



COOK COUNTY HEALTH

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Addendum to slide deck)
March 26, 2021

Recognition

Cook County Health established the ICARE Awards two years ago to recognize employees who demonstrate the characteristics of Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Excellence. CCH announced the 2020 Employees of the Year in January. The Cook County Health Foundation will honor the CCH 2020 ICARE Employees of the Year at today's board meeting.

INTEGRITY: Cook County Health defines integrity as being trustworthy, dependable, and reliable when called upon to deliver a service. This includes fulfilling assigned tasks, communicating openly and honestly, and acting in ways that reflect positively on Cook County Health.

Denise Colletti is an Activities Therapist II at Cermak Mental Health Services. She has been with Cook County Health since 1994. In their nominations, Ms. Colletti's colleagues cited her "relentless dedication to patients and colleagues" and her willingness to "go above and beyond to help". In addition to performing her duties as Activities Therapist, Ms. Colletti has helped patients create murals with positive messages and used her own funds to sew over 2000 face masks with filters and instructions for cleaning. Her colleagues went on to say, "She has done so not for the recognition, but because she truly cares for the well-being of others."

COLLABORATION: Cook County Health defines collaboration as always interacting with coworkers and other departments in a respectful manner and valuing their contributions. This includes cooperating with coworkers and assisting them when help is needed.

Blessing Onuorah is a Clinical Nurse I for Cermak Patient Care Services. She has been with Cook County Health since 2014. In their nominations, Ms. Onuorah's colleagues described her "respectful manner" and her willingness to "take into account the safety of the staff and inmates right from the start." Exemplifying collaboration, Ms. Onuorah's colleagues described her as a teacher, an advocate for safety, and a "critical thinker who is able to help her team swing into action in an emergency." Ms. Onuorah "asks important questions that help improve patient care. She is flexible and willing to help other nurses when the need arises."

ACCOUNTABILITY: Cook County Health defines Accountability as taking ownership over your actions – good or bad. This includes recognizing that you have a role to play in the success of Cook County Health and ensuring that your actions align to the improvement of the patient experience, employee experience, and the attainment of our strategic priorities.

Thomas Liss is a Storekeeper IV in Material Management. He has been with Cook County Health since 2015. In their nominations, Mr. Liss's colleagues described him as "a pleasant person willing to do any work beyond his duties to make smooth work environments." His colleagues stated that Mr. Liss, "not only brings supplies for nurses, he also brings smiles. He is the sunshine on our unit!" Mr. Liss exemplifies accountability with his willingness to help those he serves even when it is difficult. "Nurses don't have to look for rare items. He will run to his department and will find it and provide it if it is available. He is organized, friendly, and will go above and beyond his job all the time."

RESPECT: Cook County Health defines respect as being friendly and polite with gracious consideration toward others. It is recognizing that our actions can directly impact ourselves, our colleagues, our department, the patient experience, and Cook County Health as a whole.

Addie Francher is a Medical Assistant in the Oncology and Dermatology Clinic at Stroger Hospital. She has been with Cook County Health since 2016. In their nominations, Ms. Francher’s colleagues described her as someone who “has always been honest and flexible, with strong moral principles.” They stated that she values “providing care with respect and dignity to patients without compromising her personal integrity.” Ms. Francher exemplifies respect in the way she is able to work with even the most challenging patients. Her colleagues told a heartwarming story of a time Ms. Francher was able to calm an upset patient with empathy and consideration, ultimately gaining the trust of the patient.

EXCELLENCE: Cook County Health defines excellence as aspiring to provide exceptional patient care and customer service through job excellence, professionalism, and a positive attitude. This includes being flexible, willing to accept new tasks, ask questions, and use time wisely.

Jessica Rico is a Medical Assistant with Employee Health Services. She has been with Cook County Health since 2016. In their nominations, Ms. Rico’s colleagues described her as “a team player who goes above and beyond with a positive attitude.” They stated that Ms. Rico “is an integral part of our efforts to run the COVID testing tent, never missing a day of work.” Ms. Rico’s colleagues told an inspiring story of her ability to work tirelessly across several departments to ensure that the testing process would be a smooth experience for patients while also pausing to take the time to speak with each patient to answer questions and ease their experience.

Activities and Announcements

COVID-19

- Cook County Health has administered more than 290,000 doses of COVID vaccine since January 25, 2021.
- In addition to the five mass sites, an equity strategy to reach vulnerable populations has been implemented. The Cook County Department of Public Health has identified 32 municipalities that have been most impacted by COVID to hyper-focus vaccination efforts in. CCDPH is working with community-based organizations to increase vaccination rates in these communities.
- Cook County, Cook County Health and Cook County Department of Public Health launched phase 1 of a vaccine public education campaign on March 15th. The multi-media, multi-lingual campaign, “My Shot”, features residents of Cook County and highlights their reasons for taking the COVID ‘shot’. (See sample images) The \$1.2M campaign (reimbursable from the federal government) built on market research includes digital, bus shelters, billboards, transit and radio advertising, website, social media and toolkits that will be provided to commissioners, community-based organizations and other partners to educate the public about the importance of vaccinations.

While the campaign will be disseminated across Cook County, vulnerable communities have been prioritized. The campaign includes a new website, myshotcookcounty.com, where a digital toolkit can be found that includes videos featuring the participants in the ad campaign, social media posts, ads, fact sheets and more. Additional collateral materials are in development.

Phase 2 of the campaign is in development and will hyper focus on vaccine hesitancy among 18-34 year-olds, as research shows these individuals are the least likely to be vaccinated. Phase 2 will launch closer to vaccinations being available to all populations.

THIS IS OUR SHOT



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE
[MYSOTCOOKCOUNTY.COM](https://www.mysotcookcounty.com)

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THIS IS OUR SHOT



LEARN MORE ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE
[MYSOTCOOKCOUNTY.COM](https://www.mysotcookcounty.com)

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Return to Work

- Cook County Health intends to return to full clinical operations effective April 1, 2021. With lower infection rates, our employee vaccination program and continued safety protocols, including ample PPE, we are confident employees can safely return to work. We have notified staff that individuals with clinical duties are required to return to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our patients. We are exploring telework options for non-clinical staff moving forward.

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 March 18, CCH's Fresh Truck partnership with the GCFD resulted in 313 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 37,950 individuals, representing 125,697 household members, totaling more than 810,500 pounds of food. Most of the individuals benefiting from the Fresh Truck screened positive for food insecurity at a CCH health center visit.

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

April 1 – **Austin Health Center** – 4800 W. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60651

April 6 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside, IL 60546

April 13 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** – 1645 Cottage Grove Avenue, Ford Heights, IL 60411

April 15 – **Englewood Health Center** – 1135 W. 69th Street, Chicago, IL 60621

April 20 – **Robbins Health Center** – 13450 S. Kedzie Avenue, Robbins, IL 60472

- CCH began hosting Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital in December 2020. These events 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.

Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital are scheduled for the following Fridays from 3pm-4pm: March 26, April 23, May 21, and June 25.

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 mean having to empty your wallet.

IMPACT 2023 Objective 5.1C

- 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 centers' 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.

Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center: 10:00 AM – April 14, July 14, October 13

Cottage Grove: 1:00 PM – April 27, July 27, October 26

Robbins: 1:00 PM – May 18, August 17, November 16

Arlington Heights: 1:00 PM – May 25, August 24, November 23

North Riverside: 1:00 PM – June 16, September 15, December 15

Englewood: 1:00 PM – June 17, September 16, December 16

IMPACT 2023 Focus Area 5

Media, social media reports and other documents attached.

Legislative Update

Local

- On March 16th, the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee held a meeting. The agenda included a *COVID-19 Vaccine and Contact Tracing Update* from CCH CEO Israel Rocha and CCDPH Co-Leads Dr. Kiran Joshi and Dr. Rachel Rubin. The agenda also included the *CCDPH Quarterly Report*, which was presented by Dr. Rubin. The next meeting of the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee is scheduled for April 13. CCH will provide a *COVID-19 Vaccine and Contact Tracing Update* to the committee every month through the end of calendar year 2021.

State

- HB3232 (Rep. Camille Lilly) and SB1840 (Sen. Mattie Hunter) serve as the legislative vehicles for the joint effort between Cook County and Cook County Health to improve health equity and access to care.

HB3232 seeks to increase transparency and public access to hospital data, including what hospitals are doing when it comes to provision of care to uninsured patients, what services uninsured patients are using, and demographics of these patients, as well as other data related to what hospitals are doing to advance health equity and reduce health disparities. The legislation also seeks to improve the process by which patients are screened for and connected to Medicaid and hospital financial assistance programs.

This effort will help lay the groundwork for future changes and system improvements for more equitable access to care by insured and uninsured patients across all hospitals.

CCH is working with various stakeholders on the bill and expects to file an amendment that reflects conversations and negotiations.

- [Earlier this month, Governor Pritzker](#) signed [SB1510](#), also referred to as healthcare transformation, legislation passed during the January 2021 session that authorizes up to \$150M in annual funds to improve health outcomes, reduce disparities, and realign resources by improving access to primary and specialty care and addressing social determinants of health in high-need communities throughout Illinois.
- The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) also posted a [provider notice](#) and hosted a webinar to share more details about the healthcare transformation program application process. Proposals must include collaborative approaches; the first round of applications are due April 9, and a second round of applications will be due September 1.
- The Senate and House continue to hold virtual committee hearings. The Senate returned to Springfield for several days this month, and the House returned for in-person session on March 18.
- CCH CEO Israel Rocha, Jr. shared updates on Cook County's COVID-19 vaccination efforts at a Senate [Health Committee subject matter-only](#) virtual hearing on COVID-19 vaccinations on Monday, March 15. Other panelists included Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, representatives from a local health department and FQHCs, and pharmacies.
- While in Springfield, the House passed [HB158](#), the health and human services omnibus legislation championed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, by a vote of 72-41-0. HB158 includes language from the omnibus that passed the Senate in the January session, which reflects agreed provisions from hospitals, Medicaid MCOs, and other stakeholders. The bill also includes new requirements for implicit bias training

for health care workers, authorizes Medicaid coverage of doula, perinatal home visiting, and community health workers. CCH supports HB158. The bill now heads to the Senate.

Federal

- In March, Congress debated and passed the American Rescue Plan Act using the Budget Reconciliation process to bypass the Senate filibuster and relying only on Democratic votes. The House moved on to other priorities, including voting rights and gun safety, while the Senate continued to confirm key Biden Administration nominees.
- **Biden “American Rescue Plan”** – President Biden signed the H.R. 1319, American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 into law on March 11. The measure contains a number of provisions sought by the County and of interest to CCH.

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

The bill provides \$350 billion in fiscal relief for states, territories, tribes, cities and counties. County governments will receive \$65.1 billion, disbursed directly by the U.S. Department of the Treasury to every county government.

- Cook County is estimated to receive \$998.86 million, half within 60 days of enactment, half one year later.
- Funds may be used to cover costs incurred by Dec. 31, 2024, to:
 - Respond to the Covid-19 emergency and address its economic effects, including through aid to households, small businesses, nonprofits, and industries such as tourism and hospitality.
 - Provide premium pay to essential employees or grants to their employers. Premium pay may not exceed \$13 per hour or \$25,000 per worker.
 - Provide government services affected by a revenue reduction during the pandemic. (Measured by comparing the reduction in revenue due to the public health emergency to revenue received in the most recent full fiscal year.)
 - Make investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.
- Funds may be transferred to private nonprofit organizations, public benefit corporations involved in passenger or cargo transportation, and special-purpose units of state or local governments.
- Funds may not be deposited into a pension fund.

Medicaid Changes

- **Medicaid DSH Allocation Adjustment**

The bill modifies Medicaid allotments to states for disproportionate share (DSH) hospitals, which treat a large number of low-income or uninsured patients. The provision would require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to adjust state DSH allotments to align with the 6.2 percent increase to states’ federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. This would correct an unintended reduction in CCH DSH funding and allow CCH to benefit from the FMAP increase. The change is retroactive to the beginning of the public health emergency. **[This was a Cook County advocacy priority.]**
- **Medicaid Covid-19 Coverage**
 - Covid-19 vaccines and treatments will be covered until a year after the pandemic ends at no cost to beneficiaries under Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program.
 - The federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) would be increased to 100 percent for vaccine administration costs during that period.
 - Vaccines and treatment would also be covered for the uninsured. Outpatient drugs used for COVID-19 treatment would be included in the Medicaid Drug Rebate Program.

- **Medicaid Coverage Expansions**
 - In addition to creating incentives for states that have not yet expanded Medicaid under the ACA, the bill would also allow states, for five years, to provide full Medicaid benefits to eligible pregnant women for a year after giving birth.
- **Increase FMAP for Various Services**
 - Provide an 85 percent FMAP for the first three years that a state covers mobile crisis intervention services for mental health or substance use disorders, which would expire after five years.
- **Other U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Funding**
 - \$47.8 billion for testing and tracing activities.
 - \$8.5 billion for vaccine activities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - \$7.66 billion to expand the public health workforce, including grants to state, local, and territorial health departments.
 - \$6.05 billion to support manufacturing and purchasing vaccines and therapeutics
 - \$3 billion for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (HRSA) block grants.
- **Biden Administration Health Leadership** – On March 18, the Senate confirmed Xavier Becerra of California to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The vote was 50-49, with Sen. Susan Collins (R-Me.) as the only Republican voting to confirm. Becerra is expected to emphasize health access and health equity for communities of color. He will also step into a leadership role in implementing core provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act and caring for the record numbers of unaccompanied migrant children crossing the southwest border. Becerra will also continue the process of reviewing and rolling back Trump Administration policies, like the recent decision to rescind the states of Arkansas’ and New Hampshire’s Medicaid Section 1115 waivers which imposed work requirements on Medicaid beneficiaries.

Community Affairs

COVID Vaccination Site Tours & Educational Presentations

In collaboration with the Cook County Department of Public Health Office of Community Mobilization, Cook County Health is sponsoring community tours of the vaccination sites to community organizations and leaders. The tours will help the organizations talk to their constituents about the Covid-19 vaccine and the vaccination process, dispel rumors and encourage people from the community to get vaccinated. So far, participants have found the tours to be extremely informative. They have also shared suggestions and improvements to the process.

