launching of four state-supported coronavirus vaccination sites, as health officials aim to get through the first phases of the vaccination process.

The sites will be operated with the assistance of the Illinois National Guard, according to a press release. Vaccinations began Tuesday at the sites, and shots will be available for health care workers who are part of Phase 1A in the state's vaccination plan.

"Illinois is moving forward with an aggressive vaccination plan that centers equity and focuses on communities which have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19," Pritzker said in a statement. "Standing up these sites is a pivotal first step of a plan that coordinates our 97 local health departments statewide, who operate clinics already and will open up more as vaccine supply grows."

Those looking for information on vaccinations are encouraged to visit the Cook County Department of Public Health's website.

The following locations are open for health care workers who still need to be vaccinated:

Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center  
1800 South Harlem Avenue, North Riverside  
Cook County Health's Robbins Health Center  
13450 South Kedzie Avenue, Robbins  
Cook County Health's Morton East Adolescent Health Center  
2423 South Austin Boulevard, Cicero  
Cook County Health's Cottage Grove Health Center  
1645 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights

The sites will be open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., officials said. Shots are available to health care workers who are part of Phase 1A of the vaccination rollout plan, and will open to Phase 1B participants on Jan. 25, according to the press release. Vaccines will be available by appointment only.

In Phase 1B, all Illinois residents over the age of 65 are eligible for the vaccine, along with frontline essential workers.

"I am grateful for Gov. Pritzker's leadership in ramping up our vaccination program in Cook County and the state of Illinois," Preckwinkle said. "The new vaccination sites in Cook County will be critical in increasing our vaccination capabilities and protecting our communities from COVID-19 as we return to normalcy."



# Chicago Reveals New Details, Tentative Dates of COVID-19 Vaccine Plan

January 19, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/chicago-reveals-new-details-tentative-dates-of-covid-19-vaccine-plan/2418775/>

The city of Chicago [released new details](#) about its coronavirus vaccine distribution plan on Tuesday, including [tentative dates](#) for when each of the next phases might begin, with a goal of opening vaccinations up to all Chicagoans over the age of 16 by the end of May.

Chicago is currently preparing to enter Phase 1B of its vaccination plan along with the rest of Illinois Monday, opening up doses for frontline workers and those over the age of 65.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady announced in a livestream on Tuesday that the city will tentatively look to enter the next phase, Phase 1C, on March 29, followed by Phase 2 on May 31.

"I want to be very clear that any dates we provide are purely speculative based on how much vaccine we get," Arwady said. "Right now here in Chicago we're getting 34,000 approximately first doses... per week and that is not even enough to be able to vaccinate 5% of the people who are going to be eligible in Phase 1B."

Phase 1B will center on residents age 65 years and older and "frontline essential workers," including first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers, and more.

"So right from the beginning I want people to hear that even as the phase opens up, most people will not be able to get vaccine right away that first week, even that second week, etc.," she continued.

Phase 1C includes all essential workers not covered in earlier phases, as well as Chicagoans between the ages of 16 and 64 who have underlying medical conditions, Arwady said.

"Looking ahead to Phase 2, which is really when a vaccine is available to all Chicagoans, we're tentatively saying that might begin May 31, the end of May. All of these numbers for Phase 1C and Phase 2 is subject to change but just to give people a high level sense of what we're thinking," Arwady said.

Earlier this week, health care providers were [allowed to begin offering any "leftover doses" of coronavirus vaccines](#) to people over the age of 65 who live or work in Chicago in what was described as a modified phase of the city's vaccination plan.

Officials also announced last week that the city would be opening six more Points of Dispensing (PODs) vaccination sites but noted that those sites will continue to focus only on Phase 1A health care workers, by appointment only.

Arwady noted that those who qualify for vaccinations in this next modified phase do not have to register anywhere and that health care providers will be the ones primarily administering the vaccines.

"I don't want to give people the impression that they can sign up for an appointment just yet," Arwady said, but added that [that option would be available](#) "very soon."

Chicago officials say the best way to get updates on the vaccination rollout is through "[Chi COVID Coach](#)," a platform the Chicago Department of Public Health is using to monitor symptoms, giving information on testing in the city and help you get the latest details on the city's vaccination plan - including notification when you can register to get your vaccine.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced last week that the state will begin its next phase of vaccinations, also known as Phase 1B, on Jan. 25. Phase 1B will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Pritzker said Friday beginning that this week, the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard was also activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies. He said that before Phase 1B begins, the state will launch the Illinois' COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan website to give residents information on finding a nearby vaccination site and how to make an appointment.

## Illinois launches four new COVID-19 vaccination sites in Cook County

Jamie Munks

January 19, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-cook-county-pritzker-20210119-7mgsstnce5c2bpmes2r4qcnitq-story.html>

Illinois residents began getting COVID-19 shots at four new mass vaccination sites in Cook County on Tuesday as the state readies for the next phase of immunizations.

Two of the sites are in the western suburbs, the North Riverside Health Center in North Riverside and Morton East Adolescent Health Center in Cicero; and two are in the south suburbs, Robbins Health Center in Robbins and Cottage Grove Health Center Ford Heights.

The four sites are being run with support from the Illinois National Guard and will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office said Tuesday.

The sites are will be open to front line health care workers until Illinois officially moves into Phase 1b of its vaccination plan on Monday. That phase includes people 65 and older and front-line essential workers including public transit and grocery store employees, as well as teachers.

The Illinois Department of Public Health is also launching partnerships with large pharmacies to set up "hundreds of new sites in communities across Illinois," according to Pritzker's office.

Pritzker called the sites "a pivotal first step of a plan that coordinates our 97 local health departments statewide — who operate clinics already and will open up more as vaccine supply grows," in a statement on Tuesday.

Illinois National Guard members are also deploying to other parts of the state to help set up new vaccination sites and expand existing ones.

Illinois began vaccinating front-line health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities against COVID-19 in mid-December.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle called the new vaccine sites "critical in increasing our vaccination capabilities and protecting our communities from COVID-19, as we return to normalcy."



## 4 Vaccination Sites Open In Suburban Cook County

Kelly Bauer

January 19, 2021

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/01/19/4-mass-vaccination-sites-open-in-suburban-cook-county/>

CHICAGO — Four sites for coronavirus vaccinations opened Tuesday in suburban Cook County.

The vaccination sites, which are receiving support from the state, are currently only providing vaccinations to health care workers who are part of Phase 1A of Illinois' vaccination campaign, according to a Governor's Office news release.

But starting Monday, when Illinois moves into Phase 1B, frontline essential workers and people 65 and older will be able to make appointments to be vaccinated.

You must make an appointment to be vaccinated at one of the sites, according to the Governor's Office. More information about how to get vaccinated in Cook County is available [online](#).

The sites are open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday. The locations:

Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center, 1800 S. Harlem Ave. in North Riverside

Cook County Health's Robbins Health Center, 13450 S. Kedzie Ave. in Robbins

Cook County Health's Morton East Adolescent Health Center, 2423 S. Austin Blvd. in Cicero

Cook County Health's Cottage Grove Health Center, 1645 Cottage Grove Ave. in Ford Heights

The state is also partnering with pharmacies, doctor's offices and other health care settings so people can be vaccinated in those facilities.

Chicago has its own vaccination campaign. Like in the rest of Illinois, Chicago is currently in Phase 1A but will move into Phase 1B on Monday.

The city will have six vaccination sites by the end of this week. They'll be used to vaccinate some Chicagoans, but most people will be vaccinated in other settings, like at pharmacies and doctor's offices, officials have said.



# Should incarcerated people get early access to Covid-19 vaccines? Illinois says ‘yes.’

Kiran Misra

January 20, 2021

<https://www.injusticewatch.org/news/2021/incarcerated-people-vaccines-illinois/>

Cook County Jail emerged as a national [Covid-19 hotspot](#) early in the pandemic, with hundreds of correctional officers and incarcerated people testing positive. As the virus continued to spread, incarcerated people repeatedly campaigned for better protections.

Relief could now be in sight. Staff at Cook County Jail will begin receiving vaccinations Wednesday, and detained people will soon follow, according to Cook County Health officials.

People incarcerated at Illinois Department of Corrections facilities will begin receiving vaccines in about two weeks as part of Phase 1B of Illinois' vaccination plan, spokesperson Lindsey Hess told Injustice Watch in an e-mail.

That's because Illinois is one of just a handful of U.S. states that will prioritize incarcerated people in the next phase of its vaccine rollout. This development represents a victory for advocates and incarcerated people who have argued that prisons and jails are overlooked epicenters of infections.

A [December study](#) from the Prison Policy Initiative found that higher concentrations of incarcerated people in U.S. counties were associated with [earlier reported cases of](#) Covid-19 and larger increases of confirmed cases outside of prisons and jails from May to August 2020.

"One thing that people really don't realize is that although we don't go anywhere, we are around people that come and go from the penitentiary every day," said James Swansey, who was released from Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, Illinois, in December. "People on the inside, we only have a certain amount of things that we can do to stay safe."

This next phase of Illinois' "equity-centric vaccination approach" is set to begin on Jan. 25., allowing local health departments to start vaccinating essential workers, people experiencing homelessness, and people aged 65 and over, in addition to people detained in state jails and prisons.

Illinois had initially designated incarcerated people as Phase 2 recipients, drawing an outcry from advocates.

In December, more than 60 legal and advocacy organizations [sent a letter](#) urging the health department to give incarcerated people early access to vaccination, noting their high risk for infection and death. As of December 2020, the Covid-19 mortality rate in prisons nationwide was [twice as high](#) as for the general population, [according to](#) the National Commission on Covid-19 and Criminal Justice, a nonpartisan criminal justice group.

The health department quietly moved incarcerated people up in line just before the new year, changes to its [vaccine distribution plan show](#).

"Vaccinating prisoners will save lives in the facilities and in the communities surrounding them," said Camille Bennett, director of the ACLU of Illinois' Corrections Reform Project, [in a statement Monday](#). "This is good policy."

People detained in federal prisons, still designated as Phase 2 recipients in CDC guidelines, could still wait months for a vaccine.

Cook County has not yet received vaccine doses to administer to people detained in jail, but staff is currently working with the Sheriff's Office to develop a vaccination program, said Caryn Stancik, chief communications officer for Cook County Health, on Tuesday.

When the vaccines arrive, they will be administered to residents within the jail facility over several weeks. If someone is released before they can get the second dose, they will maintain priority status for vaccination, according to Stancik.

Renaldo Hudson spent most of the pandemic in Stateville before his release in December. He described delays to vaccinating incarcerated people as a "security breach" that risks the very people whose health correctional facilities are charged with protecting.

"I was in the Department of Corrections for 37 years, and in all those years, I haven't seen as many people put in body bags and so much fear within the walls of corrections. The fear among the inmate population, you can cut it with a knife," Hudson told Injustice Watch.

"The stakes are extremely high for the people that are in prison, and the stakes are high for families, people who are barely making it," Hudson said. "On a moment's notice, we have to figure out, 'how do I now bury my brother, my father because they died of Covid-19 in prison.'"

## How can Illinois seniors sign up for COVID-19 vaccines? Some health systems will begin reaching out within days.

Lisa Schencker

January 20, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-when-will-illinois-seniors-get-shots-20210120-y76mmt5dfc55ikn25x7fqib2u-story.html>

A number of Chicago-area health systems expect, within days, to begin inviting patients ages 65 and older to make appointments to get COVID-19 vaccines, and Walgreens is already allowing some seniors and essential workers to schedule shots.

The notifications will come as Illinois prepares to move Monday to the next phase of vaccinations, which will include people ages 65 and older and front-line essential workers, such as those who work in grocery stores, schools and public transportation.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has said people who are part of the next phase will be able to receive vaccines at hospitals, retail pharmacies, state-run sites, sites led by the National Guard, urgent care clinics and through large employers.

There are about 3.2 million people eligible to receive shots in Illinois as part of this next phase. The first phase, which started more than a month ago, included only health care workers and long-term care facility residents.

Even though the start of the next phase is less than a week away, information about how to actually get the vaccines has been scarce, leaving many frustrated. But some Illinois hospitals and health systems are starting to share their plans, which are dependent on receiving enough vaccine doses.

Walgreens is allowing some Illinois seniors and essential workers to [sign up online](#) for appointments, with shots to be given once Illinois starts the next phase, said spokesman Phil Caruso. The appointments are available only at some Walgreens locations and supply is limited but expected to increase eventually, Caruso said. Appointments this week are only available to health care workers.

DuPage Medical Group, which has 150,000 patients ages 65 and older in the west and southwest suburbs, hopes this week to begin asking patients to schedule times for vaccinations, as does Loyola Medicine, which includes Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Gottlieb Memorial Hospital in Melrose Park and MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn.

Oak Street Health, which has 16 clinics in Chicago and the Cook County suburbs that serve people ages 65 and older, said it hopes to reach out to patients to schedule appointments in coming days. Starting next week, the University of Illinois Hospital and Health Sciences System plans to notify patients 65 and older through its online patient portal, email and phone calls that they may make appointments.

University of Chicago Medicine has already been inviting some of its patients — those ages 75 and older who live on the South Side — to receive vaccines not used by health care workers. Advocate Aurora Health, which has 10 hospitals in Illinois, began piloting vaccinations for small groups this week.

A number of other organizations are not yet divulging their plans to vaccinate seniors and essential workers.

Northwestern Medicine “is in the process of finalizing all of those details,” spokesman Christopher King said in an email. CVS Health did not have details about when mass vaccinations for people in the next phase would start at its Illinois stores but said inoculations will be done through appointments made online.

Jewel-Osco, starting Monday, will “begin working with county health departments” to offer vaccines to those eligible under the next phase, spokeswoman Mary Frances Trucco said in a statement, but she didn’t provide additional details.

The Cook County Department of Public Health plans to announce details Thursday about the next phase, spokesman Don Bolger said.

The hospitals that shared their plans with the Tribune said they are identifying which patients to reach out to through their electronic medical record systems, and plan to contact them mostly electronically.