Completed Tours

- February 3 – **Triton College** – T Building, 2000 5th Ave, River Grove, IL 60171
- February 5 – **Triton College** – T Building, 2000 5th Ave, River Grove, IL 60171
- February 9 – **Robbins Health Center** – 13450 S Kedzie Ave, Robbins, IL 60472
- February 10 – **Cottage Grove Health Center** – 1645 Cottage Grove Ave, Ford Heights, IL 60411
- February 11 – **North Riverside Health Center** – 1800 S Harlem Ave, North Riverside, IL 60546
- March 10 – **South Suburban College** – 15800 State St, South Holland, IL 60473

Upcoming Tours in March & April

- **Des Plaines Site** – 1155 E Oakton St, Des Plaines, IL 60018
- **Forest Park Site** – 7630 Roosevelt Rd, Forest Park, IL 60130

In addition to the vaccination site tours, CCH has developed educational presentations in English and Spanish that are being presented at the Advisory Council meetings and other community meetings. The presentation provides information on the vaccine, the vaccination registration process, the vaccination sites and encourages a dialogue on vaccine facts and myths. The CountyCare team is developing a schedule to conduct these presentations to their members.

Racial Healing Circles

As an effort to become an anti-racist organization, Cook County Health will be hosting racial healing circles at Provident Hospital and on the South Side, funded by Chicago Community Trust and Illinois Department of Human Services. The plan consists of having circles with Provident Hospital employees, Community Advisory Council members, and members with the Cook County Department of Public Health Learning and Action Network. Each healing circle will take approximately three hours, and some will be broken into two 90-minute sessions.

The current Healing Circles schedule is as follows:

- March 26 – **West Suburbs Partners and Advisory Council members from the North Riverside Health Center**
- March 29 – **Spanish Language Partners and Advisory Council members**
- March 30 – **Provident Hospital Staff**
- March 31 – **Provident Hospital Staff**

Outreach Events

The Cook County Health outreach team continues to work with partners and community organizations to promote CCH's ambulatory sites and programs and enrollment in the CountyCare Medicaid Plan. Flyers and giveaways are provided to partners, who in turn hand them out at socially distanced events that they host. In addition to handing out informational "goodie bags", the CCH team also participates in virtual outreach meetings. Below are highlights of some events in which the outreach team participated this past month:

- March 24 – **Hazel Crest Village Hall Food Distribution** – 3801 W. 183rd Street, Hazel Crest, IL 60430
- March 25 – **Presentation to Family Focus Englewood on Maternal Child Programs, the Englewood Health Center and Covid Vaccinations** – 6727 S. Western, Chicago, IL 60636
- March 27 – **Representative Edgar Gonzalez and Commissioner Alma Anaya’s “Menstrual Fair”** – Kelly High School Parking Lot, 4136 S. California, Chicago, IL 60632
- March 27 – **Family Service & Mental Health Center of Cicero - Vida Nueva Event** – 5341 W Cermak Road, Cicero, IL 60804
- April 7 – **Mujeres Latinas en Accion’s Café con Conchas Event** – 2124 W 21st Place, Chicago, IL 60608
- April 13 – **Illinois Action for Children Parent Presentation in English and Spanish** – 17926 South Halsted, Homewood, IL 60430
- April 21 – **Schaumburg Township Minds Matter Virtual Presentation** – 1 Illinois Blvd, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
- April TBD – **Apostolic Church of God** – 6320 S. Dorchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60637



CHICAGO'S VERY OWN
WGN9



UNIVISION

Cook County Health Media Clips Report

February 23 – March 22, 2021

Chicago Tribune

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WBBM
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Media Dashboard: February 23 – March 22, 2021

Total Number of Media Hits: 194

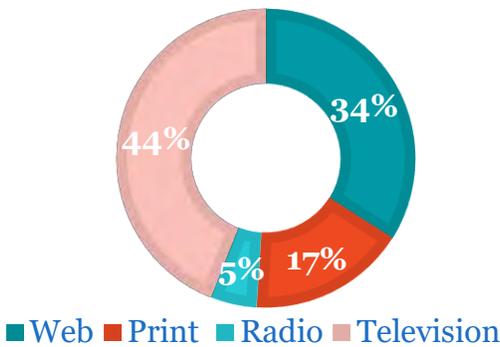
Top 5 Local Media Outlets

1. *NBC-5*
2. *Chicago Tribune*
3. *ABC-7*
4. *CBS-2*
5. *Daily Herald*

Top 5 National Media Outlets

1. *Yahoo! News*
2. *MSN*
3. *USA Today*
4. *CNN*
5. *Politico*

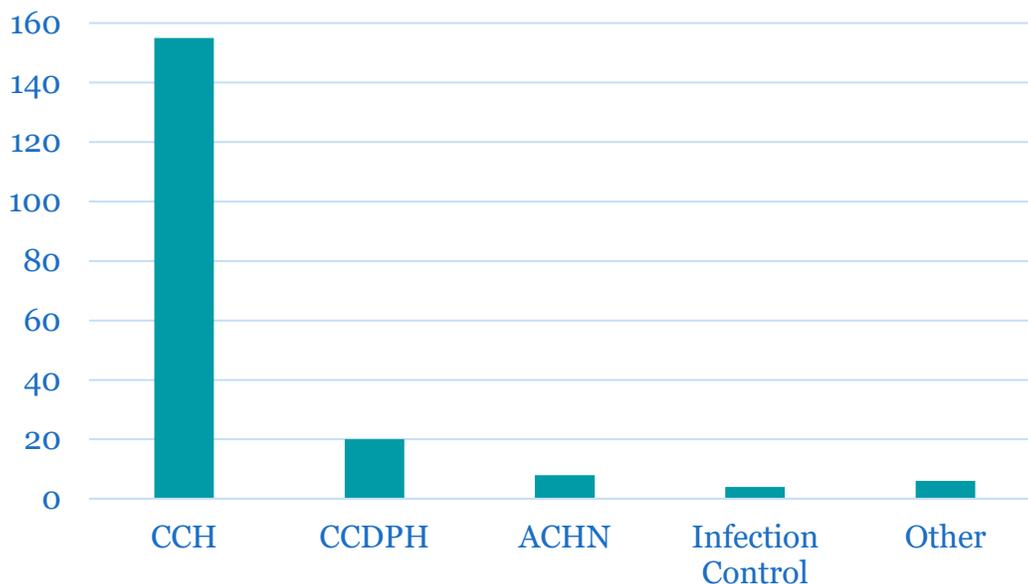
Media Outlet Type



Most Common Topics

1. Des Plaines opens as COVID-19 mass vaccination site
2. Cook County launches COVID-19 vaccine campaign
3. United Center opens as COVID-19 mass vaccination site
4. Forest Park opens as COVID-19 mass vaccination site
5. Cook County releases 20,000 suburban vaccine appointments

Media Mentions by Department





450 vaccinated at North Riverside pop-up clinic

Village, senior service agencies pull together event in just days

Bob Uphues

February 23, 2021

<https://www.rblandmark.com/2021/02/23/450-vaccinated-at-north-riverside-pop-up-clinic/>

The village of North Riverside in partnership with several other agencies serving senior citizens pulled together on short notice a COVID-19 vaccine clinic on Feb. 21 that inoculated about 450 people, including some 170 seniors from North Riverside.

Village Trustee Joseph Mengoni, who is one of three people running for North Riverside mayor in April, said that he was approached to help pull together the clinic because of his experience organizing other large-scale clinics for clients and employees of UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago, where he is executive director.

In three vaccine clinics organized by UCP Seguin earlier this month in Cicero and in DuPage County, Mengoni said the agency was able to vaccinate more than 1,000 Seguin clients and employees.

Since Cook County Health opened its North Riverside clinic to senior citizens and essential workers in Phase 1B of the state's COVID-19 vaccine program, Mengoni said he's received many calls from frustrated residents who can't schedule an appointment.

"I thought, 'We've got to host something here,'" Mengoni said. "If we can do something for our seniors in town, it would make it so much easier than trying to find an appointment."

Two weeks ago, Mengoni had been talking to Debra Vershelde, executive director of Aging Care Connections, which serves North Riverside and other western suburbs, about organizing a local clinic.

Their talks were just informal and nothing had been planned. Then on Feb. 18, Vershelde called him.

"She called and said this one just fell in our lap," Mengoni said.

While Mengoni was the local connection, the clinic itself was the result of a collaboration between many partners, including Age Options, Solutions for Care, Aging Care Connections and Oak Park Senior Services.

The Pfizer vaccines administered on Sunday to senior citizens and caregivers in the gym at the North Riverside Village Commons came through Chicago Internal Medical Practice and Research (CIMPAR), a Melrose Park-based medical group that had received vaccines from the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Mengoni had worked with CIMPAR for a pair of UCP Seguin vaccine clinics in DuPage County earlier this month.

Nine nurses from CIMPAR were on hand in North Riverside to administer the shots, aided by a group of about 20 volunteers drawn from UCP Seguin staff, North Riverside village employees including Village Administrator Sue Scarpiniti and her staff, Fire Chief Bob McDermott and a handful of elected officials, including Mengoni, Trustee Terri Sarro, Village Clerk Kathy Ranieri and former Trustee Jason Bianco. Riverside Township Trustee Michael Dropka, a North Riverside resident, was also among the volunteers.

“You can see that these people are really in need,” said Diane Slezak, a Brookfield resident and the CEO of Age Options, an Oak Park-based agency that provides services and resources for seniors. “These are not people who would be able to find their way on the internet, and that’s who we’re aiming at – those with the highest need. You see all the people on walkers and wheelchairs.”

When Mengoni got the call Feb. 18 from Verschelde, it touched off a concerted effort by North Riverside village staff as well as employees at the partner agencies to reach out to residents and clients to schedule appointments.

That effort began in earnest on Friday, Feb. 19 and continued Saturday. The village compiled its list of seniors to call from water billing records and those who applied for senior citizen discounts on vehicle stickers.

Pam Foy, senior financial analyst for the village of North Riverside who was one of several tasked with contacting senior citizens to schedule appointments, said they probably made between 300 and 350 phone calls in scheduling 170 vaccines for North Riverside residents for the Feb. 21 clinic.

“Most of them don’t have email, they don’t use the computer,” Mengoni said. “[Staff] went to residents’ homes on their way home from work and dropped off the forms so people could fill everything out beforehand.”

The rest of the slots were scheduled for senior citizens throughout the suburban area who are served by the various senior service agencies involved.

Oak Park resident Nilsa LaSalle said she had been trying to land a vaccine appointment for weeks when she received a call from Oak Park Township Senior Services late last week.

“It was a fiasco trying to get an appointment,” said LaSalle, who had tried the Walgreens, Jewel-Osco, the Oak Park Health Department and other websites without success. “It’s been like a full-time job. I was very much relieved.”

Elaine Morgan, a Maywood resident who is raising her two grandchildren, said she got her appointment through Aging Care Connections. She said she hoped getting a shot herself would help ease her grandchildren’s fears of getting vaccinated.

“They’re scare about the shot and COVID,” Morgan said. “This will help, seeing mom get the shot.”

“It was great to see all the partnerships,” said Paula Basta, the director of the Illinois Department on Aging, which provides state funding to agencies like Age Options to do vaccine clinics.

Basta, who also received a vaccine at the clinic in North Riverside, said it’s not uncommon right now for these vaccine clinics to come together within days.

“It’s typical at this point,” Basta said. “Everything shifts and changes very rapidly.”

Because the North Riverside clinic went off smoothly, officials are hoping that another will be scheduled in the future. To prepare, the village has also begun compiling a waiting list of residents wanting a vaccine.

Any North Riverside senior citizen who would like to get on the waiting list can call the village offices at 708-447-4211.

JOURNAL & TOPICS

Journal & Topics Media Group | Serving Chicago's Great Northwest Suburbs

Friday, March 19, 2021

Two Dates Slated So Far For Vaccination Site At New Trier

MABAS Division 3 Communities, Including Police, Fire To Contribute Resources

Tom Robb

February 23, 2021

<https://www.journal-topics.com/articles/two-dates-slated-so-far-for-vaccination-site-at-new-trier/>

The Journal has learned more about the COVID-19 vaccination site at New Trier High School's Northfield Campus scheduled to operate Wednesday, Feb. 24, and Monday, March 1.

New Trier Township High School Dist. 203 board members approved a site use agreement for the school at their Tuesday, Feb. 16 meeting. Dist. 203 officials released that agreement to the Journal later that same week, in response to an Illinois Freedom of Information Act order.



Sun and snow melt: Chicago warms up after bitter cold and heavy snow

Charles J. Johnson, Chicago Tribune
February 23, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/sun-snow-melt-chicago-warms-165400522.html>

For Chicagoans accustomed recently to waking each morning to fresh snow and subfreezing temperatures, Tuesday morning might have taken a second to process.

Is that ... the sun? Is the snow ... melting?

Get used to it, the National Weather Service said Tuesday, as the Chicago area's winter warm-up and snow melting session looks like it will mostly continue throughout the week.

Tuesday, temperatures were forecast hover in the low-to-mid 40s during the day, dropping as low as 32 at night, with some sprinkles of rain possible. It's not outside the realm of the possible that some parts of northern Illinois could hit 50 degrees, said Lee Carlaw of the Chicago area office of the weather service. The temperature isn't expected to dip below freezing again until Wednesday night.

Then, look for warmer temperatures to continue into the late week and weekend, with a potential high of 47 degrees Saturday. A mix of sun and clouds is expected all week, with a chance of a few flurries Friday night.

That little cold dip in the middle of the week might pay dividends for owners of Chicago-area basements and riverfront property. There about 2-3 inches of liquid water "trapped" in all the snowfall the area has experienced in the past few weeks, according to recent core samples taken by the weather service. A good meteorology rule of thumb is 10-13 inches of snow is about a solid inch of liquid water, Carlaw said.

But with temps expected in the 40s and high 30s, and a dip below freezing expected midweek, the snow shouldn't melt so fast as to create wide-scale flooding.

"We're certainly going to see some eventual river rises here, that water has to go somewhere," Carlaw said. "The good news is, if we had temps in the 50s that would be a pretty fast snowmelt. That would raise flooding concerns. ... That should help to mitigate the amount of flooding that goes on."

Like heating up a large pot of boiling water, it takes a lot of initial energy to get started melting this much snow, Carlaw said. However, it is possible floating ice jams, cut loose by the rising mercury, could jam up meanders and bends in rivers and area waterways, which can create short-term overruns.

Sunny days after a period of freeze and snow can create hazardous falling ice, and injuries have been known to occur from ice falling off even a single-story home.

"Be aware of your surroundings," a physician at Stroger Hospital told the Tribune in 2019. "Take a look up as you are walking and be aware if there are big patches of ice that are precariously dangling."

Heavy snow has been blamed for at least 20 building collapses in Chicago — as much as one per day since late January. A gas station canopy in Des Plaines also gave way Monday, and other collapses have been blamed on the snow throughout the Chicago suburbs.

And while it definitely isn't beach weather yet, the Chicago Park District announced Tuesday the city's lakefront, playgrounds and indoor pools will reopen after they closed nearly a year ago during initial COVID-19 shutdowns in the spring.

For more on the forecast, visit the Tribune's [weather page](#).

Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what happened Feb. 24 with COVID-19 in the Chicago area

Chicago Tribune Staff

February 24, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-aud-covid-19-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20210224-nvzrd6qfyjhkvnf5nx5pbhdhe-story.html>

Cook County Health system making first-dose appointments available at noon Wednesday

The Cook County Health system was scheduled to make available at noon Wednesday 5,000 first-dose appointments for later this week at two county-run mass vaccinations sites, according to a release.

The appointments that will be released Wednesday are at Triton College in River Grove and South Suburban College in South Holland, for people eligible under phase 1a or 1b of the state's vaccine distribution plan. Only about 20% of appointments this week are for first doses, with the rest reserved for people getting their second doses, according to the release.

People covered under 1b include people "65 and older and essential workers such as first responders, manufacturing employees and grocery store personnel," according to the release. About 600,000 suburban residents "are eligible for vaccine under Phase 1b," but supply is limited.

The health system has vaccinated more than 113,000 people so far, according to the release.

More than 80% of this week's appointments at Cook County Health sites are second dose appointments.

Any eligible suburban residents can make an appointment online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The [Cook County Department of Public Health](#) also is distributing vaccines through private partners, such as Jewel-Osco, Mariano's, Walgreens and other health centers. More vaccination sites can be found at the state health department's [website](#).



Thousands of New COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments to Open Wednesday in Cook County

February 24, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/thousands-of-new-covid-19-vaccine-appointments-to-open-wednesday-in-cook-county/2445979/>

Thousands of new first-dose COVID-19 vaccination appointments will open for Cook County residents at noon Wednesday.

A total of 5,000 appointments will open for later this week at Triton College and South Suburban College for individuals eligible under Phases 1A and 1B, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Those without internet access or who need assistance scheduling can call 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Under Phase 1B, the current phase of Illinois' vaccination rollout, people age 65 years and older as well as "frontline essential workers," which includes first responders, education workers like teachers and support staff and grocery store employees, are eligible.

Illinois [expects to increase eligibility](#) beginning Feb. 25, allowing for people with "a high-risk medical condition" or comorbidity to be vaccinated, though Chicago and Cook County both announced that they will not be joining the rest of the state in expanding eligibility, citing low supply.

Vaccinations at all Cook County Health sites are by appointment only. Three large-scale vaccination sites have been opened in Cook County: South Suburban College in South Holland, the Tinley Park Convention Center and Triton College in River Grove.

Additional vaccination sites throughout the county are expected to open in the following weeks.

In addition to the mass vaccination sites, select Jewel-Osco, Mariano's and Walgreen's locations are also among those offering appointments for residents eligible under Phase 1B, as well as federally qualified health centers and hospitals.

"To date, we have provided more than 113,000 doses but that is only a fraction of the demand that we have seen," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said in a statement. "Unfortunately, vaccine supply remains extremely limited. We look forward to the day when there is enough vaccine to meet the demand for first and second doses each week."

Residents who are not eligible to receive the vaccine can sign up at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov to receive updates about phases and eligibility.

Launch of COVID-19 vaccine site staffed by paramedics at New Trier High School seen as state and national model, officials say

Karen Ann Cullotta
February 24, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/winnetka/ct-wtk-covid-19-vaccine-clinic-new-trier-tl-0304-20210224-r2ugyvtflnatfjpeeur44x6cke-story.html>

The launch of a new COVID-19 vaccine site staffed by local paramedics at New Trier High School this week could provide the blueprint for future sites across Illinois and the U.S., officials said Wednesday.

A total of 571 vaccines were in the arms of educators, first responders and essential workers by 5 p.m., Wednesday at the pilot vaccination site at the high school's Northfield campus at 7 Happ Road, Cook County Department of Public Health spokesman Thomas McFeeley said in an email.

Taking just two minutes per client to administer each vaccine, there were no adverse affects to those vaccinated, and second doses will be given on March 17, McFeeley said.

Aside from slating a date for the second dose, McFeeley said officials have not yet determined when the site might be offering vaccines again, adding: "But these numbers are terrific so I think there will be reason to continue with this (point of delivery) for essential municipal workers."

Cook County Public Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. said while county officials are "very proud of the work" that has been done to ensure an equitable distribution of the vaccine to communities hit hardest by the virus, he acknowledged the frustrations of those who have been trying without success to procure appointments.

"Patience is a key ingredient," Rocha said, adding he is hopeful the model at New Trier can be replicated throughout Cook County once there is a more robust supply of the vaccine.

Cook County Commissioner Scott Britton, 14th District, said with a lack of vaccine sites in the north suburbs, the opening of the new point of distribution at New Trier was, "the fulfillment of a dream."

Despite facing a "plethora of challenges and demands" that needed to be overcome before the new partnership was forged by Cook County Department of Public Health, the Mutual Aid Box Alarm System Division 3 and area hospitals, Britton said area fire chiefs and officials at New Trier and several adjacent communities were determined to make it work.

"This unprecedented partnership between the county and local government is a perfect example of how cooperation and collaborative problem solving among public officials can have a profound impact on our communities' lives," Britton said.

Winnetka Village President Chris Rintz said he is hopeful that after the initial rollout to educators and first responders, vaccines administered at the New Trier site might eventually be available to other local residents.

"Thank goodness we're here today, watching people getting vaccines in their arms," Rintz said.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, who did not attend the kickoff of the New Trier vaccine site, said in a statement that the new site is a step forward in the county's equity-centered COVID-19 vaccination plan.

"We've seen over the last year the hard work and sacrifices of our educators and first responders during the pandemic, and I am grateful that we were able to establish this site to make it easier for them to be vaccinated," Preckwinkle added.



Essential Workers COVID-19 Vaccination Site Opens In New Trier

Local fire officials hope the paramedic-backed pilot program can become a model for community partnerships throughout the state.

*Jonah Meadows
February 24, 2021*

<https://patch.com/illinois/winnetka/essential-workers-covid-19-vaccination-site-opens-new-trier>

A first-of-its kind vaccination site run by local firefighters and paramedics has opened at New Trier High School. Local officials hope the pilot program can be replicated as more doses of COVID-19 vaccines become available for distribution.

The point of distribution, or POD, in the gymnasium of New Trier's west campus administered about 500 doses of vaccine Wednesday through an intergovernmental partnership between the school district, the county and Mutual Aid Box Alarm System, or MABAS, Division 3.

Tom Burke, Northfield's assistant fire chief and MABAS Division 3 president, said the partnership was the result of a lot of extensive discussions, long nights and countless Zoom meetings. But he knew all along they would be able to pull it off.

"This is what we do," Burke said. "This is what the fire service does. This is what the police service does. We come together. Anytime there's an emergency, anytime there's a problem, we're here to fix it. We try the best we can."

The assistant chief said he believed the pilot program could take off across Illinois with the help of the existing statewide MABAS network of fire and rescue personnel.

"It's time to reach out to the first responders and let us do what we're supposed to be doing. This is a good thing," he said. "This is what we need to do, and hopefully we can get ahead of the pandemic going on here."

Winnetka Fire Department Chief Alan Berkowsky pushed county officials to collaborate with rescue personnel to get shots into arms.

"I just want to say this is the epitome of a partnership. You got 11 communities, you got a school district, you got a Cook County Health Department, and somehow we're able to gel all this into one event," he said. "These are all municipal employees, paramedics doing the vaccination, we got support from MABAS Illinois. It's really an incredible model that I believe can be replicated across Cook County, across Illinois and across the United States as a structure for rolling out vaccination when the vaccination chain becomes much more robust."

Jabs at the site will be initially limited to first responders, school personnel and front-line essential workers in the Phase 1a and Phase 1b priority groups. But local officials hope that it will eventually be able to accommodate everyone seeking to be vaccinated.

"We appreciate the hope and optimism that vaccination sites such as this one represent," said New Trier High School Superintendent Paul Sally. "As the first vaccine site staffed by paramedics, we hope it serves as one model for expansion throughout the county and New Trier is very proud to be a part of it."

Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said there was significant hesitancy among the 2.5 million residents of the Cook County suburbs in both receiving vaccines and trusting the government.

"But we also know that many who are hesitant are willing to get vaccinated if they see others safely receiving their doses," he said. "As if first responders and teachers weren't our heroes already, they're playing a critical leadership role at this site by demonstrating the safety of these vaccines."

Cook County Health Chief Executive Officer Israel Rocha said he was grateful for efforts by local educators to make the "learning POD" a reality. He said the team was committed to sharing the model with other departments throughout the country.

"I think when you bring EMS providers or fire and rescue providers and our educators under one roof, with one common goal of helping to expand, and to bring assistance to the people who need it, that's always a good thing." Rocha said.

While vaccine supplies have been limited so far, Rocha said new distribution locations were opening every week.

"So you've been seeing that progress, in that we started with one large site, then we had our clinics, then we were able to open a large POD site, now we have several little programs that are getting started," he said.

Cook County Commissioner Scott Britton is a former village and school board member from Glenview who, along with local village officials, strongly advocated for the New Trier POD. He said Berkowsky had, during one of their many conversations, likened coronavirus vaccination efforts to a war.

"And that war is being fought, basically, with one hand behind our backs," Britton said. "Because we have firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, who are the exact people you want to be able to be on the front lines of providing these vaccines, and they're enthusiastic about doing it. I can't tell you the number of times they've said, 'If we need to send some somebody down to the western suburbs, or the southern suburbs we will do that. Our people will go there, and they will take care of our Cook County residents.'

"And it has made me think more and more about how lucky we are, particularly here in the northern suburbs, to have the men and women of our departments who are willing to step up and do what's necessary," he said. "I still can't believe we actually pulled this off."



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: State Expands Phase 1B Vaccine Eligibility

Here are the latest COVID headlines from around the state

February 25, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-state-expands-phase-1b-vaccine-eligibility/2447023/>

Illinois' Phase 1B of COVID-19 vaccinations expanded Thursday as the state opened up eligibility to a much larger group of residents.

Meanwhile, Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago is seeking participants for clinical trials designed to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of coronavirus vaccines in children under the age of 12.

Here are the latest COVID headlines from around the state:

United Center Could Become Mass Vaccination Center as Soon as March: Report

The United Center could become a mass vaccination center as soon as next month, offering COVID-19 vaccine doses to up to 7,000 people per day, according to a recent report.

The news is expected to be announced Friday by both the White House and Gov. J.B. Pritzker, according to [Crain's Chicago Business](#), which cited sources close to the matter for information that the United Center will focus on minority groups disproportionately affected by the virus.

The governor's office did not immediately confirm the announcement, but applauded the Biden Administration for "efforts to launch high capacity vaccination sites across the country are essential to equity,"

"[Gov. Pritzker] appreciates the robust collaboration with the President and his team," the governor's office said in a statement. "Our partners at Cook County and in the City of Chicago are also essential to our collective success, especially as we work together to make sure we're ready to use the increasing supply of vaccine in the most equitable way possible."

Chicago health officials had previously said they were looking into creating mass vaccination sites at several sports stadiums, but those venues wouldn't be used until the city gets more doses of the coronavirus vaccine.

Read more [here](#).

The Daily Line

Cook County ‘ramping up’ vaccinations, contact tracing faster than federal dose delivery, officials say

Alex Nitkin

February 25, 2021

<https://thedailyline.net/chicago/02/25/2021/cook-county-ramping-up-vaccinations-contact-tracing-faster-than-federal-dose-delivery-officials-say/>

Cook County public health officials have vaccinated more than 100,000 people in the past month and plan to significantly scale up operations as the pipeline of new vaccine widens, they told county commissioners Wednesday.

The county has stood up an in-house vaccination system through a combination of mass vaccination sites and targeted distribution at jails and health centers, although some county workers and residents have complained of hiccups and delays. The system is on pace to expand after Thursday, when the county Board of Commissioners approves a measure (21-1547) allowing the county to recoup up to \$75 million in additional funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to cover vaccination costs.

Chicago Tribune

Illinois administers record 130K-plus vaccines, as expansion of eligibility opens outside Chicago and Cook County

Jenny Whidden and Alice Yin

February 25, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-illinois-vaccine-numbers-daily-record-20210225-pw7siswpfvhn3ltvo4op6do4wa-story.html>

A record 130,021 coronavirus vaccine doses were administered in Illinois on Wednesday, public health officials reported, reaching a statewide total of 2,440,950. The previous daily record was 95,375 doses, administered Feb. 12.

The milestone comes as Illinoisans outside Cook County who are younger than 65 and have preexisting health conditions are now eligible to receive the coronavirus vaccine as part of the state's 1b+ phase.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced the expansion earlier this month, though Chicago and Cook County opted not to join the state in expanding phase 1b, saying that the move would make it more difficult for those already eligible to secure vaccine appointments. About 3 million people statewide would qualify under the expansion.