Oak Street Health has [posted a link](#) where seniors can sign up to receive information about vaccinations. Oak Street will vaccinate its own patients and those who are not patients, though it will prioritize people who live in the neighborhoods surrounding its clinics, which are often in underserved areas, said CEO Mike Pykosz. He expects Oak Street may be able to vaccinate about 10,000 seniors a week in the Chicago area, depending on supply.

“I 100% expect to get overwhelming demand for it,” Pykosz said.

DuPage Medical Group already sent surveys to all of its patients who use its online patient portal asking if they’re interested in getting vaccinated and, if so, if they’re essential workers.

DuPage expects this week to first reach out to its highest risk senior patients, and hopes to begin vaccinating patients by Feb. 1, said Dr. Don Hoscheit, chief medical officer. He expects the medical group may be able to vaccinate as many as 15,000 people a week by mid-February. It will likely take about 10 to 12 weeks for the medical group to work through all of its patients in this next phase, he said.

Loyola expects it may be able to vaccinate about 1,000 to 1,200 people a day during the next phase across its three hospitals, depending on how many doses Loyola receives, said Dr. Richard Freeman, regional chief clinical officer. Freeman hopes to begin scheduling appointments for Monday for seniors, as well as essential workers such as first responders, referred to Loyola from the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Loyola expects to email current patients who are seniors, especially those at high risk, inviting them to sign up for appointments through its electronic medical record system.

Advocate Aurora plans to have people sign up for appointments, after they’re notified they’re eligible, via an app.

Health systems expect some seniors may have trouble using technology to sign up for appointments and are offering alternate ways for them schedule shots.

At Loyola, patients will also be able to call their doctors’ offices for directions on how to sign up over the phone, and eventually Loyola may reach out through the phone or the mail to patients who haven’t signed up electronically, Freeman said.

DuPage Medical Group also expects patients who can’t sign up online will be able to work with their doctors’ offices to make appointments, but DuPage is still working on processes for reaching seniors who are not tech-savvy, Hoscheit said.

CVS will have a 1-800 number to make appointments if people can’t do so online.

Oak Street plans to call patients who are not able to make appointments online.

“One of our goals is to make sure (an inability) to navigate technology or the health care system doesn’t become a barrier to getting the vaccine,” Pykosz said.

## 4 vaccination locations opened in Cook County, but none are in the Northwest suburbs (yet)

Marni Pyke and Jake Griffin

1/20/2021 9:43 AM

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210119/4-vaccination-locations-opened-in-cook-county-but-none-are-in-the-northwest-suburbs-yet>

Four Cook County sites will open Monday to vaccinate people 65 and older and essential workers against COVID-19, but none are in the Northwest suburbs.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced that the new sites, two in the Western suburbs and two in the South suburbs, opened Tuesday for unvaccinated health care workers who are part of the Phase 1a eligibility group.

Details will be announced by Thursday for how the county will register people for vaccination in Phase 1b, which includes people age 65 and older and essential workers whose jobs won't allow them to stay at home during the pandemic. Those workers include firefighters, police, teachers, child-care staff members, bus drivers and grocery store employees, among others.

The vaccination sites were chosen by county officials because they are near minority populations that have been disproportionately affected by the virus, state and county officials said. The sites will serve people who live or work in Cook County.

The locations, in Cicero, Ford Heights, North Riverside and Robbins, are the only announced sites for receiving vaccinations in suburban Cook County.

"Their goal was to put sites in areas where access to health care is challenging and would have the biggest equity impact in the county," said Jordan Abudayyeh, Pritzker's press secretary.

"I'm fully confident Governor Pritzker will take the necessary steps to continue escalating vaccine distribution in Cook County, and I'm hopeful there will be state-supported vaccination sites in the Northwest suburbs soon," said Cook County Board Commissioner Kevin Morrison, a Mount Prospect Democrat. "I also know the incoming Biden administration has pledged to distribute 100 million vaccines in its first 100 days, and I'm optimistic the administration's efforts will bring more vaccines to the Northwest suburbs and Cook County."

Elmwood Park Republican Commissioner Peter Silvestri said the first four locations were chosen because the lease agreements were easiest to obtain, but more sites will be announced soon.

"They'll wind up being equitable as more agreements come online," Silvestri said. "There will be equal resources throughout the county, I wouldn't have it any other way."

The sites are being staffed by the Illinois National Guard but operated under guidance of the Cook County Department of Public Health. Officials said each site's vaccination capacity will vary until supplies are more readily available.

The sites will operate 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, officials said. They are located at:

- Cook County Health's Morton East Adolescent Health Center at 2423 S. Austin Boulevard, Cicero.
- Cook County Health's Cottage Grove Health Center, 1645 Cottage Grove Ave., Ford Heights.

- Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center at 1800 S. Harlem Ave., North Riverside.
- Cook County Health's Robbins Health Center at 13450 S. Kedzie Ave., Robbins.

To find out more, go to [cookcountypublichealth.org](http://cookcountypublichealth.org).



# Chicago Health Care Providers Can 'Formally' Begin Next Phase of COVID-19 Vaccinations Monday

January 21, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/illinois-health-care-providers-can-formally-begin-next-phase-of-covid-19-vaccinations-monday/2420023/>

Chicago is preparing to enter Phase 1b of its COVID-19 vaccination plan on Monday, which makes doses available to frontline workers and individuals over the age of 65, city officials announced Thursday.

"Looking ahead to Monday, we will be formally starting to move into Phase 1b, and 1b includes Chicagoans over the age of 65, as well as a specific group of frontline essential workers," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

Arwady clarified that beginning Phase 1b of COVID-19 vaccinations does not end Phase 1a, prioritizing health care workers. She said health care workers remain eligible and prioritized through the city's dispensing points.

Chicago opened up the option this week for health care providers to give vaccinations to people over the age of 65 or individuals with underlying medical conditions using leftover doses not directed to health care workers, Arwady said.

Arwady discussed the vaccine rollout in a news conference Thursday morning at Harry S. Truman College. She was joined by 46th Ward Ald. James Cappleman as well as two medical directors at CDPH.

Chicago's top doctor also received her second dose of the coronavirus vaccine Thursday morning.

The event came days after Arwady [released new details](#) about the city's coronavirus vaccine distribution plan, including [tentative dates](#) for when each of the next phases might begin, with a goal of opening vaccinations up to all Chicagoans over the age of 16 by the end of May.

Arwady announced in a livestream on Tuesday that the city will tentatively look to enter the next phase, Phase 1c, on March 29, followed by Phase 2 on May 31.

"I want to be very clear that any dates we provide are purely speculative based on how much vaccine we get," Arwady said. "Right now here in Chicago we're getting 34,000 approximate first doses... per week and that is not even enough to be able to vaccinate 5% of the people who are going to be eligible in Phase 1b."

Phase 1c includes all essential workers not covered in earlier phases, as well as Chicagoans between the ages of 16 and 64 who have underlying medical conditions, Arwady said.

"Looking ahead to Phase 2, which is really when a vaccine is available to all Chicagoans, we're tentatively saying that might begin May 31, the end of May. All of these numbers for Phase 1c and Phase 2 is subject to change but just to give people a high level sense of what we're thinking," Arwady said.

Officials also announced last week that the city would be opening six more Points of Dispensing (PODs) vaccination sites but noted that those sites will continue to focus only on Phase 1a health care workers, by appointment only.

Arwady noted that those who qualify for vaccinations in this next modified phase do not have to register anywhere and that health care providers will be the ones primarily administering the vaccines.

Chicago officials say the best way to get updates on the vaccination rollout is through "[Chi COVID Coach](#)," a platform the Chicago Department of Public Health is using to monitor symptoms, giving information on testing in the city and help you get the latest details on the city's vaccination plan - including notification when you can register to get your vaccine.

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced last week that the state will begin its next phase of vaccinations, also known as Phase 1b, on Jan. 25. Phase 1b will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Pritzker said Friday beginning that this week, the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard was also activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1b, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies. He said that before Phase 1b begins, the state will launch the Illinois' COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Plan website to give residents information on finding a nearby vaccination site and how to make an appointment.



# Pritzker, Preckwinkle Announce State-Run Vaccination Sites Across Cook County

Posted by *Editor*

January 21, 2021

<http://www.lawndalenews.com/2021/01/pritzker-preckwinkle-announce-state-run-vaccination-sites-across-cook-county/>

The City announced the locations of four state-support vaccination sites across Cook County that will begin vaccinating Illinois residents beginning this week. The sites are being stood up through support from the Illinois National Guard (ILNG).

## Cook County Locations

### **Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center**

1800 S. Harlem Ave.  
North Riverside, IL 60546

### **Cook County Health's Robbins Health Center**

13450 S. Kedzie Ave.  
Robbins, IL 60472

### **Cook County Health's Morton East Adolescent Health Center**

2423 S. Austin Blvd.  
Cicero, IL 60804

### **Cook County Health's Cottage Grove Health Center**

1645 Cottage Grove Ave.  
Ford Heights, IL 60411

All four locations will operate Monday through Saturday, 9a.m. to 5p.m. They will be available for health care workers who are part of Phase 1A before opening to those eligible for Phase 1B on January 25. For more information on vaccinations in Cook County please visit <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/>



# COVID Vaccine Appointments Fill Up As Phase 1B Starts Next Week Slow

Steven Graves

January 21, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/01/21/covid-vaccine-appointments-fill-up-as-phase-1b-starts-next-week-slow/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — Illinois Governor Pritzker and Chicago area doctors are hopeful the Biden administration will ramp up the COVID-19 vaccine supply.

Many are seeing doses run out quickly as appointments fill up. CBS 2's Steven Graves reports on how they are handling the supply and demand.

Each doctor CBS 2 spoke to said they are using every dose and that nothing is wasted. But the limited supply has led to some confusion for patients and providers.

As Chicago's top doc got her second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine Thursday, the message for the hundreds of thousands waiting is patience.

"We are hearing that we are not likely to see significant increases in how much vaccine probably for the next three weeks," said Doctor Allison Arwady, head of the Chicago Department of Public Health.

That's the understanding as the Biden administration takes over. Right now, Chicago continues to receive 34,000 doses a week.

Next Monday, the slow rollout of Phase 1B starts. Those eligible are people above the age of 64 and essential workers. Your primary care physician, pharmacy, vaccination site or employer are the main ways to get the shot.

Each by appointment.

"As soon as appointments become open, they get filled," said Doctor Rachel Rubin of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Cook County Public Health is working with 91 vaccination sites. Its focus is getting shots to the older population who also have essential jobs. But the rate depends on shipments from the state.

"And I can't even give you an amount. It really varies from week to week," said Rubin.

The state's vaccine portal showed almost half of its doses are unused. The state tells CBS 2 this data is lagging and localities are giving more shots almost every day.

DuPage County is quickly using up its weekly 13,000 doses.

"Trying to match exactly the number of appointments or the number of doses you have, there's just not enough predictability to that yet," said Chris Hoff with the DuPage County Health Department.

Which can result in appointment frustrations for some like Elmhurst resident Jim Henry. His pharmacy scheduled an appointment for him and his wife that was canceled, then rescheduled for next Monday. They received the call on Thursday.

“Until it’s in our arms, we’re still keeping our fingers crossed,” Henry said.

Each locality that CBS 2 spoke to said it was going to make an aggressive approach of putting the COVID vaccine information online.

# Virus Hot Spot Cook County Jail Has Begun Vaccinating Guards. Will They Take It?

Patrick Smith

January 22, 2021

<https://www.wbez.org/stories/virus-hot-spot-cook-county-jail-has-begun-vaccinating-guards-will-they-take-it/6cc6f42e-044b-41f0-894a-76ec573e67ea>

*Correction: An earlier version of this story misidentified the county health agency that gets vaccines from the Chicago Department of Public Health. It is the Cook County Health system.*

Cook County has begun vaccinating workers at the county jail, making them among the first frontline essential workers in the Chicago area to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The jail has been [a virus hot spot](#), with four jail guards and 10 detainees [killed by the novel coronavirus](#). One [study last summer](#) found that one in six COVID-19 cases in Illinois could be traced back to the jail on Chicago's Southwest Side. Health officials [have warned](#) that the jail's current population, sitting at more than 5,000 detainees, makes social distancing a challenge. The arrival of the vaccine provides hope, but its success will require buy-in from jail workers and detainees alike.

Cook County Health began administering vaccinations to Cook County Department of Corrections staff at the jail on Wednesday. Cook County Sheriff spokesman Matt Walberg said 308 corrections officers got the vaccine on the first day.

At that pace, with the vaccine being administered six days a week, it would only take a couple weeks to give the 3,000 or so corrections staff at the Little Village facility the first round of vaccine shots. However, experts say it could be a challenge to convince the majority of workers and inmates to get the vaccine.

Walberg said as of Thursday afternoon, 1,247 officers had signed up to get the vaccine — about 40% of the corrections staff at the jail.

The COVID-19 vaccines are not mandatory, and employers cannot require it while it's still approved for emergency use only.

When asked if the sheriff's office was considering staff reassignments or other job actions if people refuse to get vaccinated, Walberg said they are focused instead on educating the staff and providing daily information about the vaccines to encourage everyone to sign up voluntarily.

The union representing the corrections officers did not respond to requests for an interview.

In a [survey of law enforcement officers](#) conducted by Police1, a website for law enforcement professionals, just 38% of respondents said they would voluntarily take a vaccine. That's significantly lower than the general public, based on [a December study](#) by the Pew Research Center. Immunization efforts have faced [some pushback](#) from corrections officers and police across the country. The Los Angeles police chief is attempting to [boost confidence in the vaccine](#) among his police force after an internal poll showed only 60% of LA cops were interested in being vaccinated.

The hesitancy shouldn't come as a surprise, as there has been [reluctance even among healthcare workers](#) to fully embrace the vaccine.

Dr. John Williams, a retired physician and reserve sheriff's deputy in Colorado, has [advocated for law enforcement](#) officers to get the vaccine as soon as they can.