"As states and cities across the country expand eligibility for the vaccine, it's vital that the most medically vulnerable like those with heart disease, lung disease and cancer have access to the vaccine, regardless of their age," the governor said in a statement.

Officials said the expansion is in line with guidelines from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The list of eligible conditions include cancer, chronic kidney disease, diabetes, pregnancy and heart conditions.

The Chicago Department of Public Health put out a statement Thursday reiterating its position that the city does not receive enough vaccine to expand eligibility.

"If Chicago expanded eligibility, it would add hundreds of thousands of more people seeking vaccine in Chicago, without increasing the amount of available vaccine. This would mean those currently eligible, including seniors, front line essential workers and those in our most heavily COVID-burdened communities, would have an even harder time getting a vaccine," the statement read. "We are working to get as many people vaccinated as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. also said Thursday that there was no timeline in sight to move on from the current phase 1b, but "there is some discussion" for an in-between expansion for people with chronic conditions before the entire phase 1c begins for suburban Cook County. About 35% of the 65 or older population in that jurisdiction has at least gotten the first dose, he said, and officials want that number to be closer to 45 to 50%.

Rocha said the issue lies with inconsistent vaccine shipments, which County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said was why there was no date for expansion yet.

"Our goal as a county and as a health and hospital system is to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as we possibly can," Preckwinkle said. "The challenge of course is the supply. That's the challenge everywhere."

Pritzker's office noted the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is "poised for approval," and federal vaccine shipments to Illinois are projected to reach 100,000 doses per day in mid-March.

The number of Illinois residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required two shots of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines — reached 671,717, or 5.27% of the total population Wednesday. Over the past seven days, the state averaged 66,274 vaccines administered daily.

Officials on Thursday reported 1,884 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 32 additional fatalities. The total number of known infections in Illinois is 1,181,226 and the statewide death toll is 20,406.

As of last week, the state has reported no additional cases of the coronavirus variants originating from the United Kingdom and South Africa. Officials previously identified a total of 42 cases of the U.K. variant and one case of the South African variant.

The seven-day statewide positivity rate for cases as a share of total tests was 2.5% as of Wednesday, reaching its lowest level since the week ending June 22, when the rate was 2.0%. Thursday's new cases resulted from a batch of 91,292 tests.

As of Wednesday night, 1,463 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, with 334 patients in intensive care units and 168 patients on ventilators.



A look at the Black history that fills Chicago

Gaynor Hall
February 26, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/black-history-month/a-look-at-the-black-history-that-fills-chicago/>

CHICAGO — If the walls of Quinn Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church could talk, they would tell you of the stories of Ida B. Wells Barnett, Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and countless others who've spoken here.

The Rev. James Moody said Quinn Chapel was a protest from the very beginning, which dates back to the 1840s.

Quinn Chapel became the first Black church established in Chicago. At one of its former locations, what's now the site of the Monadnock building downtown, the church served as a stop on the Underground Railroad — guiding the enslaved to freedom.

Members like Emma Atkinson helped launch the abolitionist movement in Illinois.

"Quinn Chapel was not only a stop. It was a place for food, gathering, information, as people were passed on to the next stop," Moody said.

In 1891, the building went up at 24th Street and Wabash Avenue. The Rev. John T. Jenifer passed as white to buy the land and deeded it over to the church.

Moody is now leading a multi-million dollar restoration project.

"The existence of Quinn Chapel is a statement of the independence, ingenuity, faith, the hard work and commitment of African Americans in the City of Chicago," he said.

The same year the church was built, Provident hospital was established by Dr. Daniel Hale Williams in the Douglas neighborhood. He performed the world's first successful open heart surgery and the hospital was a much-needed training ground for Black doctors and nurses.

"He opened Provident hospital because he saw a need that patients could not get admitted were turned away from other hospitals and our doctors could not get privileges to take care of patients in the hospital," Dr. Claudia Fegan, chief medical officer at Cook County Health, said.

The hospital was later taken over by Cook County Health when it moved to 51st Street in the 1930s.

Dr. Carol Adams president and CEO of Urban Prescriptives said the history surrounds us.

"Chicago is the centerpiece of Black America and some say the centerpiece of the Black world," Adams said.

Black writers, artists, musicians, and politicians were all drawn to Bronzeville — a magnet for Black culture.

Just heading down what's now King Drive at 36th Street, the home of courageous journalist Ida B Wells. She led a crusade against lynching.

She felt that the work she was doing was important enough to put her fear aside.

Near 41st Street once lived trailblazing pilot Bessie Coleman.

“She couldn’t get into any flight school in the City of Chicago and so she went to France. How’s that for claiming your destiny,” Adams said.

A few blocks south of there was home to Chicago’s first Black alderman. Oscar Stanton De Priest went on to serve in Congress.

Legendary musician Louis Armstrong lived right off King Drive on 44th Street.

In Lawndale, the site where Dr. Martin Luther King stayed with his family in 1966 is now the King Legacy Apartments.

Civil rights activist Andrew Young remembers his time living with King at 16th and Hamlin.

Also on the West Side near Monroe and Western avenues is where police murdered a sleeping Fred Hampton in a hail of bullets. His family is working to save the house in Maywood where he grew up.

“The things the Black Panther party addressed back in the 1960s, it’s still relevant now,” Fred Hampton Jr. said.

Last summer, protests erupted across the nation after the death of George Floyd.

In the summer of 1955, 14-year-old Emmett Till was lynched while visiting relatives in Mississippi.

His home was on 64th Street and St. Lawrence in Woodlawn.

“I woke up one day and realized that just a few blocks down the street from where i was sleeping there was a story. that was my story. (emotional long pause) that was my story. and the story of millions of us that have passed through,” Naomi Davis, founder and CEO of Blacks in Green, said.

Davis’ non-profit Blacks in Green bought the building that was just designated a Chicago landmark, and they’re making no little plans.

They are raising money for a museum, community theater and garden dedicated to Emmett and his mother and the legacy of the great migration.

“It’s our duty and it’s our joy to share the story forward of the courage and the destiny,” Davis said.

Past and present. The city alive with reminders of shared heartbreak and triumph and ongoing struggle.

“It’s overcoming in spite of, its knowing you have obstacles and still moving forward,” Adams said.

Honoring Black History Month this month and beyond.



Go There: CNN answers your questions at a mass Covid-19 vaccination site in Chicago

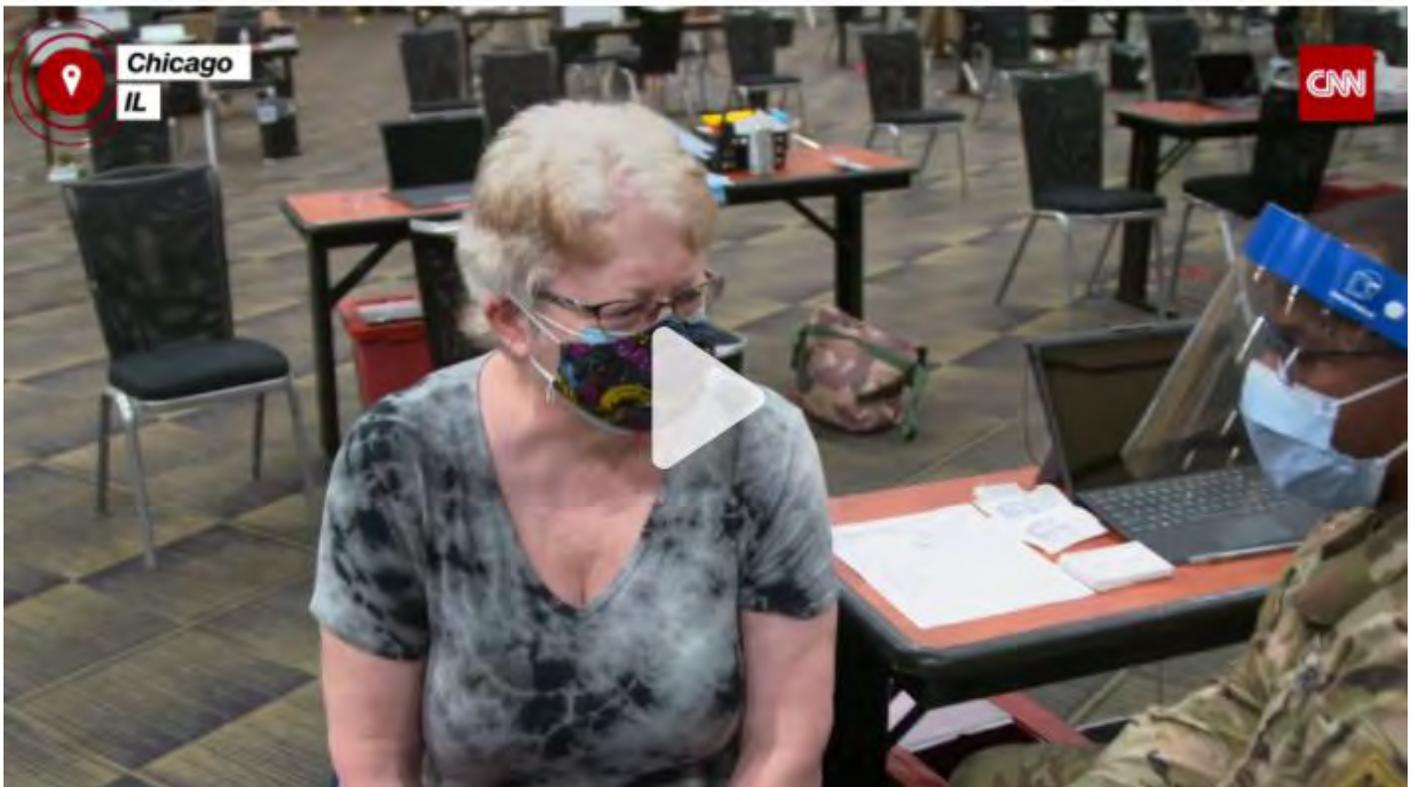
February 26, 2021

https://www.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-vaccine-updates-02-26-21/h_3bfaa6ca810fc1230ca93928f83d297b

As the US continues its push to get its entire population vaccinated, mass vaccination sites are opening across the country.

CNN correspondent Adrienne Broaddus was on the ground at a mass vaccination center opened up in Chicago, answering your questions about the vaccine rollout.

Watch more:





With the shot troops: Inside an unusual National Guard deployment

Roughly a month into the mission, more than 1,000 service members are helping inoculate Illinoisans against COVID-19, with authorization to call up another thousand.

A.D. Quig

February 26, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/shot-troops-inside-unusual-national-guard-deployment>

A long, strange year for the Illinois National Guard is culminating in one of its longest and strangest domestic deployments: injecting vaccines into hundreds of thousands of arms.

"There is no comparison" to this year, says Maj. Gen. Richard Neely, the adjutant general of the state of Illinois, director of the Illinois Department of Military Affairs and commander of both the Illinois Army and Air National Guard. In addition to the current vaccination campaign, the guard helped stand up large-scale testing sites, support mortuary operations in Cook County and deliver isolation pods for use at the McCormick Place alternate care facility. In between, guard members were deployed on flood and wildfire duty, responded to civil unrest in Chicago and flew to Washington, D.C., to protect the U.S. Capitol from insurrectionists.

Roughly a month into the mission, more than 1,000 service members were helping with the state's COVID-19 vaccination effort, with authorization to call up another thousand. They staff 15 mass vaccination sites, assist local health departments and serve on mobile teams that will be deployed to communities with limited health care options, state prisons and independent-living facilities.

Guard members have already administered more than 150,000 doses, and their current pace is 11,000 doses per day. Early on, they were delivering 11 percent of all of the state's shots.

The number of deployed service members and mass vaccination sites will only grow in the weeks to come. The effort takes close coordination between the state's Department of Public Health, Emergency Management Agency and local health departments.

ACTIVATION

The federal activation of 47,000 National Guard personnel across the country to respond to the pandemic was the second-largest nationwide peacetime domestic activation after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, says Paul Grasmehr, reference coordinator at the Pritzker Military Museum & Library. Illinois guard officials compare the scale of this mission to the response to the Great Flood of 1993—when 7,000 members were activated—and the deployment of the 2,600-member 33rd Infantry Brigade to Afghanistan in 2009.

"What we are very well trained to do is take the concept of a wicked problem and breaking it down," says Col. Seth Hible, an operations officer whose full-time job is teaching at Lake Park High School in Roselle. Floods, storms and war-zone deployments are well-worn sections of the National Guard playbook. But there was no script for a pandemic like this one.

In the fall, Neely told his team to think through the likely challenges of a mass vaccination program. "At that point IDPH hadn't asked for help, but we knew the vaccine was coming. It was going to be a large lift for any state."

By the time Gov. J.B. Pritzker called in January, the guard had a plan. "Two days later, we briefed senior staff, and four days later we briefed the governor," Neely recalls.

They would use 18-member military vaccination teams, or MVATs. Six members are medical personnel trained to give shots. The other 12 are support staffers who handle everything from crowd and traffic control to security, records input and registration, taking temperatures, observing people after they've received shots, or shuttling supplies and paperwork.

The guard has 52 MVATs today. The first 25 were "organic," Neely says, or all National Guard members. The rest are a mix of guard and contracted medical personnel to administer shots.

Early snags involved fusing military, medical and emergency management lingo, state and guard officials say. Having worked together on testing sites and having team members embedded in each other's offices helped. Hible likened the collaboration to his work with State and Defense department officials in Afghanistan.

"IEMA, for the most part, is looking longer term to try and figure out how the guard will be relieved from this mission in about two or three months or however long it takes. IDPH is looking for the shorter term, where to target our specific vaccination teams, and then we become the force generator that produces those teams and pushes them to the field," Hible says. Local health departments give the teams their marching orders.

The state's first mass vaccination site opened Jan. 26 at the Tinley Park Convention Center. It came together in roughly a week, says Cook County Health's Ratna Kanumury, who is heading up vaccination coordination.