Williams said corrections officers have been forced to ignore the dangers of COVID-19 in order to keep working. That might make them more afraid of a vaccine's side effects than the harms of the coronavirus.

Williams believes that as corrections officers start seeing their colleagues get the vaccine, they will eventually come around. And he cautioned against any efforts to mandate officers get the vaccine, anticipating it would generate stronger feelings of distrust.

Alexa Van Brunt, director of the MacArthur Justice Center Clinic at Northwestern Law School, represents jail detainees in a class-action lawsuit over COVID-19 inside the jail. She said it was important to the health of the jail inmates that guards get vaccinated.

"Correctional officers ... obviously don't social distance from the detainees that they are overseeing and supervising and transporting. They touch them, and they come into very close contact with them," Van Brunt said. "It's the nature of the security apparatus at that jail. So the public health response is only effective if the [corrections officers] and staff and everybody who comes in contact with detainees also get vaccinated."

Still, Van Brunt said she didn't understand why corrections officers were being offered the vaccine before detainees. Detainees are supposed to be vaccinated in the [1b vaccine category](#), along with frontline essential workers, which could begin as soon as next week.

"There is no actual reason why correctional officers should have precedence in the vaccine line," Van Brunt said. "If detainees start getting the vaccines right away, hopefully we can make up for the lag time there. But ... everybody should be getting vaccinated at the same time in the jail ... because they are all subject to the same amount of risk."

Cook County Health Chief Communications Officer Caryn Stancik said they are working with the Chicago Department of Public Health to start providing vaccines to jail detainees "as soon as possible." The Chicago health department is in charge of distributing the vaccine within the city, including to the county health system.

Even as she pushed for detainees to gain access to the vaccine, Van Brunt acknowledged it could be difficult to convince some of them to sign on.

"Most of Illinois' prisons and jails are predominantly Black and brown," Van Brunt said. "We know that Black people have historically been — to say maltreated is to put it mildly — have been treated very badly by the public health authorities and by governments and subjected to medical testing. And that has given rise to a lot of skepticism about vaccinations."

Van Brunt said detainees also cannot be forced to take the vaccine. She said the solution is "a public health campaign" inside the jail similar to efforts outside.

While corrections officers are getting access to the vaccine, Cook County officials were unable to say when sheriff's police officers and other sheriff staff would be getting the vaccine. A [distribution plan](#) from the city of Chicago indicates Chicago police officers will get the vaccine sometime in February or March, although a police spokesman said the start date is still to be decided.



# Cook County Health Department explains how and when you can get the COVID vaccine

*John Williams*

*Jan 22, 2021*

<https://wgnradio.com/john-williams/cook-county-health-department-explains-how-and-when-you-can-get-the-covid-vaccine/>

Cook County Health Department Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead Dr. Kiran Joshi joins John Williams to explain how you can determine whether or not you can get the vaccine soon. Plus, Dr. Joshi shares how you can register to get one.



# Illinois Health Officials to Add COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Sign-Up to Website

January 22, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/illinois-health-officials-to-add-covid-19-vaccination-appointment-sign-up-to-website/2420751/>

Illinois health officials announced Friday the launch of a statewide coronavirus vaccination appointment sign-up addition to their website, which should more effectively provide doses.

"As we increase capacity to make vaccine widely available, we will launch a statewide website to provide more information so that you can make an appointment to get vaccinated," Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a press conference.

Illinoisans can already access [the state's coronavirus website](#), which provides the vaccination plan, Restore Illinois plan and information on the pandemic. Once appointments become available, residents can access a link taking them to their local health care provider to coordinate when and where to receive the vaccine.

Pritzker added that some pharmacies, such as Walgreens, already have an appointment website live online, with others are expected to follow shortly.

"Although appointments will be hard to get for some time, times will become more and more available as our state receives increasing numbers of doses," he said.

Pritzker announced last week that the state will begin its next phase of vaccinations, also known as Phase 1B, on Jan. 25. Phase 1B will include roughly 3.2 million Illinois residents, according to the state.

Phase 1B includes anyone over the age of 65, as well as frontline essential workers that have been prioritized, like first responders, people who work in correctional facilities, grocery store workers, day care workers, people who work in manufacturing settings, educators and those in school settings, public transit employees, postal workers and others.

Pritzker said last week that the state will be standing up "hundreds of vaccination sites across the state, including retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile teams, state-run mass vaccination locations in northern, central and southern Illinois, hospitals and urgent care locations, and ultimately, doctors' offices and large employers who can host their own workplace clinics"

The Illinois National Guard was also activated to assist local health departments in expanding vaccination clinics, Pritzker said, with the first two teams deploying to Cook County Health Department sites.

Beginning on Jan. 25, the National Guard-led sites will begin vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at CVS, Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said.

All of those vaccination sites will be appointment only, Pritzker said, asking residents not to line up at the store or to call their local pharmacies, but rather use the website once available.

Chicago is currently preparing to enter the next phase of vaccinations along with the rest of Illinois on Monday, opening up doses for frontline workers and those over the age of 65.

But the city's top doctor warned Thursday that appointments for those who qualify will be "very limited," urging patience as she said most people who qualify for vaccinations in this next phase will likely have to wait "a number of weeks."

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said the city is not receiving "anywhere near enough" doses from the federal government to vaccinate everyone eligible - a trend playing out nationwide since shipments began last month.

"Let me highlight that we do not have anywhere near enough vaccine to vaccinate anywhere near the number of people who are going to want to get vaccinated beginning on Monday," Arwady said. "I'm thrilled that there is so much demand here. We are not wasting any vaccine, we have not wasted any vaccine in Chicago in one day, we will not waste any vaccine going forward."

But she noted that Chicago has more than 360,000 residents over the age of 65 and more than 300,000 people who are employed in some of the sectors eligible to be vaccinated in Phase 1B.

Arwady said Thursday that there are four ways in which residents will be able to get vaccinated against COVID-19: through their medical system or health care provider, through pharmacies, through a dedicated vaccination location like the points of dispensing sites, or through their employer.

Arwady said the first way, through residents' individual medical systems, is how most people will be vaccinated. That includes primary care doctors, federally qualified health centers, hospitals and other systems of care, she said, noting that many of those systems were already reaching out to "some of their most vulnerable patients" to make appointments.

Arwady said with regard to the second way, through pharmacies, that the city had enrolled more than 100 pharmacies across Chicago and would share more information on Monday about how to sign up for an appointment in that manner.

The third way will be through mass vaccination sites like Chicago's "POD" locations, Arwady said. The city had launched six of the PODs at City Colleges locations, which she noted are still for health care workers, not the general public, and by appointment only.

Arwady said the fourth way Chicagoans can get vaccinated, through their employers, has been the way that she's received most questions about.

Earlier in the week, Arwady [released new details](#) about the city's vaccine distribution plan, including [tentative dates](#) for when each of the next phases might begin, with a goal of opening vaccinations up to all Chicagoans over the age of 16 by the end of May.

Arwady announced in a livestream on Tuesday that the city will tentatively look to enter Phase 1C, on March 29, followed by Phase 2 on May 31.

Phase 1C includes all essential workers not covered in earlier phases, as well as Chicagoans between the ages of 16 and 64 who have underlying medical conditions, Arwady said.

"Looking ahead to Phase 2, which is really when a vaccine is available to all Chicagoans, we're tentatively saying that might begin May 31, the end of May. All of these numbers for Phase 1C and Phase 2 is subject to change but just to give people a high level sense of what we're thinking," Arwady said.

Arwady again noted Thursday that those who qualify for vaccinations in Phase 1B, slated to start Monday, do not have to register anywhere yet but the option may be available soon.

Chicago officials say the best way to get updates on the vaccination rollout is through "[Chi COVID Coach](#)," a platform the Chicago Department of Public Health is using to monitor symptoms, giving information on testing in the city and help you get the latest details on the city's vaccination plan - including notification when you can register to get your vaccine.

## Social Graces: Should you get the vaccine while working from home?

Hannah Herrera Greenspan

January 22, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/sc-fam-social-graces-social-distancing-family-events-0324-20200319-g2hmccb7g5fv5ensiuncs6jmse-story.html>

*You've been notified by your health care provider that you are eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine. Since you are working from home, should you get vaccinated now or wait? These are the etiquette issues of our time. The "Social Graces" column is focusing on COVID-19 issues for the near future, and we'll group them in an ongoing list; the most recent Q&A will always be on top.*

**Q: I'm eligible for a vaccine but still can work from home. Should I get one or forgo my dose?**

A: When it comes to the vaccine, we appreciate people's interest in forgoing the vaccine for someone who may need it more. But we just need to follow the public health algorithms to get everybody who is indicated to have the vaccine.

Working from home is safer, but it still isn't zero risk. We still have interactions in our buildings, communities, delivery services and mail.

A single incident of exposure to a cloud of aerosolized COVID-19 is enough to get infected. So people who have that contact happening 30 or 40 times a day are much more likely to get it than somebody who has it once a day or a few times a week, but it's still happening.

For us to get our life back to some normalcy, we need everybody to get vaccinated when their number comes up. We're encouraging people to get vaccinated as soon as they can.

— Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine, Cook County Health



# Illinois To Enter Phase 1B Of COVID-19 Vaccinations, But Some Sign Ups Need Adjusting

Steven Graves

January 22, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/01/22/illinois-enters-phase-1b-of-covid-19-vaccinations-find-where-to-sign-up-here/>

**CHICAGO (CBS)** — Illinois is getting ready for the massive effort to vaccinate more people. More than 2 million people in the state 65 and older or essential workers will be eligible Monday.

Each shot requires an appointment. Gov. JB Pritzker is looking at pharmacies as a main option in Phase 1B, but limited doses and hardships — even finding where to sign up — can make it difficult to get the shot.

Most people will need use their pharmacy's website to register. The first ones in the state's lineup are Jewel Osco, CVS and Walgreens. There are pages dedicated to COVID-19 vaccine, but registration is hard to find.

For example, on [Jewel Osco's site](#) you can navigate to vaccine page, but after clicking, information does not appear updated.

The state says changes should come by Monday.

"Already today, the [Walgreens site](#) is up and running. And the others will follow," Pritzker said Friday.

The state says it hopes to have its own site up for pharmacy and county health department information, but it is unclear when that will be in place.

So CBS 2's Steven Graves checked around. [Lake County](#) has its registration page clearly up and running. [DuPage County](#) does as well. And there, officials say some patients in Phase 1-B are already signed up for their shots.

An appointment is also required in [Cook County](#). There is a mass vaccination site at the North Riverside Health center, which is one of many that enlists health professionals with the National Guard who will speed up the process.

"Here with the Guard and their efficiencies and their professionalism, we're able to see 275 patients a day," said Dr. Daniel Vittum, a family medicine physician with Cook County Health.

But again, the county has yet to make a vaccine registration portal. Officials say it is coming soon.

Right now, it is possible to opt to ask for the vaccine through your health provider which may be easiest.

The governor is looking to do more walk-in locations once more of the vaccine is available.

Chicago also plans to release registration details on Monday

## The Illinois National Guard's latest mission: Help vaccinate Cook County from COVID-19

Stacy St. Clair

January 23, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-chicago-vaccinations-illinois-guard-20210123-5nwgoeja3fc4ffhxvaorghpfg-story.html>

After just a few days of helping to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine at a Cook County health center, 2nd Lt. Alex Villafuerte has grown accustomed to the startled look on patients' faces when they walk in and see uniformed soldiers administering shots.

He acknowledges their surprise with a masked smile, explaining that the Guard recently has been activated to speed up the state's vaccination program. If he's unable to allay their concerns, he reaches into the right breast pocket of his uniform and pulls out his own vaccination card showing he received the shot Tuesday at the same location.

Villafuerte's effort shows the delicate dance the Illinois National Guard must perform. No one questions the troops' ability to bolster the massive operation's efficiency or pace, but there have been debates nationwide concerning whether uniformed soldiers would fuel baseless conspiracy theories about the government's motive for mass immunizations and exacerbate vaccine hesitancy.

"We're trying to squash the conspiracies," said Villafuerte, who lives in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. "I use my (immunization) card to show them it's not a conspiracy. It's a real thing, and we're very lucky to have the vaccine. As members of the Illinois National Guard, we're just here to help."

The assistance comes as nearly 1.1 million people across Illinois have been infected with the virus. On Friday, the [reported death toll](#) reached 18,615 statewide since the start of the pandemic.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker activated the Guard this month [to help distribute vaccines](#) as they become more widely available to the public, though [he's warning](#) that demand will continue to exceed supply. The state will move into phase 1b Monday, as an estimated 3.2 million residents will become eligible for their first round of shots. The allowed group includes people older than 65, teachers, first responders and other front-line workers.

More than 200 Guard members have been activated so far, and the governor plans to activate about 400 total to all regions of the state. The first soldiers arrived in Cook County on Tuesday and are now helping to administer vaccines at six suburban locations. The Guard members were not vaccinated before arriving, but can receive the shot at the end of the day if there are any leftover doses that would otherwise spoil.

At Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center, Guard members and the site's regular staff moved patients quickly through the vaccination process Friday. It took most people less than 30 minutes from the time they walked in the door for their scheduled appointment until the time they finished, including the required 15-minute waiting period to be monitored for immediate side effects.

"It's just a good feeling to be helping out the community," said Sgt. Johnny Newsome, who lives in the Rogers Park neighborhood. "You can tell how much the people appreciate it."

Unlike states that have been plagued by long lines, overflowing parking lots and angry patients, the North Riverside site had the calm, quiet vibe of an optometrist's office. A few people, however, did double takes upon walking inside and seeing uniformed troops.

None complained or expressed reservations.

"I think it's a phenomenal use of the National Guard," said Sophie Foucault, a speech language pathologist from Hawthorn Woods who received her first shot Friday. "I'm all for it. The more the merrier."

As he waited in the recovery area, Jay Trivedi, a pharmaceutical scientist from Skokie, said the Guard's involvement with the vaccination program was in keeping with the military's overall mission.

"They swear an oath to protect the country," he said. "They protect us against enemies on the open battlefield and now they're protecting us against an invisible enemy. They are keeping their promise to protect us, and I'm grateful for it."

The 18 Guard members have helped Cook County health staff double the number of vaccinations it can administer each day, said Dr. Daniel Vittum, the site's lead physician. The soldiers include military medics to give the shots, as well as logistical support teams to take patients' temperatures, escort them to the examination rooms and stay with vaccine recipients for 15 minutes after their shots to watch for immediate side effects.

On Friday, the North Riverside site planned to give 180 shots of the Pfizer vaccine. There were another 276 scheduled for Saturday, Vittum said.

"With their military background and organization, they (the Guard members) are bringing efficiencies and teamwork," Vittum said. "They move people through quickly, and it has just been great to have them."

The Illinois National Guard has played in key role in implementing the state's COVID-19 response since the earliest days of the pandemic. Last March, troops established [the first state-run testing sites](#) and ran them with military precision as they performed more than 233,000 tests over a four-month period.

After spending the spring and summer testing people for COVID-19, some soldiers have returned to vaccinate the public. Others have embraced their first chance to fight against a virus that has killed [more than 410,000 people](#) in the U.S.

"I'm grateful to be here," said Mia Mapa of Aurora, an EMT in the National Guard and a student at Northern Illinois University. "I know how lucky we are to have the vaccine in the United States, and I didn't want to miss an opportunity to play a part."



# Illinois National Guard deployed to help organize, expedite massive COVID-19 vaccination effort

*Dane Placko*

January 23, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/illinois-national-guard-deployed-to-help-organize-expedite-massive-covid-19-vaccination-effort>

**COOK COUNTY** - The Illinois National Guard has been deployed to one of its most critical missions ever.

They're helping to organize and expedite the state's massive **COVID-19 vaccination** effort.

Mia Mapa is trained as a medic in the Illinois National Guard. But on Friday she put that training to use fighting **COVID-19**.

Mapa is one of the first Illinois National Guard soldiers deployed to vaccination centers.

"COVID is no different than fighting an enemy overseas. We are all here to support the community. That's one of the main reasons we joined the Army," said Lt. Alejandro Villafuerte.

They greet patients at the front door, escort them to clinic rooms, administer the vaccination shots and then watch the patients in a recovery room after they've received the vaccine.

Before the Guard arrived at this clinic earlier this week, they were only able to vaccinate about 75 people a day.

"Now with the Guard here we can get up to 275 vaccines done in a single day. They are very efficient, professional and well trained, so we're really happy to have them here," said Dr. Daniel Vittum of the Cook County Health Department.

For now, the Guard is only assisting vaccinations in **Cook County**, but Gov. Pritzker says that is just the start.

"And over the next three weeks approximately 25 additional National Guard vaccination teams are deploying to more sites in the high-need areas all across the state," said Pritzker.

"I am from the Cook County area. So it's really great for me to be able to help out the community. It's one of the whole reasons I joined the Guard -- to be able to help out," said Sgt. Johnny Newsome.

And it's appreciated by the people getting the vaccines, who are more accustomed to seeing Guard troops deployed in Washington DC and Springfield.

"Thank you so much for your service. I'd much rather see it being focused on this rather than what was happening this past week," said Sophie Foucault who received the vaccine.

## Phase 1b of vaccinations starts Monday, but accessibility questions remain

Jake Griffin

January 25, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210124/phase-1b-of-vaccinations-starts-monday-but-accessibility-questions-remain>

Starting Monday, roughly 3.2 million more Illinois residents are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Just how those residents are going to get the vaccine remains largely unknown, however.

Eligibility is one thing. Accessibility is another.

Despite the state's edict authorizing vaccination of anyone 65 and older, as well as essential front-line workers like public safety employees, teachers and grocery store personnel, there is no statewide vaccine registration apparatus and state officials are directing residents to their local county health departments.

Meanwhile, officials at suburban county health departments are taking a scattershot approach to the vaccination process in the absence of any specific guidance from federal or state officials. Eligible residents should check with their primary care physicians to see if they're giving the shots, register with national pharmacy chains like Walgreens or CVS, and sign up with the county health departments as well, they suggest.

"The first opportunity that they have to get the vaccine, please take advantage of the vaccine," said Karen Ayala, DuPage County Health Department executive director. "It's the same regardless of where you get it. We're just most interested in people getting the vaccine as soon as possible."

About 268,000 vaccine-eligible DuPage County residents are urged to register at [the health department's website, dupagehealth.org](https://dupagehealth.org), Ayala said. Shots would be eligible at the county's clinic site or one of the dozens of other health care providers DuPage County and other Illinois counties are relying on to help administer vaccines.

"When we have clinic availability, or any of our partners let us know that they have clinic availability, we can push that information out to people," Ayala said of the online registration process.

Kane County Health Department officials also are directing eligible residents to [its website kanehealth.com to register for the vaccine](https://kanehealth.com). They're also relying on "partner providers," though a list of those providers isn't yet available on the health department's website.

Approximately 125,000 Kane County residents are eligible in the phase 1b group, officials estimate.

There's also a dearth of vaccine doses that has plagued the vaccination process since the initial rollout in mid-December and slowed inoculations. That's going to affect each health department's ability to provide shots to those who are newly eligible, health department officials contend. They also complain that information from state and federal officials has been scant.

In the meantime, county health department officials are preaching patience.

"It's a limited number of entities that have the vaccine right now," said Lake County Health Department Executive Director Mark Pfister. "We still have no clear understanding of what to expect. We're hopeful we'll see our allocations increase."

Health department officials in Lake County sent notices to those in the second wave of eligibility late Sunday afternoon notifying them that because of limited supply, the health department was still vaccinating the first group of eligible recipients. Once demand from that group slows down, "we will begin opening appointments for people in phase 1b," the notice read.

Vaccine-eligible Lake County residents can still [register at the county's AllVax portal, allvax.lakecohealth.org](https://allvax.lakecohealth.org) and should be notified when a vaccine dose is available.

Just over 1% of the state's population has been fully vaccinated with two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, state officials report. That means residents in the initial eligibility group of health care workers, hospital employees and residents of long-term care facilities are still prioritized.

"We know about the governor wanting to initiate 1b vaccinations," said Will County Health Department spokesman Steve Brandy. "We hope to be into 1a over the next week or two. We are in the process of finishing up 1a."

Meanwhile, eligible Will County residents can register at [the department's website, willcountyhealth.org](https://willcountyhealth.org).

The Cook County Public Health Department was expected to unveil a vaccine registration portal late last week, but that announcement has yet to be made. There is no way to register on the agency's website, but residents can [register for vaccination updates at redcap.dph.illinois.gov](https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov).

The Illinois National Guard has been deployed to four vaccination locations in suburban Cook County, and 25 more sites are expected to be staffed by troops when they are ready over the next three weeks, state officials said.

National Guard officials said 25 teams of about 18 to 20 troops will be deployed to those sites. Each team will have about six medics already trained to inoculate patients with the vaccine. The other troops will serve in administrative and record-keeping roles, officials said.

Illinois Department of Public Health officials and Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office also said Friday [the state's COVID-19 information site, coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov), would have a portal to direct residents throughout the state to their appropriate county health department's vaccine registration site. However, as of Sunday that information was not available on the state site.

Hospital networks, like Advocate Aurora Health and Edward-Elmhurst Health, announced they have begun notifying eligible patients about vaccine availability through those health care systems' scheduling apps.

Still, numerous seniors aren't comfortable using the internet or may not have a computer or a smartphone to access information, AARP Illinois State Director Bob Gallo warned. To bridge the technology gap, state and local leaders need to offer vaccine telephone help lines that are staffed appropriately and don't leave seniors on indefinite hold, he said.

Phone numbers for county health departments are:

- Cook County Public Health Department, (708) 836-8600.
- DuPage Health Department, (630) 682-7400.
- Kane County Health Department, (630) 208-3801.
- Lake County Health Department, (847) 377-8000.
- McHenry County Health Department, (815) 334-4510.
- Will County Health Department, (815) 727-8480.
- Daily Herald staff writers Marni Pyke, Susan Sarkauskas, Katlyn Smith and Mick Zawislak contributed to this report.



# These Are the 7 National Guard Mass Vaccination Sites Open in Cook County

January 25, 2021

NBC 5 Chicago

As of Tuesday, seven mass vaccination sites will have opened in suburban Cook County as Illinois begins the next phase of its vaccine rollout, opening up doses to "frontline essential workers" and those aged 65 and older.

Operated with the assistance of the Illinois National Guard, the locations include:

**Cook County Health's North Riverside Health Center**

1800 South Harlem Avenue, North Riverside

**Cook County Health's Robbins Health Center**

13450 South Kedzie Avenue, Robbins

**Cook County Health's Morton East Adolescent Health Center**

2423 South Austin Boulevard, Cicero

**Cook County Health's Cottage Grove Health Center**

1645 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights

**Cook County Health Blue Island Health Center**

12757 S Western Ave, Blue Island

**Cook County Health Arlington Heights Health Center**

3250 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Suite 300, Arlington Heights

**Tinley Park Convention Center**

18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park

Phase 1B opens up vaccinations to several groups, including first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers and more.

A website launched at noon Monday for Cook County residents to receive information and make appointments as they become available. (*Click [here](#) for more. A call center is also going live at noon, at (833) 308-1988.*)

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, joined by Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, toured the mass vaccination site in Tinley Park Monday, which is set to open Tuesday.

"Widespread vaccination sites will allow us to quickly and efficiently get these life-saving vaccine doses to Illinoisans as more federal shipments of vaccine come online," Pritzker said in a statement. "The Illinois National Guard and the Illinois Department of Public Health are proud to partner with Cook County to launch the Tinley Park Convention Center Vaccination Site – our seventh collaboration in Cook County overall, with many more to come across the state."

Appointments are required, according to the village of Tinley Park, which said appointments can only be made through the [state](#) and county websites.

County officials expect to be able to administer up to 3,000 vaccines per day "when the Tinley Park site is fully optimized and when adequate vaccine is available."

The governor said current vaccination sites in the state are available by appointment only, but that the state plans to launch walk-in locations in the coming weeks.

There are several ways eligible residents will be able to get vaccinated, but state officials have urged patience as the new phase opens up.

Beginning Monday, National Guard-led sites began vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Pritzker said, noting that CVS is expected to "soon follow."

By Feb. 1, more pharmacies, including Hy-Vee, Mariano's and Kroger, will also begin vaccinations, Pritzker said.

Additional vaccination sites are set to open across the state, including hundreds of additional pharmacy providers coming online through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, according to the state's website.

"As the state moves forward with its plan and continues to build out capacity, smaller independent pharmacies, urgent care clinics, doctors' offices, and workplaces will all be coming online to serve as vaccination sites," the state's website reads. "Additional teams from the [Illinois National Guard] will also deploy to regions across the state to stand up new sites and build out additional capacity at existing sites."



# Cook County Launches COVID-19 Vaccine Website, 1<sup>st</sup> Mass Vaccination Site

January 25, 2021  
WTTW Chicago

A year after the first coronavirus case was reported in Illinois, the first mass coronavirus vaccination site was launched Monday in suburban Cook County.

"We're gathered to celebrate a major development in (our) COVID-19 vaccination efforts," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Monday morning inside the massive Tinley Park Convention Center as the state moves into the next phase of its vaccination rollout.

The 75,000-square-foot center is the first of several mass vaccination sites set to open in suburban Cook County, according to Preckwinkle, who said others would be opening in the coming weeks.

She also announced the launch of a new website ([vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](http://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov)) and hotline (833-308-1988) for those who live or work in Cook County to receive COVID-19 vaccination information and sign up for appointments. The hotline will be available 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

On Tuesday, vaccinations at the convention center will begin for eligible individuals: residents ages 65 and older, front-line essential workers and health care workers, according to officials.

The convention center is set to administer 9,000 vaccinations per week, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who said the center has the capacity to administer 18,000 vaccinations per week.

"While we're excited to be taking these steps, I want to be sure we set clear expectations. At this moment, not just here but across the country, demand is heavily outweighing our supply of vaccines," Preckwinkle said. "Over 600,000 individuals are eligible for vaccination in phase 1b. ... However, we don't have adequate vaccine to supply to vaccinate everyone immediately."

Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha echoed that sentiment, saying it will take weeks to vaccinate everyone who is eligible. "This is a marathon, not a sprint," he said.

Vaccination appointments will be made available only when vaccine doses are guaranteed in order to avoid having to cancel appointments, according to Rocha. "It's important people recognize all (vaccination) sites work on an appointment system," he said.

Anyone who lives or works in Cook County can sign up on the county's website, regardless of vaccine eligibility, and they will be put on a listserv, according to Rocha. "Once you're on there, whether you're eligible or not, you're in queue," he said, adding that individuals will be notified via email when appointments are available to those who are eligible to receive one.

On Monday, officials announced a new feature on the state's coronavirus website that allows eligible residents to [find nearby vaccination sites](#). The site also provides residents with information on how to make an appointment, updates on the state's vaccination plan and answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccine.

“This site will serve as a hub of all vaccine-related information, directing residents to the appointment booking homepages of our 97 local health departments and our pharmacy partners, which will total hundreds of locations statewide,” Pritzker said in a statement. The site will be updated as new vaccination locations open.

State officials also provided links to both [Walgreens](#) and [Jewel Osco](#) for eligible residents to schedule appointments, which began Monday at Walgreens and Tuesday at Jewel Osco.

State health officials reported 2,944 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases Monday and 49 additional deaths. Since the first infection was reported in Illinois a year ago, there have been 1,104,763 cases and 18,798 deaths across the state.

As of Sunday night, 2,962 people were hospitalized with COVID-19, and of those, 601 patients were in intensive care units and 302 were on ventilators, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity rate for cases is 4.7%, — down from 5.9% a week ago, [according to IDPH data](#).