"It was rapid fire," Kanumury says. "We did a site survey on Saturday (Jan. 16). By that Thursday, the contract was finalized. We had supplies delivered Friday evening, and we were unpacking boxes on Saturday," setting up IT, testing walkie-talkies and working with pharmacy partners to ensure vaccine storage was adequate.

STAFFING

The guard is fully staffing the Tinley Park site with eight MVAT teams, supervised by Cook County Health. At full capacity, the site can vaccinate 3,500 people every day. Guard members are also helping at the county's vaccination sites at Triton and South Suburban colleges and at several CCH clinics. The only difficulty has been training new staff as guard members complete their tours and others replace them. Officials have opted to have some overlap so new members can learn from those on the way out.

In Winnebago County, the guard is working alongside a volunteer medical reserve corps and public health workers at a vaccination site at Sandy Hollow, and it is rolling out mobile vaccination units going to workplaces to vaccinate teachers, grocery store clerks, transit drivers and workers in factories and food-processing plants.

"We'd been experiencing very high rates of infection and high rates of morbidity, mortality," plus a lengthy mitigation shutdown, says Dr. Sandra Martell, Winnebago's public health administrator. "We knew we had to pick up the pace."

Having civilians work alongside uniformed guard members helped alleviate any concerns by those skeptical or scared of having the military involved in the effort, she says. Plus, guard members bring a lot from their civilian life; some know different languages or IT workarounds, for example. Others are familiar faces from the local community.

Who picks up the tab? While governors control service members, the federal Department of Defense will pay until at least March 31. So far, the state has spent \$2.4 million for medical staffing, supplies and equipment. "We are expecting that this could cost as much as \$100 million," IEMA Deputy Director Scott Swinford says, which will be fully reimbursed. "We appreciate the federal government's assistance monetarily and getting us through this."

MIL-OSI USA: Duckworth Tours Cook County Health COVID-19 Vaccination Site at Triton College

Source: United States Senator for Illinois Tammy Duckworth
February 27, 2021

<https://foreignaffairs.co.nz/2021/02/28/mil-osi-usa-duckworth-tours-cook-county-health-covid-19-vaccination-site-at-triton-college/>

U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today toured Cook County Health's COVID-19 vaccination site at Triton College and met with Cook County officials to discuss how federal and local entities can support each other equitably and efficiently vaccinating Illinoisans. Duckworth was joined by several local officials including Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. Photos of today's visit are available [here](#).

"It's great to see the work Cook County is doing here at Triton College to quickly and efficiently vaccinate so many Illinoisans," Duckworth said. "Large vaccination sites like this and the federally-supported United Center mass vaccination site that will be opening soon are an important step in our efforts to overcome this pandemic. Though we've seen vast improvements in vaccine supply in recent weeks, we still need to get more vaccinations to Chicago, Cook County and all of Illinois. I will continue working to secure more funding to ensure that enough staff and supplies are available to keep getting Illinoisans vaccinated."

Duckworth has been a leader in helping ensure states and municipalities have the resources they need to equitably and effectively distribute COVID-19 vaccines and ensuring Illinoisans know the [vaccine is safe](#). Earlier this month, Duckworth [announced](#) nearly \$50 million to support and expand vaccine distribution in Cook County. Duckworth [worked closely](#) with the Biden Administration to help bring a community vaccination center federal pilot site to Chicago which will launch in March. Duckworth has also held a series of virtual roundtables with [Black](#) and [Latinx](#) community leaders in Chicago and the [Metro East](#) to discuss the disproportionate public health impact of COVID-19 on people of color as well as plans to equitably distribute a safe vaccine to these communities across Illinois.

'I'm Pretty Appalled By It': Franklin Park Party Shows Attendees Without Masks And No Social Distancing

Megan Hickey

March 1, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/01/im-pretty-appalled-by-it-franklin-park-party-shows-attendees-without-masks-and-no-social-distancing/>

New video on social media is raising coronavirus concerns.

Dozens of mask-less people were packed into a nightclub in the western suburbs.

CBS 2 Investigator Megan Hickey reports from Franklin Park where people in the music industry are calling the club out. CBS 2 has been getting complaints from citizens and concert promoters alike. The Cook County Department of Health said it is investigating.

It was advertised as the "Chi-Town TakeOver" at the Pure Nightclub on Saturday night. "Masks Required to Enter/ Limited Capacity" the invite said. But public videos tagging the venue showed a lot of people.

Few were actually wearing masks. And social distancing seemed quite difficult.

"I'm pretty appalled by it."

Doctor Rachel Rubin of the Cook County Department of Public Health said it is investigating the gathering and the organizers will likely be sanctioned.

"We then pass it on to our legal team, and it gets sent to the state's attorney and they review and decide whether they want to go on," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer, Cook County Department of Public Health. "Whether it's a fine or taking them to court, basically."

CBS 2 reached out to the promoter and the venue to talk about the decision to host the party and exactly what COVID-19 precautions were put in place.

But so far, so response.

It's certainly not the only venue trying to stay afloat, albeit against state guidelines.

"How is this able to happen?"

Chicago concert promoter Eddie De Mouf said he understands it but there's a reason he hasn't been putting on large shows.

"What's more important you tell me, Megan, your health? Your life? Or a couple of bucks. It's a no brainer for me," said De Mouf of Eddie De Mouf, Freestyle and House Music Chi. Entertainment.

And Pure Nightclub is far from alone.

Just last week, CBS 2 showed [videos from a concert in Lombard](#).

On Monday, the village said Brauer House was issued a notice and the state of Illinois Liquor Control Commission and Illinois Department of Commerce are actively reviewing their business operations.

The concert promoter said she was “in and out” on Saturday night. There were temperature checks, masks required and a 50 person maximum.

When told the videos posted on social media contradicted what she was said, she said she had no interest in being interviewed.

Here is the statement the Village of Lombard sent to CBS 2 regarding the party at Brauer House:

The Village of Lombard has been working closely with the DuPage County Department of Public Health on regulatory compliance issues related to operations at Brauer House. Both agencies have engaged business ownership and management to communicate State COVID-19 mitigations and seek compliance with State regulations.

In light of continued business operations, including the release of video from a recent event which clearly depicted more than 50 persons gathered on the dance floor, many without proper face coverings, the health department and village have jointly issued a formal Notice of Facility Non-Compliance to Brauer House. Additionally, the State of Illinois Liquor Control Commission and Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity have been engaged and are actively reviewing business operations.

Per recent correspondence from Brauer House management to the Village of Lombard, County Health Department and the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, multiple events, including Brauer House Late Night Dance Party events, have been or are in the process of being cancelled.



Language Barriers Are Leaving Non-English Speakers Behind In The Vaccine Rollout

Mariah Woelfel

March 2, 2021

<https://www.wbez.org/stories/language-barriers-are-leaving-non-english-speakers-behind-in-the-vaccine-rollout/d6332d30-63d6-4fbc-b793-2c16679bd781>

Chicagoan David Castillo, 32, of Brighton Park, has spent days working to get his Greek father-in-law and Spanish-speaking aunt a vaccine appointment.

“For both of them it’s been a struggle, because they’re not primarily English-speaking, and the website is all in English. They’re also a little older, so not as proficient with technology, which hampers their efforts,” Castillo said.

As the city of Chicago and state of Illinois continue to direct residents to first-come-first-serve online sign-up systems, getting a vaccine in Illinois requires time, internet research skills and English proficiency. People, often family members of non-English speakers, are spending hours on those English-based, sign-up portals, met constantly with messages of “No upcoming appointments available.”

In Cook County, there’s actually a number you can call if you don’t speak English, don’t have the internet or don’t know how to use their website. But nearly three months into vaccine distribution in Illinois, there’s no multilingual vaccine helpline for the state or city as a whole. The city on Tuesday announced a multilingual helpline will start Thursday, but only for those trying to book an appointment at the new United Center mass vaccination site.

Advocates say non-English speakers are being left behind as a result.

“When a person is limited English-proficient, many times they also have a low level of education, which leads to difficulty navigating, whether it be the internet or just using a laptop,” said Luvia Quiñones, the health policy director at the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Quiñones and others say a hotline is one avenue that could help. Take Cook County, for example, which is receiving 10,000 to 12,000 calls a day from people who opt to use the hotline, which offers Spanish language, in their search for a vaccine.

The county contracted with a firm early-on to hire additional temporary staff to run the phone line.

“We knew from day one that we were going to have to have a hotline to ensure access ... for seniors, as well as for any individual who would rather use the phone or doesn’t have access to technology for a microsite,” said Iliana Mora, the Chief Operating Officer of the Cook County Health Ambulatory Services. The “microsite” allows people to view [the county’s sign-up page](#) in numerous languages.

Of course, a vaccine sign-up hotline is not the only cure to low vaccination rates. Demand is currently outpacing vaccine supply across the country, vaccine skepticism is declining but still significant, and access issues (such as where vaccination sites are located) still exist.

And some say as long as the system continues to work on a first-come-first-serve basis, it will always favor those with the time and expertise to scour the internet.

“We really continue to express concerns about how to make this process more equitable,” said Dr. Vineet Arora, with the advocacy group IMPACT. “One way would be to use a pre-registration system, when everyone would come in a wave, and then you run a lottery to give out appointment times. These types of things have been done in hospitals and have worked to great effect.”

This system has also been used in other states, where instead of hoping you’ll hit refresh at the exact moment an appointment opens up, you register once and get a call when it’s your turn.

While the city of Chicago has a general COVID-19 hotline, calling it leads you directly to 311, which leads to an automated option menu in English. It does not give you an option to hear the menu in Spanish. Eventually, if you stay on long enough, you’ll get to a person, who can transfer you to the general COVID-19 hotline, where the city can make a translator available. But this line is meant for general COVID-19 questions, not vaccine sign-ups.

“Unfortunately, most people ... if they only speak Spanish, they probably are going to assume that they cannot get through to anybody in Spanish, so they probably would just hang up,” Quiñones said.

This problem is not new or unique to Chicago. (Follow one WBEZ reporter’s search to find her Spanish-speaking parents a vaccine.) But Quiñones said it is frustrating that creating a multilingual vaccine hotline has not been a higher priority for the state, given high rates of COVID-19 cases and deaths in Latino communities and the fact that the digital divide looks to be higher among immigrant communities. The stakes are high, she said.

“I think that there is this assumption that people that don’t speak [English] will get the information somehow, either through a relative or a friend or something,” she said. “But I think it adds to the barrier of the distrust, the unknown and the hesitation around the vaccine. And I think for those that are Spanish speakers ... depending on their immigration status, it also adds to their fear of not knowing that this vaccine is safe or not.”

The state and city have taken other important steps to ensuring equitable vaccine access — including running pop-up mass vaccination sites in 15 community areas hit hard by COVID-19, providing Spanish translation at COVID-19 press conferences and including factsheets and PDFs in Spanish on their websites.

And there is hope that a hotline will be available soon. The state has put out a request for proposals for companies to create a multilingual vaccine sign-up hotline.

“Our ask has been to try to prioritize at least the five most-spoken languages. We know that there are ... over 60 languages spoken in Illinois,” Quiñones said. “Knowing that there’s limited capacity around phone operators, etc., we have asked to at least prioritize the top five, including Polish, as well as Arabic, Korean [and] others.”

The state’s request for hotline proposals shows an estimated start date of Feb. 25, but the state did not respond to questions about when the hotline will be up and running — just that the state is in the process of finalizing a deal to create one.

The city of Chicago referred WBEZ to its general COVID-19 hotline (which is not meant for vaccination appointments).

But on Tuesday the city announced the creation of a new multilingual hotline for people hoping to book an appointment at the new mass vaccination site the United Center.

To make an appointment at the United Center specifically, residents can call (312) 746-4835. For now, that number first directs you to the English-automated 311 menu. The state also notes the line will be staffed by just 200 people, so long wait times are likely.



Cook County Officials Ease COVID Restrictions, Allowing Increased Capacity at Bars, Restaurants

March 2, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-officials-ease-covid-restrictions-allowing-increased-capacity-at-bars-restaurants/2451862/>

Following the lead of the city of Chicago, the Cook County Department of Public Health is easing coronavirus mitigation measures, including expanding capacity limits at bars and restaurants.

According to a press release from CCDPH, bars, restaurants and event spaces will be able to expand their indoor seating capacity to 50% or 50 people, whichever is lower.

The change to capacity limits is the same one announced by officials in Chicago on Tuesday. There, bars and restaurants can expand their capacity to 50%, and bars will be permitted to remain open until 1 a.m., as opposed to the 11 p.m. curfew previously in place.

“Although the progress made in the metrics is encouraging, we must continue to protect the safety and health of Cook County residents and wear masks, watch our distance, and wash our hands,” Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead, Cook County Department of Public Health, said in a statement.

Officials are also reminding the public that masks are still required inside of indoor establishments, with everyone 2 years of age and older requiring facial coverings.

The news comes as COVID metrics continue to improve in the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, the positivity rate in Cook County has continued to drop in recent days, falling to 3.4% as of Feb. 27.

The region’s ICU bed availability has remained steady at 26%, while overall hospitalizations have decreased each of the last 10 days.



Text Message From Cook County Health Stirs Confusion For Vaccine Patients

Marie Saavedra

March 2, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/video/5355184-text-message-from-cook-county-health-stirs-confusion-for-vaccine-patients/>

When a viewer reached out to us about a text from Cook County asking for a picture of their vaccination record card - they thought was a scam - and so did we. CBS 2's Marie Saavedra reports.



Cook County Health sending texts requesting vaccine confirmation before some 2nd dose appointments

ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 2, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/cook-county-health-text-scam-vaccine-card/10383956/>

Cook County Health officials said Tuesday that a text message sent out earlier asking some people to send them a picture of their vaccine card is legitimate.

Several residents who got the text contacted ABC7 Chicago saying they thought the message was a scam because of a typo and the unusual request.

In a statement, Cook County Health officials say they were trying to reconcile some second dose appointments that did not have a matching first dose record in their system.

Anyone who was asked to provide verification before receiving their second dose can send it to covidvaccineverification@cookcountyhealth.org or call the hotline at 833.308.1988.

Full statement from Cook County Health

Cook County Health vaccine sites represent only 16 of the hundreds of vaccine locations across Cook County. Vaccine is received and earmarked for first or second dose to ensure that all individuals who receive their first dose get their second dose.

As part of our internal vaccine integrity review process, we noted a number of second dose appointments scheduled without a matching record for the first dose being administered at one of our vaccine sites. This can occur due to the use of a middle initial or other identifying factor in one appointment but not the other; because the individual received their first dose elsewhere; or because they inadvertently clicked a second dose appointment when they wanted a first dose appointment. As part of our validation process, we have asked these individuals to provide their vaccine record card. In addition to providing the necessary validation of the individual, it is critical to ensure that we are administering the right vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer) at the right interval. Appointments for those who provide validation will be honored.



Vaccination site for Cook County residents coming to Des Plaines

March 2, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210302/vaccination-site-for-cook-county-residents-coming-to-des-plaines>

A mass coronavirus vaccination site will open at the former Kmart at 1155 E Oakton St. in Des Plaines, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle is set to announce Wednesday.

The vaccination site will serve Cook County residents in Phase 1A and 1B, which includes health care personnel, residents of long-term care facilities, people older than 75, police, teachers and other essential workers.

The vaccines will be available by appointment only. You can register online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988, according to an alert sent to Elk Grove Village residents by Mayor Craig Johnson.

Elk Grove Village is also working to partner with a pharmacy to host a vaccination event in the community in the future, Johnson said in the alert.



Colon cancer screenings drop during COVID-19 pandemic, despite awareness after Chadwick Boseman's death

ABC 7 Chicago Digital Team
March 3, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/colon-cancer-screenings-drop-amid-covid-pandemic/10385819/>

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month.

The death of actor Chadwick Boseman from colon cancer has raised awareness of the disease. He was only 43 years old.

But at the same time, screenings for colon cancer have plummeted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Jacqueline Harrison is a colorectal surgeon with Cook County Health. She joined ABC 7 Chicago Wednesday to talk about colon cancer preventative care.

Harrison said average-risk patients should be screened at age 45. Then, if your results are normal, you won't need to be screened again for 10 years.

Other screening tests are also available for average-risk patients, she said. Those must be done more often.



NBC 5 Investigates: Searching The Sewers For COVID-19 at the Cook County Jail

Officials at the Cook County Sheriff's office are hoping the sewers at the jail could lead to groundbreaking new clues in their battle against the deadly virus

March 3, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/nbc-5-investigates-searching-the-sewers-for-covid-19-at-the-cook-county-jail/2453183/>

Authorities at Cook County Jail are searching for coronavirus clues in the unlikeliest of places: the sewers.

"You know, I wanted to get as far out front of determining what the positivity rate was in the jail," Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart told NBC5. "It's just a proactive thing that I really wanted to do."

The process is complex, but the premise is rather simple. After all, anyone infected with the virus sheds evidence of it in their waste.

And it just so happens that the output of the restrooms and cells at Cook County Jail run in defined sewers out of each division, isolated from storm water or melting snows. It's an ideal place to look for traces of the virus.

If you know how and where to look, that is (and if you don't mind staring down a torrent of sewage).

Enter the scientists from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

"It's much easier to test a couple of wastewater samples than to test hundreds of people," says UIC's Dr. Samuel Dorevitch. "If we tell them, that building where they thought they didn't have any COVID cases actually does, then they know what measures to put in place---to isolate people, move people out, so COVID isn't being transmitted in that building any more."

To be certain, the sheriff's office already tests the detainees---when they arrive, and on a random basis during their stay. But health officials say this can yield much faster results----and can give a global picture of virus concentrations in each of the jail's divisions.

"The time frame, which is so huge, this gives us about a five day heads up on anything that could be breaking out here, that we wouldn't get through normal testing," Dart said. "Because right now we test everyone---we've tested 55,000 people!"

On a recent morning, a UIC team, accompanied by doctors from the jail's Cermak Health Services and the Chicago Department of Health, showed NBC5 how they take samples from sewers at six different sites inside the jail complex.

Picture the water bottle from your fitness class, attached to a 10-foot chain. Scientists pop open the manhole covers of the sewers, and lower those bottles into the raw sewage flowing about ten feet below.

"So it's wastewater. Basically that they flush down the toilet, they shower, everything gets mixed up," says UIC's Dr. Abhilasha Shresta.

After each sample was taken, Dr. Shresta made sure the top was screwed down tight, then sprayed the outside with disinfectant. Each was labeled with the date and the division where the sample was taken.

"So we are taking it in the lab," she said. "And then we'll start doing the processing right away."

If it sounds like a tedious process which is not for those with a weak constitution, you're right on both counts, but back in the UIC labs is where the real science kicks in.

There, defined amounts of sewage from each sample are poured through filters, which capture any traces of virus. Dr. Dorevich said the tests are so sensitive, they can reveal more than just the presence of the virus.

"We're able to know how much virus is in that sample," he said. "Certainly, the difference between none, a little, and a lot, is useful."

From the beginning, the virus presented an ominous challenge for jail officials. The complex houses thousands of pre-trial detainees, some for years, and new residents arrive every day.

A month into the pandemic, Dart and his team faced a single day in April with over 300 virus cases. But since then, the sheriff's office has spent millions on testing, PPE, and a new housing scheme separating detainees into previously mothballed areas of the jail complex.

And those procedures have paid off. On Wednesday morning, there were only eight positive cases.

To be sure, the numbers have waxed and waned with the same regularity seen on the outside. Just as the rest of Illinois saw a spike in the fall, the jail also saw some of its highest numbers---375 cases on Dec. 13 alone.

But now those numbers are back in the single digits, and officials say they are optimistic this process could become a new tool in the front lines of the fight.

Partners at Argonne National Laboratory will also be testing the samples for new strains of the virus, such as the South African variant which has proven more contagious.

"This can serve as an early warning system," says Dr. Wilnise Jasmin of the Chicago Department of Health. "Samples collected here will tell us a lot earlier than if we wait for someone to become symptomatic."

And if virus is found? Dr. Chad Zawitz of the jail's Cermak Health Services, says the results will help his department to be much more nimble.

"Knowing exactly where we need to target our resources, we can more effectively respond," he said. "We are particularly interested in learning what is circulating on the compound."



New Des Plaines COVID-19 immunization site to use single-dose vaccine

Jake Griffin

March 4, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210303/new-des-plaines-covid-19-immunization-site-to-use-single-dose-vaccine->

A new mass vaccination site opening in Des Plaines later this week will be the first location in the state to use the new single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine to inoculate residents, health care and essential workers.

"This is the first large-scale vaccination site to use it," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced Wednesday at a news conference from the facility at 1155 E. Oakton St., which once housed a Kmart store. "That means we can more quickly get the vaccine into the arms of residents, and protect our communities and loved ones."

State officials announced Tuesday that 83,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine would be shipped to Illinois later this week.

Besides the benefit of a single dose, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will not require extreme cold storage, allowing it to be transported with greater ease. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines currently in use each require two doses and specialized cold storage.

"All three are highly effective vaccines that can save lives," said Israel Rocha Jr., CEO for the Cook County Public Health Department. "But with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, it will be much easier to bring the vaccine to community settings, to pop-up sites, allowing us to reach more individuals where they live and where they work, for their ease and convenience."

People can start booking appointments for the new site at 1 p.m. today by visiting vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

The site will serve Cook County residents in Phase 1A and 1B, which includes health care personnel, residents of long-term care facilities, people 65 and older, police, teachers and other essential workers.

It is initially expected to vaccinate nearly 2,000 people a day, but it has the potential to provide 3,500 shots daily, officials said.

State health officials are hopeful the new Des Plaines site will help speed up inoculations statewide.

On Wednesday, Illinois Department of Public Health records showed 82,449 more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have gone into the arms of Illinois residents and workers. That brings the state's inoculation total to 2,900,341.

Health officials report 906,490 residents and workers in Illinois have been fully vaccinated, while 1,993,851 have received at least one dose.

Over the past two days, the state has received 652,820 new doses of vaccines, according to state health department figures.

Meanwhile, state health officials also reported 44 more COVID-19 deaths and 2,104 new cases Wednesday. The state's death toll from the respiratory disease stands at 20,626, while 1,191,520 have been infected with the virus since the outset of the pandemic, IDPH figures show.

Statewide, hospitals reported treating 1,260 patients for COVID-19 infections, with 275 of them in intensive care.



Mass Vaccination Site Opening In Vacant Des Plaines Kmart

The last Kmart in Illinois to close is set to become the largest COVID-19 vaccination site in the northwest suburbs.

Jonah Meadows

March 3, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/desplaines/mass-vaccination-site-opening-vacant-des-plaines-kmart>

Up to 1,890 people a day will begin receiving COVID-19 vaccines Thursday at a vacant big box retail store in Des Plaines, as the state's last Kmart to close is set to become the largest vaccination site in the northwest suburbs. It will also be the first in the state to use the new single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The state-supported mass vaccination and testing site will be operated by a partnership of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Cook County, according to Des Plaines City Manager Mike Bartholomew.

"They've already done the interior renovations to make that happen," Bartholomew told aldermen Monday. "So we will have access to mass vaccination right in our backyard, so hopefully that will be great for the community and the surrounding area."

The facility includes about 200,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space and is being subleased by Cook County from SG Blocks, a firm that had set up a COVID-19 testing site aimed at travelers coming through O'Hare International Airport, according to a release.

"We were happy to support the leadership team at Cook County in transitioning the space to a COVID-19 vaccination site," said SG Blocks CEO Paul Galvin. "Our Chicago Airport Testing was not fully utilizing the entire building footprint, so using our massive space to aid in the process of vaccinating folks to fight the spread of COVID-19 made complete sense."

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has activated more than 1,000 members of the Illinois National Guard to help local health departments set up new vaccination sites and support mobile vaccination teams, according to his office.

"Every day we're doing more, but let me also point out there is a vaccine shortage throughout the United States. We're getting vaccines into people's arms as quickly as humanly possible in the state of Illinois," Pritzker said at a news conference Thursday. "We're a big state, a complex state, but it's the local public health departments that take responsibility. We ship to local public health departments. They then need to put it in people's arms with their partners locally."

The federal government is expected to increase the state's allocation of vaccine to more than 100,000 doses a day later this month, according to Pritzker. On Wednesday, Illinois Department of Public Health data showed the seven-day rolling average number of doses administered rising to more than 84,000.

Information on how to register for a vaccination through the Cook County Department of Public Health is [available online](#) or by calling 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Vaccinations through the county's community vaccination program are available by appointment only.

Local elected officials praised the opening of the mass vaccination site at the vacant retailer in a news release.

"It's great to see this much-needed vaccination site open in Des Plaines, a community that suffered some of the highest rates of COVID-19 in the region earlier in the pandemic. This repurposed facility will allow residents throughout the O'Hare corridor to take that all-important step to protect themselves and their loved ones: Getting vaccinated," said State Sen. Laura Murphy (D-Des Plaines).

"We are very happy to see that the Governor is providing a new site to have the residents of the Northwest suburbs to get vaccinated," said State Rep. Marty Moylan (D-Des Plaines).

"We look forward to working with our county, state and federal partners to bring this mass vaccination site to the city of Des Plaines," said Des Plaines Mayor Matt Bogusz.

There are currently 16 state-supported vaccination sites around Illinois, including one at Arlington Heights Health that can administer up to 270 jabs a day and one in River Grove that can administer 540. In the Chicago area, only the Tinley Park Convention Center site has the capability to administer more than 1,000 doses a day.

Next week, the United Center is set to become the state's largest vaccination site yet when it begins to get shots into up to 6,000 arms a day for the next eight weeks, according to health officials. Appointments for vaccinations at the United Center open for all Illinois residents age 65 and up at 10:30 a.m. Thursday.

Plans for the Des Plaines mass vaccination site was first reported by the Journal & Topics Newspapers. The Kmart opened at Lee and Oakton streets in 1967 on the site of a former pumpkin and onion farm, according to the Des Plaines Journal.

The building was renovated in 2016. In 2019, a year after parent company Sears Holdings' bankruptcy, it had become the state's last operational location of the chain. It shuttered permanently in April 2020.

"The COVID-19 vaccine site in Des Plaines is our latest step forward in vaccinating Cook County and our most vulnerable communities," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said a news release. "This new site, which is conveniently located for many residents of the northwest suburbs, will be utilized over the coming months as we progress in our program and vaccine supply increases."

Chicago Tribune

Illinois set to open two more mass vaccination sites Thursday as workers put finishing touches on United Center site

Paige Fry and Jenny Whidden
March 3, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-covid-numbers-20210303-7gayf6cdyjgfk4fjkebum7gi-story.html>

The state readied two more mass vaccination sites to open Thursday as workers completed preparations at the United Center site, where plans call for up to 6,000 people to be inoculated each day by next week.

The sites opening Thursday at 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines and in downstate Quincy, together, are geared to give shots to up to 4,000 people a day once at full capacity, the state said. With those sites, the state has 18 state-supported mass vaccination sites.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office also announced Wednesday that additional Illinois National Guard members are being activated to support seven southern counties with COVID-19 response.

The United Center mass vaccination site is in a parking lot on the northeast side of Madison and Wood streets. Contractors are building six white tents — each covering 5,000 square feet — that will make up the site, said Dan Shulman, a Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman.

"This is just really on a much grander scale what the typical person that's going to any other place to get a vaccination is going to experience," he said.

The site will be the biggest in the state. It will have a "soft opening" on March 9, Shulman said. March 10 will be the first day the site will try to hit its goal of 6,000 vaccines per day. The site will be open seven days a week for eight weeks. **Registration will begin 8:30 a.m. Thursday.**

There will be more than 110,000 slots for those 65 or older, who can register at zocdoc.com/vaccine or call 312-746-4835, according to Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady.

The call center will be monitored from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays. Through a city partnership with Uber, 20,000 free rides also will be available to those residents who need help getting to the appointment and back after they sign up.