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity is 5.8%, according to state health officials. That number is higher in both suburban Cook County (6.9%) and Chicago (7%), [according to IDPH regional data](#).

For information about COVID-19 vaccinations, including how to register for an appointment in suburban Cook County, visit [vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](http://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov) or call 833-308-1988, which operates 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Friday.



# Illinois, Cook County Launch Websites To Sign Up For COVID-19 Vaccination Appointments

Chris Tye

January 25, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/01/25/illinois-cook-county-launch-websites-to-sign-up-for-covid-19-vaccination-appointments/>

With a shortage of vaccine as Illinois begins the next phase of inoculations, two new websites are going online to try to make signing up for an appointment simpler.

CBS2's Chris Tye helps walk us through the tricks and pitfalls of getting the shot.

Cook County Health and the Illinois Department of Public Health have both launched websites designed to make finding vaccine near you easier.

At [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov), if you click on "Vaccine Locations," you'll be directed to enter your zip code to find pharmacies, public health departments, and other vaccination sites near you.

For example, if you live in Aurora, you'll find a link to the Kane County Health Department website, or you can sign up for an appointment with Walgreens to get a shot at their store on Eola Road.

There are some hiccups though, so be ready for some frustration. With Walgreens, you need to sign up to become a Walgreens online customer to book; and each county health department operates differently.

We couldn't access the Kane County sign-up page Monday afternoon.

Meantime, Cook County has launched its own vaccine website, [vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov).

It's open to anyone who lives or works in Cook County. You just need to fill out your name, age, job, and contact information.

Even if you're not in Phase 1A or Phase 1B of the vaccination plan, you can still register for updates on when the vaccine will be available for you, and you'll be put in line for a shot when you're eligible.

The Cook County site started taking appointments at noon Monday.

The county will begin Phase 1B vaccinations on Tuesday at its first mass vaccination site at the Tinley Park Convention Center. Dozens more locations are slated to come online in coming weeks.

There are more than 600,000 Cook County residents eligible for Phase 1B of the vaccine plan, so officials are asking for patience, and say this will be disappointing for some.

Cook County also has set up a hotline you can call to schedule an appointment if you don't have internet access, or just have trouble signing up online. You can call 833-308-1988 Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.



# COVID Vaccine Registration in Illinois: Where You Can Get It and How to Make an Appointment

January 25, 2021

NBC 5 Chicago

With both Illinois and Chicago now opening vaccinations to millions of residents under Phase 1B guidelines, many are wondering where they can get vaccinated and how they schedule an appointment.

Phase 1B opens up vaccinations to people age 65 years and older as well as "frontline essential workers," which includes first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff, childcare workers, grocery store employees, postal service workers and more.

There are several ways eligible residents will be able to get vaccinated, but state officials have urged patience as the new phase opens up.

Beginning Monday, [National Guard-led sites](#) will be vaccinating residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at Jewel Osco and Walgreens, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said, noting that CVS is expected to "soon follow."

A Walmart spokeswoman confirmed Friday that beginning this week and next, the big-box retailer will start providing inoculations in the city of Chicago as well as in Indiana along with six other states.

The company has already been providing vaccinations in New Mexico and Arkansas, where it's headquartered. *(For more information on their vaccine rollout click [here](#).)*

By Feb. 1, additional pharmacies, including Hy-Vee, Mariano's and Kroger, will also begin vaccinations, Pritzker said.

To make an appointment through a state-run vaccination site, click [here](#). For a statewide vaccination locations map or to find a site near you, click [here](#). *Note: those who schedule an appointment through these sites will need:*

You may be required to provide proof of employment as health care personnel using an employee ID, a recent letter from your employer, or a recent pay stub. If you are not eligible in this phase, your vaccination appointment will be rejected.

For more information on how those eligible in Phase 1b can get an appointment through Walgreens click [here](#). *Note: those who schedule an appointment will need:*

An appointment confirmation email

A COVID-19 Vaccination Authorization Form with your registration code (if applicable)

State ID, valid driver's license or other government-issued ID

Work ID or other document to show proof of employment (for healthcare workers, frontline and essential workers only)

Medical and/or pharmacy benefit insurance card

Download, print and complete the [vaccination consent form](#). If you don't bring the completed form, you will need to complete it at the pharmacy before your vaccination.

For more information on how those eligible in Phase 1b can get an appointment through Jewel-Osco click [here](#). *Note: those who schedule an appointment will need:*

Proof of employment (badge, paystub, uniform, etc)  
Medical license (if applicable)  
Drivers license  
Medical and prescription insurance cards  
Last 4 digits of SSN

"At this time, these sites will be available by appointment only," the governor's office said in a release Monday. "As the federal supply of vaccines increases and Illinois receives more vaccine, the state will launch walk-in locations and expand sites to additional providers like doctor's offices and urgent care clinics. More information about those locations will be released in the coming weeks."

Additional vaccination sites are set to open across the state, including hundreds of additional pharmacy providers coming online through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, according to the state's website.

The Illinois National Guard is deploying teams to sites in Cook County as well as sites in St. Clair County, before additional deployments statewide.

"As the state moves forward with its plan and continues to build out capacity, smaller independent pharmacies, urgent care clinics, doctors' offices, and workplaces will all be coming online to serve as vaccination sites," the state's website reads. "Additional teams from the [Illinois National Guard] will also deploy to regions across the state to stand up new sites and build out additional capacity at existing sites."

For information on where to get vaccinated in each county, here's a list of Chicago-area county information sites:

**Cook County:** A website launches at noon Monday for residents to receive information and make appointments as they become available. Click [here](#) for more. A call center is also going live at noon, at (833) 308-1988.

**DeKalb County:** For the latest information and updates, click [here](#). To sign up for notifications, click [here](#).

**DuPage County:** For the latest information and update, sign up for alerts on when you can get an appointment [here](#).

**Grundey County:** For those in Phases 1A and 1B, a survey is required to declare your interest in getting vaccinated.

Click [here](#) for the Phase 1b survey and [here](#) for the Phase 1a survey.

**Kankakee County:** To register for the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes publicly available, please fill out the Kankakee County Health Department survey [here](#). After completing the survey, the health department says it will contact you when it is your turn to get vaccinated and schedule your vaccine appointment. "As we move into each new phase KCHD staff will contact all of those eligible in that phase to provide directions on how to get scheduled for the vaccine."

**Kane County:** For the latest information and updates, click [here](#). To sign up for the latest updates from the county, click [here](#).

**Kendall County:** For the latest information and updates, click [here](#). In addition, those who want to take a survey for more information can click the following links:

**Click Here for:** [Covid-19 Vaccine Recipient Administration Record](#)

**Click Here for:** [1A COVID-19 Vaccine Survey](#)

**Click Here for:** [1B COVID-19 Vaccine Survey](#)

**Lake County:** This county has launched what it calls the [Lake County AllVax Portal](#). It asks residents to register and health officials will notify you when it is time to make your appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine. "You will only receive an email to schedule when you are eligible and the Health Department has vaccine and appointments available to you," the county's website states. For more information click [here](#).

**LaSalle County:** Health care workers in Phase 1A can sign-up [here](#). A Phase 1B *notification* sign-up is also available [here](#). "Only individuals working or living in LaSalle County may receive vaccine through LaSalle County," the county's [website](#) states.

**McHenry County:** Phase 1B enrollment form available [here](#). Enrollment for Phase 1a is also available [here](#). Residents can also sign up for e-notifications or other information [here](#).

**Will County:** Residents in this county are being asked to fill out a registration sign-up form [here](#). Once signed up, residents will be notified when they can schedule an appointment. For additional information, click [here](#).

In Chicago, also moving to Phase 1B, the city's top doctor said there are four ways in which residents will be able to get vaccinated.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said options include through a medical system or health care provider, through pharmacies, through a dedicated vaccination location like the points of dispensing sites, or through an employer.

Chicago officials say the best way to get updates on the vaccination rollout is through "[Chi COVID Coach](#)," a platform the Chicago Department of Public Health is using to monitor symptoms, giving information on testing in the city and help you get the latest details on the city's vaccination plan - including notification when you can register to get your vaccine.

## Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, Walmart and Cook County now scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments

January 25, 2021  
Chicago Tribune

Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, Walmart, and suburban Cook County are scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments for eligible Chicago-area residents.

The state has also launched a website, <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>, where people can find vaccination locations and links to schedule appointments.

The online sign-ups, however, come amid extremely limited doses of the vaccines, meaning appointments can be tough to come by. Some people have reported spending hours online trying to snag spots or choosing appointments far from their homes, in hopes of not having to wait weeks, or months, for their turn. Others say they've been unable to find appointments at all.

The retail pharmacies and county began scheduling appointments as the state moved into phase 1b of COVID-19 vaccinations Monday, which includes people ages 65 and older and front-line essential workers such as teachers and public transportation and grocery store employees. Many hospital systems have also started sending out electronic invitations to senior patients to make appointments for the shots.

Illinois is expecting about 120,000 first doses of vaccine this week, not including those going to Chicago, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said at a news conference Monday. About 3.2 million seniors and essential workers in Illinois are eligible for the vaccine as part of this phase.

Walgreens is vaccinating seniors and essential workers at 92 sites across Illinois, according to Pritzker's office, and appointments can be made at <https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19>. Jewel-Osco is allowing people to make appointments online at <https://www.mhealthappointments.com/covidappt>, with shots starting Tuesday, according to the governor's office.

Walmart is taking appointments for seniors and essential workers at six of its stores in Chicago at <https://www.walmart.com/cp/1228302>. The Cook County Department of Public Health began scheduling appointments Monday at [vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](http://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov) and 833-308-1988.

"While we're excited to be taking these steps, I want to be sure we set clear expectations," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said at a news conference Monday. "At this moment, demand is heavily outweighing our supply of vaccines."

As of Monday, CVS Health was not making vaccinations available to Illinois residents at its stores, spokesman Charlie Rice-Minoso said in an email. CVS and Walgreens have contracted with the federal government to vaccinate residents of long-term care facilities.

Enormous demand, coupled with slim supplies of vaccines, has sent many Chicago-area residents into a frenzy trying to find appointments.

Keri Halperin, 49, of Northbrook, stayed up until midnight one night last week to schedule appointments for her parents and in-laws at Walgreens.

She was able to get four different appointments for them — at four different Walgreens in four different towns — for this week. She said she knows people who live in the Chicago area who are traveling as far as Peoria and Carbondale for appointments.

“It was all we could do, and we just wanted to make sure we get them their shots,” Halperin said, noting that her parents and in-laws are all older than 75 and, in some cases, have serious health conditions. “I want my parents to be protected.”

She said the system seems unfair because not everyone has a relative who can make an appointment in the middle of the night, and not everyone can drive to a distant location for a shot.

Older people who aren’t tech-savvy are particularly worried about scheduling their appointments, said Dr. Eve Bloomgarden, an endocrinologist at Northwestern Medicine and a co-founder of the Illinois Medical Professionals Action Collaborative Team, which is a group of Illinois doctors and health care professionals working to address pandemic-related issues. This past weekend, the group started widely distributing on social media a list of places to get vaccinated.

“People are panicking about whether they’re going to miss their opportunity,” said Bloomgarden, who likened the process to getting opening-night tickets to the play “Hamilton.”

“Their younger kids, ages 18 to 50, are basically devoting hours of time a day to trying to get appointments for their parents,” Bloomgarden said. “I think it would be really nice to have a more equitable system where you didn’t have to try to play all these games because it’s really going to weed out people who can’t do this.”

Many seniors and essential workers also will be able to sign up with their health systems for inoculations, but those systems are not all moving at the same pace.

Some systems, such as Loyola Medicine, began vaccinating people in phase 1b Monday, while others have not started.

Loyola Medicine has enough doses to vaccinate about 900 people a day, for now, said Dr. Richard Freeman, regional chief clinical officer. The system has been sending messages to some of its eligible patients inviting them to schedule appointments, but it takes time to get everyone who’s eligible into that invitation system, he said.

Some seniors and essential workers aren’t sure whether to wait for invitations from their health systems or hunt for appointments across all the available sites, grabbing whatever they can find first. Freeman recommends they contact their doctors’ offices for recommendations and then decide whether they’d like to wait for an appointment with their own health systems or try their luck elsewhere.

The Cook County Department of Public Health encourages people to look for appointments with multiple providers but to schedule only one appointment.

“We do not have adequate vaccine supply to vaccinate everyone immediately,” Preckwinkle said. “With this in mind, we’re once again asking for your patience.”

# Tinley Park gets first large vaccination site in Cook County suburbs as state moves into next stage of inoculation plan

January 25, 2021  
Chicago Sun-Times

The first large-scale vaccination center in the Cook County suburbs is scheduled to open on Tuesday, an appointment-only site in Tinley Park that officials say will eventually be able to administer 18,000 shots a week.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other officials unveiled the site Monday as the state moves into a new phase of the state's vaccination program, one allowing frontline essential workers and those 65 and over to begin receiving the inoculations.

But despite moving ahead to Phase 1B of the immunization plan, one county health official cautioned the process would be a "marathon, and not a sprint."

The vaccination site, located at the Tinley Park Convention Center in the southwest suburb, will begin offering vaccinations by appointment only, starting at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday and will be able to administer 9,000 vaccinations a week initially and double that when the state's federal supply of doses increases, Pritzker said.

"Widespread vaccination sites will allow us to quickly and efficiently get these life-saving doses to Illinoisans as more federal shipments of vaccine come online," Pritzker said.

The Tinley Park location is the first of at least five larger vaccination sites opening across suburban Cook County in the coming days and weeks, Preckwinkle said.

It will be the seventh new vaccination site set up in Cook County — similar efforts are ramping up in regions all across the state, with approximately 25 more National Guard teams set to launch in the next few weeks to help vaccinate the state's residents, Pritzker said.

Monday marks the start of Illinois' Phase 1B of COVID-19 vaccinations, which broadly includes those 65 and over and those classified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as frontline essential workers — including teachers, first responders and grocery workers.

Israel Rocha Jr., the CEO of Cook County Health, urged patience as the county, and the state, works to distribute vaccines.

"Every single individual who wants a vaccine can get a vaccine, and we are committed to being your partner in that effort," Rocha said. "If ever there was a phrase 'this is a marathon, and not a sprint' that is today. We are anxious to vaccinate all the people that are able to receive the shot, but patience is needed as the federal government works up to ramp up production."

Rocha said the county's Department of Public Health has distributed vaccines to more than 90 other locations throughout suburban Cook County, including to Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, Mariano's, as well as other hospitals and federally qualified health centers,

Preckwinkle joined the governor in celebrating the county's major development in vaccination efforts as it plans to continue Phase 1A and begin Phase 1B. She said while the current supply doesn't meet the demand, the county is setting up large scale sites to "ensure that we're ready as vaccine continues to be distributed in Cook County, in partnership with the state of Illinois.

"We stand ready to contribute to [President Joe Biden's] goal of vaccinating 100 million people in the first 100 days," Preckwinkle said.

Pritzker said he's had "numerous conversations" with members of Biden's administration about when Illinois may see an increase in the vaccine supply, but the governor said he has not been told when that will occur.

Those who fit the 1B criteria will be able to sign up for an appointment at the county's [site](#) starting Monday at noon and learn more about the vaccine and where they can get it on the [state's website](#).

A hotline also has been set up to help people schedule a vaccine appointment, at 833-308-1988, Preckwinkle said.



# First Mass COVID-19 Vaccination Site Opens In Tinley Park

January 25, 2021

Lorraine Swanson

The [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) opened the first of five mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County at the [Tinley Park Convention Center](#), 18451 Convention Center Drive. The county's website and toll-free number are now up and running where residents age 65 and older, as well as first responders and essential workers, such as teachers and grocery store workers, can make an appointment to receive the vaccine.

Residents in the 1b category can jump on the [Community Vaccination Program website](#) to see if they qualify to receive the vaccine at this time, make an appointment, get information and register for future notifications when the vaccine becomes available for other population groups.

Over 3.2 million Illinoisans are [eligible for Phase 1B](#) of vaccine distribution. Eligible residents, including everyone over age 65 and frontline essential workers, will be able to receive a vaccine at one of the Illinois National Guard assisted sites, at a site operated by a local health department, or at a partner pharmacy.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other elected officials toured the mass vaccination site in the convention center on Monday morning. Shots will be administered by the [Illinois National Guard](#). About 9,000 vaccines will be dispensed weekly, and up to 18,000 doses per week once the federal government ramps up vaccine distribution.

The governor said about three-quarter of a million doses have been administered so far in Illinois, with only about 120,000 first doses arriving this week in Illinois outside of Chicago. Due to the limited supply, vaccinations are being given by appointment only, with more slots being added each week as more vaccine becomes available.

Every state in the nation is experiencing this same shortage, Pritzker said. "It's another example of the Trump Administration's tragic incompetence that they didn't invoke the defense production act and didn't order more vaccine from the manufacturers."

Pritzker added that his team has had conversations with the Biden Administration and the new president had "already taken steps to expand vaccine manufacturing. In the meantime Illinois has already taken steps necessary to be ready with sites like Tinley Park to vaccinate more as expanded shipments arrive."

Over 600,000 residents in suburban Cook County are eligible for the vaccine in Phase 1B. Preckwinkle asked for residents' patience because the county does not have an adequate supply to vaccinate everyone immediately.

"While we're excited to be taking these steps I want to make sure that we set clear expectations at this moment, not just here but across the country," Preckwinkle said, "Demand is heavily outweighing our supply of the vaccines."

As the federal supply of vaccines increases and Illinois receives more vaccines, the state will launch walk-in locations and expand sites to additional providers like doctor's offices and urgent care clinics. More information about those locations will be released in the coming weeks.

Walgreens, Jewel-Osco and Walmart pharmacies are already making appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine for eligible residents. Illinois residents can search by city name or Zip Code on the Illinois Department of Public Health [to find a vaccine location near them](#).

CVS, Hy-Vee, Mariano's and Kroger stores are also in sync to start administering the vaccine when more supplies are available.

There is also a toll-free hotline residents can call to receive vaccine information or to make an appointment, at 833-308-1988, which will be staffed 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. Residents are asked to help older family members or neighbors who may not be tech-savvy get signed up.

## COVID Vaccine Appointment Registration Website, Call Center Go Live For Suburban Cook

January 25, 2021

Tom Robb

Top state and Cook County officials provided an update on how the registration process for COVID-19 vaccines would roll out through an online registration portal and telephone hotline Monday.

A new website was to be launched allowing individuals qualified to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the Phase 1B group in suburban Cook County to register to receive the vaccination, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and others at the press briefing said.

Appointments, which must be made to secure a vaccination are being made through a website ([vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](http://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov)) and through a call center at 833-308-1988. The website and call center went live at noon Monday. The call center would be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

If appointments are not available, those registering through the system would receive emails when new appointments are available.

Those not in the 1B group may also register through the website and call center, and would be notified when appointments for vaccinations become available, Cook County Health Chief Executive Officer Israel Rocha said.

The Phase 1B group includes those over 65 and frontline essential workers including teachers, first responders not already vaccinated as Phase 1A frontline medical workers, workers in food and agriculture, manufacturing, corrections and inmates, United States Postal Service workers, public transit, grocery store workers, and staff at shelters and day cares, according to the Illinois Dept. of Health.

Although 3.2 million people across Illinois and 600,000 people in suburban Cook County aged 65 and older along with frontline essential workers are eligible for the vaccination in the 1B group, Gov. JB Pritzker said the state is set to receive 120,000 doses of the vaccine, outside Chicago, this week.

Pritzker said he has been in regular contact with officials managing the COVID-19 vaccine supply for the Biden Administration. He said Biden Administration officials found no plans for vaccine distribution when they took over. Pritzker said all states are facing vaccine shortages, which he blamed on former president Donald Trump's "incompetence."

Preckwinkle said six mass vaccination centers are planned and said more would be established with the assistance of the Illinois National Guard as more supply of the vaccine comes in.

The Journal learned the Cook County Health Community Health Center in Arlington Heights, New Arena (formerly Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates), along with selected Walgreens, CVS, Jewel-Osco and Mariano's stores and "mobile strike team" sites would be vaccination sites.

Several sources have said discussions are ongoing with area high school districts to have high schools serve as possible vaccination centers, including Maine East High School in Park Ridge. High schools or other specific locations were not discussed in the briefing.



# IL reports 2,944 new cases, 49 deaths as vaccination Phase 1B begins

January 25, 2021

ABC 7 Chicago

Illinois health officials reported 2,944 new COVID-19 cases and 49 deaths Monday as the state entered Phase 1B of the vaccination plan.

With Illinois now in Phase 1B, people over 65 and many essential workers are now eligible to get the vaccine. That includes approximately an additional 3.2 million people.

The Illinois National Guard will be assisting with vaccinations at Cook County Health Centers in half a dozen suburbs. There are more deployments planned throughout the state.

Officials said that beginning Monday, those guard-supported sites will take 1B appointments as will pharmacies at hundreds of Walgreens, CVS and Jewel locations.

Walgreens is providing vaccines at 92 sites across the state and appointments can be made on [their website](#) while Jewel-Osco will begin vaccinating eligible residents Tuesday, with appointments available [on their website](#).

Governor JB Pritzker said there are plans to launch walk-in locations once the supply of vaccine increases.

On Monday, Governor Pritzker and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle toured the Tinley Park Convention Center, which is preparing to become a mass vaccination site.

Governor Pritzker announced the creation of a new portal, [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov), to provide the latest information on vaccines.

"Today, as we launch the newest phase of our Vaccine Administration Plan for frontline essential workers and those 65 and over, I'm proud to announce our statewide vaccination site locator, searchable by zip code and city, at [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov)," said Governor JB Pritzker. "This site will serve as a hub of all vaccine-related information, directing residents to the appointment booking homepages of our 97 local health departments and our pharmacy partners, which will total hundreds of locations statewide. That also includes information on our first Illinois National Guard mass vaccination site, opening tomorrow at Tinley Park Convention Center, and will be updated as more state-run sites and hundreds of additional local options come online. As federal supply is currently limited and every state in the nation is facing a shortage, I urge all eligible Illinoisans to check back regularly for available appointments - and in the meantime, mask up, keep our distance, wash our hands, and remember we'll stay healthy and safe if we look out for each other."

Illinois is now reporting eight more cases of the new, potentially more contagious COVID-19 variant first identified in the United Kingdom. Before now, there was just one case confirmed here. All nine of these cases are within Cook County.

The total number of cases in Illinois now stands at 1,104,763, with a total of 18,798 deaths, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the past 24 hours, laboratories have reported 74,202 specimens for a total of 15,484,034.

As of Sunday night, 2,962 patients in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 601 patients were in the ICU and 302 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators.

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from Jan. 18-24 is 5.8%.

The test positivity rate is a metric the state began providing in late October. It is calculated by using the total number of positive tests over the total number of tests. This is the metric being used to by state health officials to make decisions about mitigations.

A total of 1,112,725 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago, with an additional 550,050 doses allocated to federal government partners for long-term care facilities, bringing the total number delivered in Illinois to 1,662,775.

IDPH reports that a total of 692,763 vaccine doses, including 110,403 at long-term facilities. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered is 28,171.

The IDPH says that vaccine distribution numbers are reported in real-time and vaccine administration numbers lag by as much as 72 hours.

The deaths reported Monday include:

- Boone County: 1 male 60s
- Coles County: 1 male 70s
- Cook County: 1 male 40s, 2 males 50s, 3 females 60s, 2 males 60s, 2 females 70s, 2 females 80s, 2 males 80s, 1 female 90s, 3 males 90s
- DeKalb County: 1 female 80s
- DuPage County: 1 male 60s, 2 females 70s, 1 male 70s, 1 male 90s
- Fulton County: 1 male 80s
- Henry County: 1 male 90s
- Kane County: 1 female 50s, 1 male 50s, 1 male 70s, 1 female 80s, 1 male 80s
- Lake County: 2 males 50s, 1 female 60s
- Macoupin County: 1 female 80s
- Madison County: 1 female 60s, 1 female 90s
- McHenry County: 1 female 60s, 1 male 70s
- McLean County: 1 female 70s
- Peoria County: 1 male 60s
- Randolph County: 1 male 70s
- Sangamon County: 1 male 60s
- St. Clair County: 1 female 80s
- Tazewell County: 1 female 90s
- Will County: 1 male 80s
- Winnebago County: 1 male 90s

# Cook County opens COVID-19 vaccination appointment scheduling signup

*Daily Herald*

*January 25, 2021*

Signup for COVID-19 vaccinations in suburban Cook County began today at <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov/sign-up>.

The website went live this afternoon with some appointment slots available.

Health officials warn of short supply.

"Cook County is currently in Phase 1b which includes individuals 65 and over and front line essential workers. Vaccine supply is extremely limited at this time. Please be patient," a notice on the website says.



# How to schedule your COVID-19 vaccination appointment

*WGN 9 Chicago  
January 25, 2021*

A new state run COVID-19 vaccination site will open at the Tinley Park Covention Center on Tuesday.

More than two million Illinois residents are now eligible for the vaccine, that includes anyone over the age of 65, plus frontline essential workers in grocery stores and schools.

In Chicago, the city will send more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to 15 neighborhoods, including Englewood, Austin and Little Village.

Community groups will also go door-to-door helping older and high-risk residents sign up.

Walgreens, Jewel, Walmart and suburban Cook County are all scheduling vaccine appointments for eligible recipients.

The state also launched a website to help find a vaccination station near you.

Vaccination sign-up:

**Walgreens:** [walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19](https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19)

**Jewel:** [mhealthappointments.com/covidappt](https://mhealthappointments.com/covidappt)

**State website:** [coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location)

Click [here](#) for more information

# **Tinley Park Convention Center COVID vaccine site opens Tuesday**

*January 25, 2021*

*Yahoo! News (website shows video from 1/25 press conference with Governor Pritzker)*

The Tinley Park Convention Center will open as Cook County's first large scale COVID-19 vaccine site on Tuesday.

# Tinley Park Convention Center COVID vaccine site opens Tuesday

*Inter News Cast  
January 25, 2021*

The Tinley Park Convention Center will be the first large scale COVID-19 vaccination site to open in Cook County, opening Tuesday.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Gov. JB Pritzker announced the site at a press conference Monday. Staffing at the mass vaccination site will be helped by the Illinois National Guard, and Preckwinkle herself got the first shot.

All vaccinations at the Tinley Park and other Cook County sites will be available by appointment only. If you are included in Phase 1A or 1B of Illinois' vaccination plan, you can [schedule an appointment by visiting the Cook County COVID-19 Community Vaccination Program website](#). You can also use that website to sign up for updates from Cook County about vaccination updates and scheduling future appointments.

"In order to make sure we don't have people interrupting their days when there is not the guarantee of an appointment, the website will only reflect appointments where a vaccine is guaranteed," said Israel Rocha, Jr., CEO of Cook County Health.

If you do not have internet access, you can call 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information and to schedule an appointment if you are eligible.

County officials said they will be able to give as many as 3,000 vaccines per day when the Tinley Park site is fully optimized and enough vaccine is available. To start, they're expecting to give around 9,000 vaccines per week.

"While current vaccine supply does not meet the demand, we are standing up large scale sites now to ensure we are ready as vaccine continues to be distributed to Cook County," Preckwinkle said.

Cook County is hoping to open five more large scale vaccination sites across the Chicago suburbs pending vaccine availability.

Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, CVS, Mariano's and Kroger will also be offering appointments for Phase 1B vaccination. You can visit [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov) and select "Vaccine Eligibility" from the menu at the top of the page to determine if you are able to get vaccinated at this time.

Supply, however, is expected to remain the biggest problem.