The site will have free parking. Those seeking shots will enter one tent for an intake process, where they will be asked a series of health questions and confirm their registration, then move through a breezeway into another tent where they will receive the shot.

Before leaving, there will also be a waiting area for a brief observation of a person to see if they experience any symptoms after taking the vaccine, Shulman said. The person will also have a follow-up appointment made at the center to receive their second dose.

"We're partnering with the United Center that has ample experience dealing with high volumes of people, moving them through a space and getting them in and out efficiently," he said.

“We’ve never done a mass vaccination, a national vaccination effort like this before, but we do have experience setting up large-scale facilities, whether it’s mobile home parks, disaster registration centers, emergency commodity points of distribution, this is just a different scale for a different purpose.”

Pritzker said the opening of the United Center mass vaccination site “is a really exciting development.” The state had been working with the federal government, FEMA, as well as the White House, to establish the site.

The United Center was chosen because it’s in an area that was easily accessible to communities of color that have “historically had challenges with the health care system to get vaccinated,” Pritzker said.

Pritzker said he thinks the site will help increase vaccination numbers on weekends.

“The issue is not so much that the people don’t want to get vaccinated on the weekends; it’s that the local public health departments that are delivering those vaccines aren’t fully staffed in their locations in those over the weekend days, and their partners similarly,” he said. “We’ve tried to make up for that by, again, with the FEMA site, which is open on Saturday and Sundays, and with the distribution of vaccines to our federal retail pharmacy partners.”

Illinois administered 82,449 coronavirus vaccine doses Tuesday, reaching a statewide total of 2,900,341, according to state officials. The number of Illinois residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required two shots — reached 906,490, or 7.11% of the total population.

Over the past seven days, the state’s daily average for vaccinations was 84,202.

Officials on Wednesday also reported 2,104 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 44 additional fatalities. The total number of known infections in Illinois is 1,191,520, and the statewide death toll is 20,626.

The seven-day statewide positivity rate for cases as a share of total tests was 2.4% — the lowest the state has seen since late June — for the fifth day in a row. Wednesday’s new cases resulted from 80,854 tests.

As of Tuesday night, 1,260 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, with 275 patients in intensive care units and 138 patients on ventilators.



Lo que debes saber del nuevo centro de vacunación masiva en contra del coronavirus en Des Plaines

March 3, 2021

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wqbo/lo-que-debes-saber-del-nuevo-centro-de-vacunacion-masiva-en-contra-del-coronavirus-en-des-plaines-video>

Esta sede estará ubicada en el antiguo Kmart y en ella se vacunarán a las personas que sean elegibles dentro de la fase 1B, es decir, mayores de 65 años de edad y trabajadores esenciales. El proceso de registro comenzará este jueves a partir de la 1:00 pm y para agendar tu cita debes llamar al 833 308 1988.



Cook County to Receive Over 18K Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Doses Thursday

March 3, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-to-receive-johnson-johnson-vaccine-shipments-thursday/2452885/>

Over 18,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are set to arrive in Cook County Thursday, the health department said.

The Cook County Health Department said the Johnson & Johnson vaccine shipments are expected Thursday, though officials did not detail more information on the rollout.

Johnson & Johnson vaccine shipments began Monday, with Chicago and Illinois expecting to receive an estimated dose count above 100,000 by the end of the week.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said doses are expected across the state, with roughly 22,000 planned for Chicago and another 83,000 for the remaining regions.

More than 90% of the newly authorized vaccine will go to mass vaccination sites throughout the state, with the remaining doses shipped to other providers, officials said. IDPH noted that the total doses does not include those going to Chicago, which will receive its own allocation.

"As Dr. Fauci and many medical experts have pointed out time and again, we are so fortunate to have three effective vaccines that are proven to fully protect against death and hospitalization," IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said. "The new Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be distributed for use at mass vaccination sites across the state, so that we are maximizing their capacity and getting as many eligible Illinoisans vaccinated as possible so that we can win the race against the new virus variants and end this pandemic."

Chicago's Department of Public Health also said the city anticipates its first doses of the third approved vaccine will arrive this week.

"The Emergency Use Authorization approval for the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine is great news for the city of Chicago's vaccination efforts," the department said in a statement. "The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe and effective, especially in preventing severe illness and death, requires a single dose and has fewer reported side effects than other available COVID-19 vaccines."

The department said further information on how the newest vaccine will be distributed will be released "when we can."

Johnson & Johnson [began shipping its coronavirus vaccine across the United States on Monday](#) for injections starting on Tuesday.

Johnson & Johnson will deliver about 16 million more doses by the end of March. The company's CEO Alex Gorsky said on NBC's "Today" show that the company expects to distribute 100 million shots by June and a billion by the end of the year.

Advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention voted overwhelmingly Sunday to recommend the vaccine for adults 18 years old and up. It adds to the vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna that were authorized in December. The news also comes as the city prepares to launch a mass vaccination site at the United Center this month in partnership with the federal government. The site plans to offer vaccinations for all eligible Illinois residents.



Cook County Opens First Large-Scale Vaccination Site in Illinois to Provide Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

Residents can begin making required appointments for the coronavirus vaccine at the new location on Thursday at 1 p.m.

March 3, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-opens-first-vaccination-site-in-illinois-to-provide-johnson-johnson-vaccine/2453141/>

A new community vaccination site in Des Plaines will be the first large-scale facility to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Illinois, Cook County Health announced Wednesday.

The health department will open its fourth large-scale vaccination site at 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines on either Friday or Saturday, pending vaccine arrival, according to a release.

“This is a critical time in our fight against COVID-19 and providing all three FDA approved vaccines ensures that our residents are afforded every vaccine option currently available,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. “The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective in protecting people against severe illness and death. The fact that it is a one-dose vaccine is exciting as it allows people to protect themselves in just one visit.”

Cook County officials said they expect to provide nearly 3,500 doses per day once the vaccination site is “fully optimized” and vaccine is available. Officials noted the Des Plaines site is the first large-scale facility statewide to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Residents can begin making required appointments for the coronavirus vaccine at the new location on Thursday at 1 p.m. Appointments can be made from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

“This location is indicative of our ongoing commitment to distribute vaccine across Cook County in what we expect to be one of the largest vaccine programs in the country,” Israel Rocha Jr., CEO, Cook County Health, said. “The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is another tool in our fight against COVID-19, and we are excited to provide our residents with another highly effective vaccine that will help keep people out of the hospital and prevent deaths.”

Over 18,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are set to arrive in Cook County Thursday, the health department said Wednesday.

Johnson & Johnson vaccine shipments began Monday, with Chicago and Illinois expecting to receive an estimated dose count above 100,000 by the end of the week.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said doses are expected across the state, with roughly 22,000 planned for Chicago and another 83,000 for the remaining regions.

More than 90% of the newly authorized vaccine will go to mass vaccination sites throughout the state, with the remaining doses shipped to other providers, officials said. IDPH noted that the total doses does not include those going to Chicago, which will receive its own allocation.



COVID-19 In Illinois: Full List Of Mass Vaccination Sites With More To Open Thursday; 2,104 New Coronavirus Cases, 44 More Deaths

CBS 2 Chicago Staff
March 3, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/03/covid-19-illinois-new-mass-vaccination-sites-des-plaines-quincy/>

As Illinois continues ramping up COVID-19 vaccination efforts, key metrics continue to show encouraging progress in the fight against the virus.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 2,104 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, as well as 44 more deaths.

Gov. JB Pritzker's office announced the state is opening two new mass vaccination sites on Thursday: in Des Plaines, at the former K-Mart store at 1155 E. Oakton St.; and in Quincy, at the Oakley Lindsey Center at 300 Civic Center Plaza. The sites will be able to provide a nearly 4,000 doses per day combined when operating at full capacity.

Once those sites are open, Illinois will have a total of 18 state-run mass vaccination sites, as well as more than 850 other vaccination locations open to the public at pharmacies, clinics, and local health departments. The state also operates mobile vaccination teams to help reach rural and underserved communities.

Cook County officials said the Des Plaines site will be the first large-scale vaccination site administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Illinois. Cook County officials plan to provide as many as 3,500 vaccines per day there once it is fully up and running.

"This is a critical time in our fight against COVID-19 and providing all three FDA approved vaccines ensures that our residents are afforded every vaccine option currently available," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said in a news release. "The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective in protecting people against severe illness and death. The fact that it is a one-dose vaccine is exciting as it allows people to protect themselves in just one visit."

The Des Plaines site will open either Friday or Saturday depending on when the vaccine arrives.

Mobile teams are currently operating in Cook, St. Clair, Sangamon, Jackson, Winnebago, and Madison counties. Gov. JB Pritzker also is activating additional members of the Illinois National Guard to support mobile vaccination efforts in seven counties in southern Illinois: Union, Johnson, Pope, hardin, Alexander, Pulaski, and Massic counties.

National Guard members also will help local health departments operate permanent vaccination sites across the state. As of Monday, more than 1,070 members of the National Guard were assisting with COVID-19 response efforts statewide.

Meantime, the state has averaged 84,202 vaccine doses administered per day over the past week, a 45% increase over the average of 58,141 one week ago.

So far, the state has received a total of 3,836,625 doses of vaccine since December, and has administered 2,900,341 doses. A total of 906,490 people in Illinois have been fully vaccinated, or 7.11% of the population.

Meantime, Illinois reported 2,104 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus on Wednesday, as well as 44 more deaths. Since the start of the pandemic, IDPH has reported a total of 1,191,520 cases, including 20,626 deaths.

The state’s seven-day average case positivity rate remains at 2.4% for the fifth day in a row, tied for the lowest it’s been since June 23. The state’s average case positivity rate has been below 3% for 17 days in a row, the longest such stretch reported so far during the pandemic.

As of Tuesday night, 1,260 coronavirus patients were hospitalized in Illinois, including 275 in the ICU and 138 on ventilators. COVID-19 hospitalizations have been cut nearly in half in the past month, and are down nearly 80% from their peak last fall.

If you qualify for a vaccine and are trying to find an appointment, here are some links to help you: (We have to caution you, it may be difficult to find an available shot in the near future and near your home, but we did want to share all these links in one place to perhaps make it easier for you.)

[Wal-Mart](#) | [Walgreens](#) | [CVS](#) | [Jewel-Osco](#) | [Kroger](#) | [Mariano’s](#) | [Meijer](#) | [Zocdoc](#) | [Hy-Vee](#) | [Illinois Department Of Public Health](#) | [Indiana Health Department](#)

All 18 Illinois mass vaccination sites listed below are open to anyone in Illinois who meets [current eligibility requirements](#) (frontline healthcare workers, residents and staff at long-term care facilities, people age 65 and older, frontline essential workers, and anyone who is 16 or older and has a serious underlying health condition). You must first make an appointment through the local health department where the mass vaccination site is located.

Opens	Location	Address	Appointment	Doses capability at full capacity
Now Open	Tinley Park Convention Center	18451 Convention Center Drive	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	2,160
Now Open	North Riverside Health Center	1800 S. Harlem Avenue, North Riverside IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	270
Now Open	Morton East School Base Clinic	2423 S. Austin Blvd, Cicero IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	270
Now Open	Robbins Health Center	13450 S. Kedzie Ave., Robbins IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	135
Now Open	Cottage Grove Health Center	1645 Cottage Grove Ave., Ford Heights IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	135

	Blue Island			
Now Open	Health Center	12757 S. Western Ave., Blue Island IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	270
	Arlington			
Now Open	Health Center	3250 N. Arlington Heights Rd. Arlington Heights IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	270
Now Open	Triton College	2000 5 th Ave., River Grove IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	540
	South			
Now Open	Suburban College	15800 State St., South Holland IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	540
	Thornton			
Now Open	Fractional South High School	18500 Burnham Ave, Lansing, IL 60438	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	270
Now Open		Illinois State Fairgrounds, Orr Building Springfield IL	http://www.SCDPH.org (217) 210-8801	1620
Now Open	Belle-Clair Fairgrounds	200 S. Belt E #2650, Belleville IL	https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/health-department	1080
	Southern Illinois			
Now Open	Banterra Center	University, Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
Now Open	Carbondale Civic Center	Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
Now Open	Winnebago County	1321 Sandy Hollow Rd., Rockford IL	https://www.wchd.org/	1350
	Gateway			
Now Open	Convention Center	1 Gateway Drive., Collinsville IL	https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/index.php	1350
Mar. 4	Former K- Mart	1155 E Oakton St, Des Plaines, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	1,890
	Oakley			
Mar 4	Lindsey Center	300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy IL	https://www.adamscountytogether.com/	2,100
Mar 10	United Center	1901 W. Madison Street, Chicago IL		



New mass COVID-19 vaccination site set to open in Northwest Suburbs

Gaynor Hall
March 3, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/new-mass-covid-19-vaccination-site-set-to-open-in-northwest-suburbs/>

CHICAGO – A former Kmart is turning into a mass vaccination site in Des Plaines, with the Illinois National Guard supporting the effort.

Illinois currently supports 18 mass vaccination sites, including two new locations in Des Plaines and Quincy.

About 20,000 vaccine appointments are expected to be available in Cook County for seniors and essential workers starting at 1 p.m. Thursday. The Des Plaines locations will be the state's first large-scale site to administer the new Johnson and Johnson vaccine that requires only one dose.

The first Johnson & Johnson shipment was delayed and depending on its arrival, vaccinations could start either on Friday or Saturday for essential workers and people over the age of 65.

Cook County health officials say people who sign up for appointments can choose which vaccine they want to be administered but emphasized all three options are safe and effective.

"I think the best vaccine for you is the one you can get immediately," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, with the Cook County Department of Public Health. "I think everyone needs to be vaccinated as soon as they become eligible."

Up to 3,500 vaccination shots a day could be administered at the former Kmart located at Oakton Street.

The news comes as signups are set to begin Thursday at 8:30 a.m. for the mass vaccination site at the United Center. More than 110,000 appointments will be available, with Illinois seniors taking top priority. Appointments for people younger than 65 with underlying health conditions will open Sunday.