"By our estimate, over 600,000 suburban individuals are eligible for Phase 1B," Preckwinkle said. "We do not have adequate vaccine supply to vaccinate everyone immediately."

And while around 750,000 people have been vaccinated in Illinois so far, there are hundreds of thousands of doses still in storage and out of reach, a source of frustration as distribution to long-term care facilities has not gone as planned.

“All vaccinations that are necessary for that entire group have been taken out already of our allotment, and they sit on shelves because the federal pharmacy partnership is so slow at the job,” said Gov. JB Pritzker.

County officials also reminded residents to remain patient, as Phase 1B vaccination is expected to take some time and is contingent on availability of vaccine.

Phase 1B includes people aged 65 and over and front line essential workers.

# IL set to enter new phase of COVID-19 vaccination Monday

January 25, 2021  
Chicago Crusader

People 65 and older and many essential workers became newly eligible to receive the vaccine when the state moved into Phase 1B of the vaccination plan Monday.

Illinois health officials reported 3,292 new COVID-19 cases and 40 deaths Sunday.

Illinois is set to enter the next vaccination phase beginning Monday.

As of Saturday night, 1,112,725 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago, with an additional 524,050 doses allocated to federal government partners for long-term care facilities, bringing the total number delivered in Illinois to 1,636,775.

The IDPH says that vaccine distribution numbers are reported in real-time and vaccine administration numbers lag by as much as 72 hours.

The Illinois National Guard will be assisting with vaccinations at Cook County Health Centers in half a dozen suburbs.

There are more deployments planned throughout the state.

Saturday the state announced Chicago and Cook County have dropped to Tier 1 mitigations, meaning restaurants and bars will be able to reopen for limited indoor dining.

IDPH reports that a total of 657,820 vaccine doses, including 106,274 at long-term facilities. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered is 26,666.

“Over the next three weeks, approximately 25 additional National Guard vaccination teams are deploying to more sites in high need areas all across the state,” Gov. JB Pritzker said Friday.

Officials said that beginning Monday, those guard-supported sites will take 1B appointments as will pharmacies at hundreds of Walgreens, CVS and Jewel locations.

Mariano’s, Kroger, and Hy-Vee will also take vaccine appointments beginning on February 1.

Gov. JB Pritzker said there are plans to launch walk-in locations once the supply of vaccine increases.

Pritzker said he was pleased with the state’s progress against the pandemic, but frustrated by the lack of available vaccine.

To make it easier for people to find out where they can go to get vaccinated, the state is setting up an online portal.

Due to the shortage of the vaccine, shots will be given by appointment only.

“People will be able to go to a website that will get them to either their local public health department or to a pharmacy where they can sign up for an appointment,” Pritzker said.

Within the past 24 hours, laboratories have reported 125,831 specimens for a total 15,209,516.

As of Saturday night, 2,994 patients in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 617 patients were in the ICU and 321 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators.

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 17-23, 2021 is 6.0%.

The test positivity rate is a metric the state began providing in late October. It is calculated by using the total number of positive tests over the total number of tests. This is the metric being used to by state health officials to make decisions about mitigations.

With the positivity rate at mid-October levels, the governor announced all Illinois health regions have now exited Tier 3 mitigations. And while many businesses will be allowed to partially reopen in their new tiers, hospitality industry experts think it may already be too late. The Illinois Restaurant Association estimates 20 percent of restaurants will not survive the pandemic; 5,000 could close, eliminating 120,000 jobs.

Metro East Region 4 also moved to Tier 2 Friday, bringing all Illinois regions out of Tier 3 mitigations, according to IDPH. Region 4 includes, Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair, and Washington counties.

All high school sports can now take place in regions that are in Phase 4 of the “Reopen Illinois” plan, which currently includes regions 3, 5 and 6 – all of which are downstate.

None of the Chicago-area regions currently fall in that category, which means competitions in high-risk sports like basketball, football and wrestling still cannot take place here.

“With all regions of Illinois now out of Tier 3, we can now see that the entire state is headed down the right path,” IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said. “During the summer, we were on this same path. We know that we must continue to take precautions and be smart about how we relax some of the mitigation measures, which are in place to protect our health and safety.”

You can see [a map of the Restore Illinois regions here](#) and the [differences between Illinois’ COVID-19 mitigation tiers](#) here.

The deaths reported Sunday include:

Clinton County: 1 male 70s

Cook County: 1 female 40s, 1 male 50s, 1 female 60s, 2 males 60s, 3 females 70s, 6 males 70s, 2 females 80s, 2 males 80s, 2 females 90s

DeKalb County: 1 male 70s

Dewitt County: 1 male 90s

DuPage County: 1 female 100+

Effingham County: 1 male 70s

Jefferson County: 1 female 70s

Knox County: 1 male 70s

Lake County: 1 male 50s, 1 female 70s

Logan County: 1 female 70s, 1 female 90s

Macon County: 1 female 80s

Madison County: 1 female 50s, 1 male 60s

McHenry County: 1 female 70s, 1 male 70s

McLean County: 1 male 70s

Stephenson County: 1 male 50s

Will County: 1 male 60s

Winnebago County: 1 male 80s



## New COVID vaccine portal

*Pure Oldies 107.5 FM*

*January 25, 2021*

Gov Pritzker bragged a little Monday when he helped open a new COVID vaccination site in Tinley Park, and a doctor talked up the need for everyone to get the vaccine when they can.

“People who have received both doses are considered to have achieved full protection after two weeks from the second one,” said Dr. Whitney Lyn of Cook County Health. “The more people who get vaccinated, the more people who are protected. The more people who are protected, the sooner we can resume normalcy.”

Said Pritzker, “Our statewide vaccine locator is searchable by both ZIP code and city. You will also find a guide as to who qualifies for vaccines in this new phase 1B. Broadly, that includes those 65 and over and those classified by the CDC as frontline essential workers, such as teachers, first responders, and grocery workers.”

# More now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine, but when can they get it?

Jake Griffin

January 25, 2021

New ways to get access to COVID-19 vaccination opened Monday for people 65 and older and essential workers in the suburbs, but slots filled quickly amid continued vaccine shortages.

As those eligible for immunization broadened to 3.2 million Illinoisans -- one quarter of the state's population -- federal data show available vaccine doses and distribution are lagging behind other states.

Illinois has administered 49% of the vaccine doses providers have received, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State records differ and paint an even less efficient picture, showing less than 42% of the doses received have been injected so far.

Some in the suburbs were able to sign up for future vaccinations on Monday, the day Gov. J.B. Pritzker had designated for the beginning of Phase 1B for inoculating those 65 and older and essential workers, a broad category that includes many people who are unable to work from home.

A new Cook County scheduling portal allowed some people to schedule vaccines [at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov) or by calling the Cook County Public Health Department at (833) 308-1988. Eligible Cook County residents vied for slots at 13 vaccination sites, including one at 3250 N. Arlington Heights Road in Arlington Heights.

Elsewhere in the suburbs, pharmacies and health care providers had begun Phase 1B vaccinations in some areas and public health departments planned to do so in coming days or weeks.

Illinois vaccine providers have administered the sixth-most doses of any state in the country, according to CDC figures, but Illinois' vaccination rate of 5,517 doses per 100,000 residents is better than only 10 other states.

Pritzker blamed the vaccination scheduling difficulty on a lack of vaccine doses provided by the federal government. During the unveiling of a large-scale vaccination site staffed by Illinois National Guard troops and operated by the Cook County Department of Public Health Monday at the Tinley Park Convention Center, Pritzker said Illinois is not the only state struggling.

"Every state in the nation is experiencing this same shortage," he said. "But we have a new president now, and he's already taken steps to expand vaccine manufacturing, and in the meantime Illinois has taken the steps necessary to be ready with sites like Tinley Park to vaccinate as soon as those expanded shipments arrive."

Pritzker complained the state's low vaccination rate stemmed from an "exceedingly slow" rollout of vaccinations at roughly 1,700 long-term care facilities. National pharmacy chains like Walgreens and CVS were contracted by the federal government to perform inoculations of residents and workers at those facilities.

According to state records, the pharmacies have received roughly one-third of the state's vaccine doses and administered just 20% of those.

"All these vaccinations sit on shelves because that partnership is so slow at the job," Pritzker complained.

CVS Chief Medical Officer Dr. Troy Brennan [appeared on CNN Monday to dispute claims](#) made by governors in several states.

Brennan said all residents and workers willing to be vaccinated at the 7,822 skilled nursing facilities under contract with CVS throughout the country -- including 301 in suburban Chicago and downstate Illinois -- have had their first doses of the vaccine. Nationally, 36% have received a second dose to be fully vaccinated, he said. Brennan expects all skilled nursing facilities to be fully vaccinated by mid-February. The company has moved on to providing vaccines at assisted living centers and other long-term care facilities, including some where they were told by state officials to begin vaccinating on Monday, like Illinois, he said.

"We basically identified what the schedule was and we've kept to that schedule," Brennan said. "We're certainly not withholding and we're certainly not wasting any vaccine."

However, officials in the governor's office said CVS could have started vaccinating in such facilities and that Monday wasn't a start date, but rather the last day the process could have been started.

Brennan said pharmacies were given vaccine doses based on head counts provided by the states at the facilities that turned out to be largely inflated. Another reason pharmacies had a large unused supply, he suggested, was because he estimated roughly 40% of workers at long-term care facilities passed on being inoculated at their first opportunity. Many, Brennan said, have reconsidered and begun the two-dose vaccination process.

Any excess doses, he said, will be turned over to the state to be used at vaccination sites like the one just opened in Tinley Park Convention Center, where scores of Illinois National Guard troops were getting instructions Monday on how to process residents with appointments.

Those vaccinations are expected to start at 8 a.m. Tuesday. Cook County health officials were steadfast in noting that vaccinations will only be given to those with appointments and only a certain number of appointments will be set each day, based on the supply of the vaccine available.

The convention center site is one of seven now open in Cook County and operating in conjunction with teams of National Guard troops. Other sites are county run health clinics in Arlington Heights, Ford Heights, Blue Island, Cicero, North Riverside and Robbins. A full list of [vaccination sites throughout the state is available at coronavirus.illinois.gov](#).

Health officials in other suburban counties say it could be weeks before vaccines are available for Phase 1B as they finish vaccinating health care workers. Health department officials in both Lake and Will counties said they won't be vaccinating Phase 1B residents for a week or more. In DuPage County, the health department is focusing on the first wave of eligible residents, but noted other vaccine providers like hospitals and pharmacies have started vaccinating in Phase 1B.

McHenry County Health Department officials announced some Jewel-Osco pharmacies in the county are scheduling vaccine appointments for county residents 65 and older who register through [the county agency's website at mchenrycountyil.gov](#).

Meanwhile, state health officials on Monday announced 49 more Illinois residents have died from COVID-19, while another 2,944 new cases were diagnosed.

That brings the state's death toll from the virus to 18,798, with 1,104,763 who have now been infected since the outbreak began just over a year ago.

Illinois Department of Public Health officials said 11,290 more doses of the vaccine were administered Sunday, bringing the total number of vaccines administered in the state to 692,763 since mid-December. Vaccine providers throughout the state are averaging 28,171 doses administered a day, over a seven-day period. The state's vaccine providers are averaged 82,342 new doses of the vaccine during the same time period.

Hospitals throughout the state reported 2,962 COVID-19 patients being treated Sunday. Of those hospitalized, 601 were in intensive care.

IDPH also announced the state's seven-day average case positivity rate is at 4.7%. Case positivity allows health officials to see the level of infection in a specific population group. A seven-day average is used to smooth out any daily anomalies in the reporting of new cases and test results.



# COVID-19 Vaccines: All About Phase 1B and How to Get Dose in Illinois

January 25, 2021  
Telemundo Chicago

Illinois and Chicago have entered the next phase of their vaccine implementation, called Phase 1B, increasing the eligibility of millions of residents.

Phase 1B opens vaccines to people 65 and older, as well as "essential front-line workers," including first responders, education workers such as teachers and support staff, child care workers, supermarket employees, postal service workers and more.

There are a number of ways that eligible residents will be able to get vaccinated, but state officials have urged patience as the new phase opens.

Who will be included in Phase 1B:

Residents 65 and over.

Essential Frontline Workers, which means "residents who are at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 because of their job duties, often because they are unable to work from home and / or must work closely with others without being able to socially distance themselves" .

This includes:

**First Responders:** Firefighters, Law Enforcement, 911 Workers, Security Personnel, School Officials.

**Education:** Teachers, principals, student support, student aid, daycare worker.

**Food and agriculture:** processing, plants, veterinary health, livestock services, animal care.

**Manufacturing:** industrial production of goods for retail distribution, wholesale or other manufactures.

**Correctional Workers and Inmates:** Jail Officers, Juvenile Facilities Staff, In-Person Support Workers, Inmates.

**USPS workers**

**Public transportation workers:** flight crew, bus drivers, train drivers, taxi drivers, paratransit drivers, in-person support, ride-sharing services.

**Grocery Store Workers:** Packers, Cashiers, Warehouses, Pickup, Customer Service.

**Shelters and daycare staff :** homeless shelter, women's shelter, adult day / walk-in program, sheltered workshop, psychosocial rehabilitation.

**NOTE:** For a map of vaccination locations across the state, you can **click here**.

Beginning Monday, sites run by the National Guard will vaccinate residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as sites at [Jewel Osco](#) and [Walgreens](#) , Illinois Governor JB Pritzker said, noting that CVS is expected to "continue soon".

By February 1, other pharmacies, including Hy-Vee, Mariano's and Kroger, will also start vaccines, Pritzker noted.

To make an appointment through a state immunization site, [click here](#) . For a map of vaccination locations across the state or to find a site near you, **click here** .

**Note:** Those who schedule an appointment through these sites will need

You may be required to provide proof of employment as a health care staff by using an employee ID, a recent letter from your employer, or a recent pay stub. If you are not eligible at this stage, your vaccination appointment will be declined.

For more information on how those eligible in Phase 1b can get an appointment through **Walgreens** , [click here](#).

**Note:** those who make an appointment will need

An appointment confirmation email.

A COVID-19 vaccination authorization form with your registration code (if applicable).

State ID, valid driver's license, or other government-issued ID.

Work ID or other document to show proof of employment (for healthcare workers, frontline and essential workers only).

Insurance card for medical and / or pharmaceutical benefits.

Download, print and complete the [vaccination consent form](#) . If you do not bring the complete form, you must complete it at the pharmacy before your vaccination.

For more information on how those eligible in Phase 1b can get an appointment through **Jewel-Osco** , [click here](#) .

**Note:** those who make an appointment will need

Proof of employment (credential, pay stub, uniform, etc.)

Medical license (if applicable)

Driver's license

Health insurance and prescription cards

The last 4 digits of the Social Security number

Additional vaccination sites will be established throughout the state, including hundreds of additional pharmacy providers that will connect online through a partnership with the Illinois Department of Public Health, according to the state's website.

The Illinois National Guard is deploying teams to sites in Cook County, as well as to sites in St. Clair County, before further deployments statewide.

For information on where to get vaccinated in each county, here is a list of Chicago area county information sites

**Cook County:** A website is launched at noon Monday for residents to receive information and schedule appointments as they become available. Right [click here](#) <sup>i</sup> for more information. A call center will also be operational at noon at (833) 308-1988.

**DeKalb County:** For the latest information and updates, [click here](#) . To sign up for notifications, [click here](#).

**DuPage County** - For the latest information and updates, sign up for alerts on when you can get an [appointment here](#).

**Grundy County:** For those in Phases 1A and 1B, a survey is required to declare interest in getting vaccinated. [Click here](#) for the Phase 1b **survey** and [here](#) for the Phase 1a **survey** .

**Kankakee County:** To register for the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes publicly available, complete the Kankakee County Health Department survey [here](#) .

After completing the survey, the health department says it will contact you when it is your turn to get vaccinated and to schedule your vaccination appointment. "As we progress through each new phase, KCHD staff will contact all eligible in that phase to provide instructions on how to schedule the vaccine."

**Kane County:** For the latest information and updates, [click here](#) . To sign up for the latest updates from the county, [click here](#) .

**Kendall County:** For the latest information and updates, [click here](#) .

Also, those who want to take a survey to find out more can click on the following links:

To obtain: [Covid-19 vaccine recipient administration record](#)

To: [1st COVID-19 Vaccine Survey](#)

Ppara: [1B COVID-19 Vaccine Survey](#)

**Lake County:** This county has launched what it calls the [Lake County AllVax](#) portal . Ask residents to sign up and health officials will notify you when it's time to schedule your appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine. "You will only receive an email to schedule when you are eligible and the Health Department has vaccinations and appointments available for you," the county website states. **Click here** for more information .

**LaSalle County:** Healthcare workers in Phase 1A can **register here**. A Phase 1B notification log is also available here. "Only people who work or live in LaSalle County can get the vaccine through LaSalle County," the [county website](#) states .

**McHenry County:** [Phase 1B](#) registration form [available here](#) . Registration for Phase 1a is also available here. Residents can also sign up to receive electronic notifications or other information [here](#) .

**Will County:** Residents of this county are asked to fill out a [registration form here](#) . Once enrolled, residents will be notified when they can schedule an appointment. For additional information, **click here**.

Why can't I get an appointment?

Pritzker said last week that while Illinois is moving into the new phase, there will be limitations based on the amount of vaccine the state receives.

"However, this does not mean that you will be able to get vaccinated immediately as easily as you will get a flu shot," Pritzker said. "Because federal vaccine production was hampered by the previous administration's failure to properly invoke the Defense Production Act, the supply of vaccines is still limited nationwide. Additional vaccines are in the works that could soon get FDA approval, and that will help. But there are 3.2 million Illinoisans in Phase 1B, so there will be much more demand than supply in the short term - to put that in perspective, we expect about 126,000 firsts to arrive. doses next week outside of Chicago. That's less than 4% of population 1B. Until vaccine supply improves,

Pritzker said the state is working to build capacity and expects to see an increase in doses in the coming weeks.

What about Chicago vaccines?

In Chicago, also moving into Phase 1B, the city's chief physician said there are four ways residents will be able to get vaccinated.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said options include through a medical system or healthcare provider, through pharmacies, through a dedicated vaccination location such as checkpoints. dispensing sites, or through an employer.

Officials in Chicago say the best way to get updates on the release of vaccination is through "[Chi COVID Coach](#)", a platform that the Department of Public Health in Chicago is using to monitor symptoms, providing information on testing in town and help you get the latest details on the city's vaccination plan, including notification of when you can register to receive your vaccination.

**You can sign up for Chi COVID Coach here.**

While anyone who qualifies for the vaccine in the next phase is eligible to receive it, Chicago Phase 1B aims to prioritize certain populations, Arwady said.

For those who receive the vaccine through the city, there will be a prioritization for those most at risk and to help "lower the barriers," Arwady said.

At the beginning of Phase 1B, the city plans to direct the vaccine to correctional facilities and first responders.

In February, depending on vaccine availability, the city will move to making vaccines available to employers of workers in grocery stores, and in manufacturing and factory settings.

After that, in late February, the city plans to direct the vaccine to employers of daycare workers and educators.

Heading into March, again depending on the availability of vaccines, vaccines are expanded to employers of public transportation workers, farm workers, government workers, postal workers and more.

Although Illinois has not yet determined dates for future phases of the vaccine, Chicago officials said Phase 1C could arrive in late March and Phase 2, which includes all residents over the age of 16, could begin the May 31.



# Tinley Park Convention Center COVID vaccine site is Cook County's 1st large scale operation

*Michelle Gallardo and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team*

*January 25, 2021*

<https://abc7chicago.com/10006118/>

TINLEY PARK, Ill. (WLS) -- The Tinley Park Convention Center will be the first large scale COVID-19 vaccination site to open in Cook County, opening Tuesday.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Gov. JB Pritzker announced the site at a press conference Monday. Staffing at the mass vaccination site will be helped by the Illinois National Guard, and Preckwinkle herself got the first shot.

All vaccinations at the Tinley Park and other Cook County sites will be available by appointment only. If you are included in Phase 1A or 1B of Illinois' vaccination plan, you can [schedule an appointment by visiting the Cook County COVID-19 Community Vaccination Program website](#). You can also use that website to sign up for updates from Cook County about vaccination updates and scheduling future appointments.

"In order to make sure we don't have people interrupting their days when there is not the guarantee of an appointment, the website will only reflect appointments where a vaccine is guaranteed," said Israel Rocha, Jr., CEO of Cook County Health.

If you do not have internet access, you can call 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information and to schedule an appointment if you are eligible.

County officials said they will be able to give as many as 3,000 vaccines per day when the Tinley Park site is fully optimized and enough vaccine is available. To start, they're expecting to give around 9,000 vaccines per week.

"While current vaccine supply does not meet the demand, we are standing up large scale sites now to ensure we are ready as vaccine continues to be distributed to Cook County," Preckwinkle said.

Cook County is hoping to open five more large scale vaccination sites across the Chicago suburbs pending vaccine availability.

Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, CVS, Mariano's and Kroger will also be offering appointments for Phase 1B vaccination. You can visit [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov) and select "Vaccine Eligibility" from the menu at the top of the page to determine if you are able to get vaccinated at this time.

Supply, however, is expected to remain the biggest problem.

"By our estimate, over 600,000 suburban individuals are eligible for Phase 1B," Preckwinkle said. "We do not have adequate vaccine supply to vaccinate everyone immediately."

And while around 750,000 people have been vaccinated in Illinois so far, there are hundreds of thousands of doses still in storage and out of reach, a source of frustration as distribution to long-term care facilities has not gone as planned.

"All vaccinations that are necessary for that entire group have been taken out already of our allotment, and they sit on shelves because the federal pharmacy partnership is so slow at the job," said Gov. JB Pritzker.

County officials also reminded residents to remain patient, as Phase 1B vaccination is expected to take some time and is contingent on availability of vaccine.

Phase 1B includes people aged 65 and over and front line essential workers.



Fase 1B de vacunación: habilitan el Tinley Park Convention Center como centro de inmunización masiva

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wgbo/fase-1b-de-vacunacion-habilitan-el-tinley-park-convention-center-como-centro-de-inmunizacion-masiva-video>

La mañana de este lunes, el gobernador de Illinois, JB Pritzker, acompañado de varios funcionarios electos, dio un recorrido por las instalaciones. El mandatario estatal dio a conocer en este lugar la página de internet que se ha puesto a disposición para que miembros de la comunidad que son elegibles puedan inscribirse para ser inmunizados.

# Social Media Dashboard



## Insights and Activity Report

November 24, 2020 – January 25, 2021



COOK COUNTY  
HEALTH

# Social Media Summary

## November 2020 – January 2021 Activity

During November 24 – January 25, the communications team posted content on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn for Cook County Health.

Posts included content such as COVID-19, interviews with local media, recognition for physicians and the hospital and health tips.

**Facebook: 46 posts**

<https://www.facebook.com/Cookcountyhhs/>

**Instagram – 27 posts (*does NOT include stories*)**

<https://www.instagram.com/cookcountyhealth/>

**Twitter – 55 (*includes retweets*)**

<https://twitter.com/CookCtyHealth>

**LinkedIn – 16 posts**

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cook-county-health/>

# Social Media Insights

As of January 26

## Twitter (60-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **61.3K**
- Profile visits: **4,529**
- Mentions: **281**
- Followers: **3,477** (up **227**)

## LinkedIn (60-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **38K** (up **37%**)
- Unique visitors: **1,169** (up **119%**)
- Followers: **6,129** (up **366**)

## Facebook (60-Day Summary)

- Post reach: **50.2K**
- Page views: **2,749**
- Page likes: **4,906** (up **185**)
- Page followers: **6,489** (up **553**)

## Instagram (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **7,813**
- Reach: **1,309**
- Profile visits: **566**
- Followers: **2,211** (up **145**)

# Top Social Media Posts

November 24, 2020 –  
January 25, 2021



COOK COUNTY  
HEALTH

# Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

## Post Performance

- Reach: **6.0K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **419**
- Clicks: **1070**

**Cook County Health** ✓  
Published by CM Cchhs [?] · ★ Favorites · December 17, 2020 · 🌐

Today, Cook County Health began administering the COVID-19 vaccine to our employees. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. were on hand to watch these dedicated workers, who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, receive their vaccinations.

Tracy Everett, an emergency room nurse, was the first CCH employee to be vaccinated. We are grateful to all our staff who have been working tirelessly in this fight.

**Performance for Your Post**

**6,043** People Reached

**419** Reactions, Comments & Shares

<b>266</b> Like	<b>84</b> On Post	<b>182</b> On Shares
<b>74</b> Love	<b>19</b> On Post	<b>55</b> On Shares
<b>1</b> Wow	<b>1</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares
<b>51</b> Comments	<b>6</b> On Post	<b>45</b> On Shares
<b>28</b> Shares	<b>28</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares

**1,070** Post Clicks

<b>180</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>890</b>
------------	----------	------------

# Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

## Post Performance

- Reach: **4.1K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **110**

**Cook County Health** ✓  
Published by CM Cchhs [?] · ★ Favorites · January 13 · 🌐

Today, Dr. Rachel Rubin, CCDPH co-lead, received her second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Dr. Rubin wants residents to know the more people who get vaccinated, the more people who will be immune to COVID-19. The more people who are immune, the less likely it is that you will have close contact with someone who has COVID-19. #covid\_19 #covidvaccine #wellnesswednesday

**Performance for Your Post**

<b>4,105</b> People Reached		
<b>110</b> Reactions, Comments & Shares		
<b>76</b> Like	<b>38</b> On Post	<b>38</b> On Shares
<b>6</b> Love	<b>3</b> On Post	<b>3</b> On Shares
<b>21</b> Comments	<b>3</b> On Post	<b>18</b> On Shares
<b>7</b> Shares	<b>7</b> On Post	<b>0</b> On Shares
<b>141</b> Post Clicks		
<b>4</b> Photo Views	<b>0</b> Link Clicks	<b>137</b> Other Clicks
<b>NEGATIVE FEEDBACK</b>		
<b>1</b> Hide Post	<b>0</b> Hide All Posts	
<b>0</b> Report as Spam	<b>0</b> Unlike Page	

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on post

# Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **1,018**
- Reach: **864**
- Profile visits from post: **27**



 **cookcountyhealth**  

 **cookcountyhealth**  It's another historic day at Cook County Health. A shipment of the COVID-19 vaccine has arrived and staff will shortly begin being vaccinated. Follow us on social media and watch history in the making. #OneCookCounty

5w

 Liked by [cchfoundation](#) and 99 others

DECEMBER 17, 2020

Add a comment... [Post](#)

# Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **1,045**
- Reach: **936**
- Profile visits from post: **22**



 **cookcountyhealth**  

 **cookcountyhealth**  Today, Cook County Health began vaccinating our first employees against COVID-19. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. were on hand to watch these dedicated workers, who have been on the frontlines of the pandemic for months, receive their vaccinations.

Tracy Everett, an emergency room nurse, was the first Cook County Health employee to receive the vaccine. We are grateful to all the staff who have been working tirelessly in this fight.

5w

 Liked by **kevin4cook** and **98 others**

DECEMBER 17, 2020

Add a comment 

# Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **4,608**
- Total engagements: **366**



# Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **17,172**
- Total engagements: **557**

 **Cook County Health**  
@CookCtyHealth

Today, [@IDPH](#) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike received her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at our North Riverside Health Center. Dr. Ezike was joined by Cook County Health leaders and Cook County Board Commissioner Frank Aguilar to encourage others to get vaccinated when eligible.



2:55 PM · Jan 12, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

# Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **7,314**
- Clicks: **986**
- Reactions: **191**



# Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

## Post Performance

- Impressions: **4,488**
- Clicks: **586**
- Reactions: **92**