Locals can sign up for an appointment through zodoc.com/vaccine or by calling 312-746-4835. The hotline is open Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

On Thursday, March 4 the hotline will open at 8:30 a.m.

The Illinois Department of Public Health urges residents who have received their first vaccination to sign up for the "V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker" to communicate directly with the CDC about any potential side effects and receive texts reminding them about their second dose.

On Tuesday, more than 80,000 doses were administered in Illinois. Gov. Pritzker said he expects the average daily delivery of doses from the federal government to surpass 100,000 later this month.

On Wednesday, Toni Preckwinkle, President of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, said, "Before the opening of large sites like this one in Des Plaines, things were pretty grim but I'm very grateful and I see brighter days ahead."

To learn more about Illinois' COVID-19 Community Vaccination Program, [click here](#). To contact the Vaccine Sign-Up Hotline, call **833-308-1988** 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Cook, Local Leaders Tour New Vaccine Site In Des Plaines; Will Open Possibly Tomorrow (Friday)

Todd Wessell
March 4, 2021

<https://www.journal-topics.com/articles/cook-local-leaders-tour-new-vaccine-site-in-des-plaines-will-open-possibly-tomorrow-friday/>

Cook County and local officials gathered inside the former Kmart store at Oakton and Lee streets in Des Plaines Wednesday afternoon to tour Cook County's fourth large-scale vaccination site. This will be the first large-scale vaccination site in Illinois administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Cook County officials expect to provide as many as 3,500 vaccines per day when the Des Plaines site, 1155 E. Oakton St., is fully optimized and when adequate vaccine is available.

"This is a critical time in our fight against COVID-19 and providing all three FDA approved vaccines ensures that our residents are afforded every vaccine option currently available," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective in protecting people against severe illness and death. The fact that it is a one-dose vaccine is exciting as it allows people to protect themselves in just one visit."

The site will open either Friday, March 5 or Saturday, March 6 pending the arrival of the vaccine to continue Phase 1A and Phase 1B vaccinations. Phase 1B includes individuals age 65 and older and essential workers such as first responders, manufacturing employees and grocery store personnel.

"With our new operations in Des Plaines we are now operating 11 state-supported mass vaccination sites in Cook County in addition to the soon-to-launch United Center, and the network of more than 800 vaccination locations around the state all trained on one goal: vaccinating as many people as possible, as quickly as possible," said Gov. JB Pritzker. "One in six Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine, and as the federal government increases Illinois' deliveries to over 100,000 a day later this month, IDPH and our 97 local health departments are prepared to meet the moment. In the meantime, I encourage all Illinoisans to wear their masks and stay vigilant as we power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Vaccinations at Des Plaines and other Cook County Health sites are by appointment only. Appointments for Des Plaines will be released at 1 p.m. Thursday, March 4. Appointments can be made through vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the hotline at (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday-Friday.

The Des Plaines location was chosen to ensure that Cook County is providing vaccine access in communities that were hit hard by the virus.

Des Plaines mass vaccination site to open Friday

Marni Pyke
March 5, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210304/des-plaines-mass-vaccination-site-to-open-friday>

Illinois has received over 4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine and administered more than 3 million shots, officials reported Thursday, as registration opened for mass clinics in Des Plaines and the United Center in Chicago amid high demand from anxious seniors.

On Wednesday, 93,302 more people received COVID-19 shots, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported.

The seven-day vaccination average is now at 78,942.

The United Center site, a federal facility open to all Illinoisans, is accepting people age 65 and older exclusively for inoculations through 4 p.m. Sunday.

When appointments opened online at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, there was a huge rush of people trying to register, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Alison Arwady said, noting technical issues were resolved within 30 minutes.

"It's a sign of how much demand there is," she said at an online question-and-answer session.

All drive-through appointments were snapped up for the current three-week lineup, but walk-in appointments remained open, Arwady said.

Registrations can be taken online at zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling (312) 746-4835.

A mass site at Des Plaines that will offer Johnson & Johnson's one-dose vaccine opens its doors Friday. Appointments are required and can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988, although that number rang busy when the Daily Herald checked.

The Des Plaines mass clinic is expected to handle up to 3,500 shots a day, while the United Center facility is estimated to provide 6,000.

Among those finding success at the United Center was Charlie Sikaras, 67, of Warrenville.

"This morning, I was able to secure an appointment on March 15," he said. "The appointment process was very straightforward and I was able to print a ticket along with instructions and FAQs."

Sikaras had signed up with the DuPage County Health Department's vaccination website but had no success landing an appointment.

DuPage leads suburban Cook, Chicago and the collar counties in percentage of people fully vaccinated with 7.42%, but officials have said they're hamstrung by not getting enough doses.

The federal government has delivered 4,007,475 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December. The IDPH reported 2,993,543 shots have been put in arms so far, but Gov. J.B. Pritzker updated that information at a Thursday briefing in Centreville.

"We have administered in Illinois over 3 million doses of lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines for our residents," Pritzker said.

So far, 952,141 people -- 7.47% of the state's population -- have been fully vaccinated. Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. require two doses several weeks apart.

Meanwhile, Illinois has moved up in the U.S. rankings for getting shots into arms per capita. The state is 35th out of 50 for administering vaccines, with 23,851 per 100,000 people, according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control data Thursday. In early February, Illinois was 44th.

But the state remains in the bottom 10 states for receiving doses from the federal government, standing at 41st with 30,979 doses per 100,000 people delivered. In early February, Illinois was 42nd.

The IDPH announced this week it was expanding a program to offer vaccines to federally qualified health centers and hospitals to help underserved communities. "We have to be sure we're getting vaccines to Black and brown people who are too often denied health care that should be their right," Pritzker said Thursday.

Next week, the state will begin allocating 300 to 500 vaccine doses per week to those sites that include Chicago Behavioral Hospital in Des Plaines, Amita Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks in Glendale Heights, and the Lake County Health Department's FQHC in Waukegan.

Amita Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks Vice President Vladimir Radivojevic said details were still being settled, but the hospital was "excited to be partnering with the state to bring the vaccine to our community."

Vaccines would be open first to eligible patients, then to qualifying people in the community.

"This initiative is very good as it provides additional vaccine above and beyond our normal vaccine amounts coming to Lake County," Health Department Executive Director Mark Pfister said.

Also, Illinois reported 1,740 new cases and 42 more deaths from the respiratory disease.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,200 COVID-19 patients Wednesday night.

The state's seven-day average positivity rate is 2.4%.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,193,260, and 20,668 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 73,990 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



Des Plaines, United Center vaccination sites open for appointments Thursday

March 4, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/des-plaines-united-center-vaccination-113824345.html>

The United Center mass vaccination site in Chicago and another in suburban Des Plaines are set to begin accepting appointments online and by phone Thursday.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Tanja and Terrell, appointments for the UC site are expected to go fast in just a few hours. People can make them online or over the phone and then come next week. Shots will start going into arms.

Starting at 8:30 this morning, the online platform Zocdoc will be up and running.

OLIVER KHARRAZ: I think it's a fairer system to put all the data out there at one place versus having hidden pockets where you need to either, you know, work the system or work your connections.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Zocdoc CEO Oliver Kharraz says all 110,000 vaccine appointments for the United Center will be available this morning. He expects demand to reach at least 300 bookings per minute. That's a staggering 18,000 per hour.

OLIVER KHARRAZ: I think there's a fair chance that all 110,000 will go. I think there's still a lot more demand for the vaccine than there is supply.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: This morning, "ABC 7" has learned a portion of those appointments, as much as 19%, will be dedicated to the call center. But some wish the system did more to target communities of color.

MARINA DEL RIOS: A weighted lottery system, or else at least have a list of priority people. If you are in these particular zip codes and these particular communities, then you get first dibs.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Appointments will also open today for this new mass vaccination site in Des Plaines, the first in suburban Cook County to utilize the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

ISRAEL ROCHA JR: Because Johnson & Johnson is a single-dose vaccine, patients do not have to worry about scheduling a second appointment.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Now, the Des Plaines site will open this weekend. It's located in a former Kmart store, and it will become one of the largest mass vaccination sites in the northwest suburbs. Now, for more information on who's eligible for-- eligible for shots at both mass vaccination sites and how to make an appointment, just go to our website at abc7chicago.com.



Illinois opens COVID-19 mass vaccinations sites in Des Plaines, Quincy

March 4, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/illinois-opens-vaccinations-sites-in-des-plaines-quincy>

Governor JB Pritzker announced Wednesday the launch of two additional state-supported mass vaccination sites in Des Plaines and Quincy.

According to the Governor, the sites will launch Thursday, March 4 and provide a combined nearly 4,000 doses per day at full capacity.

The Des Plaines mass vaccination site is located in a former K-Mart store at 1155 E. Oakton St. It marks the fourth such site in Cook County alone.

About 20,000 vaccine appointments are expected to be available in Cook County for seniors and essential workers starting at 1 p.m. Thursday. Those interested can make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by phone at (833) 308-1988. The site will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Officials hope to begin vaccinations Friday or Saturday for those who qualify in Phase 1B.

The Des Plaines locations will be the state's first large-scale site to administer the new Johnson and Johnson vaccine that requires only one dose.

"The COVID-19 vaccine site in Des Plaines is our latest step forward in vaccinating Cook County and our most vulnerable communities," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This new site, which is conveniently located for many residents of the northwest suburbs, will be utilized over the coming months as we progress in our program and vaccine supply increases."

With these new sites coming online, Illinois will have 18 mass vaccination sites across the state of Illinois. This is in addition to the state's mobile vaccination teams which are deployed statewide to reach rural and underserved communities. These teams will move from site to site within counties offering direct assistance to underserved communities with a focus on those unable to visit mass vaccination sites or other clinics, including rural, undocumented, and/or Black and Brown communities.

"With our new operations in Des Plaines and Quincy, Illinois is now operating 18 state-supported mass vaccination sites in addition to the network of more than 800 vaccination locations around the state all trained on one goal: vaccinating as many people as possible, as quickly as possible," said Governor JB Pritzker. "One in six Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine, and as the federal government increases Illinois' deliveries to over 100,000 a day later this month, IDPH and our 97 local health departments are prepared to meet the moment. In the meantime, I encourage all Illinoisans to wear their masks and stay vigilant as we power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic."

The state-supported mass vaccination sites listed below are open to all Illinois residents, who meet the current eligibility requirements and have an appointment through the local health department.

- Tinley Park Convention Center - 18451 Convention Center Dr. - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- North Riverside Health Center - 1800 S. Harlem Ave., North Riverside - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Morton East School Base Clinic - 2423 S. Austin Blvd, Cicero - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Robbins Health Center - 13450 S. Kedzie Ave., Robbins - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Cottage Grove Health Center - 645 Cottage Grove Ave., Ford Heights - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Blue Island Health Center - 12757 S. Western Ave., Blue Island - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Arlington Heights Health Center - 3250 N. Arlington Heights Rd. Arlington Heights - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Triton College - 2000 5th Ave., River Grove - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- South Suburban College - 15800 State St., South Holland - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Thornton Fractional South High School - 18500 Burnham Ave, Lansing - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Orr Building - Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield - OPEN NOW - <http://www.scdph.org/> - (217) 210-8801
- Belle-Clair Fairgrounds - 200 S. Belt E #2650, Belleville - OPEN NOW - <https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/health-department>
- Banterra Center - Southern Illinois University, Carbondale - OPEN NOW - <https://www.jchdonline.org/>
- Carbondale Civic Center - OPEN NOW - <https://www.wchd.org/>
- Winnebago County - 1321 Sandy Hollow Rd., Rockford - OPEN NOW - <https://www.wchd.org/>
- Gateway Convention Center - 1 Gateway Drive., Collinsville - OPEN NOW - <https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/index.php>
- Former K-Mart - 1155 E Oakton St, Des Plaines - OPEN NOW - <https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov>
- Oakley Lindsey Center - 300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy - OPEN NOW - <https://www.adamscountytogether.com/>
- United Center - 1901 W. Madison Street, Chicago - OPEN MARCH 10 - <https://www.zocdoc.com/vaccine/screener?state=IL>

There are now more than 880 vaccination locations in Illinois open to the public. While the state is working to increase the number of vaccines administered daily, it is limited by the amount of vaccine available and allocated by the federal government.



Cynthia Fisher: Patients should know actual, not estimated, prices

Cynthia Fisher
March 4, 2021

<https://triblive.com/opinion/cynthia-fisher-patients-should-know-actual-not-estimated-prices/>

Beginning this year with the implementation of a new Health and Human Services rule, American consumers won the right, upheld by a U.S. Court of Appeals, to access real hospital prices.

The new rule requires hospitals to post their actual prices, including their discounted cash and secret negotiated rates. Armed with this information, patients can finally enjoy financial security that a routine trip to the hospital won't end up in financial ruin. Patients and employers can use transparent prices to shop for the best quality care at the lowest possible prices.

Unfortunately, hospitals have largely sidestepped the spirit, if not the letter, of this rule by providing nearly meaningless cost estimates that are difficult to access and cumbersome to use and don't allow price comparisons, instead of actual prices. These cost estimates are just more pricing games from hospitals in an attempt to prevent patients from controlling their health care finances.

Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh includes a disclaimer on its price list for shoppable services that is representative: "Disclaimer: The information listed above is based on historical data and is an estimate, not a guarantee, of what you may be charged for services."

Such cost estimates provide little to no value because they don't protect against wild deviations from the projected price. Estimates are generally based on average procedure costs in a given region. Yet averages have little meaning given the well-documented fluctuations in health care prices — even at the same hospital.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that the price of a C-section at one Sutter Health hospital in California ranged from \$6,241 to \$60,584. At another location, the price for a complex cardiac procedure varied from \$89,752 to \$515,697.

A 2017 Duke University analysis of 12 online price calculators found that a tonsillectomy and adenoidectomy range from \$1,200 to \$15,360. NPR profiled a family whose health care bills were routinely far more than their online cost estimator projected. They received a \$500 estimate for an MRI, but the actual price was \$2,400.

Estimates do nothing to arrest runaway health care costs or pervasive price opacity. In fact, they contribute to both. Pricing games like cost estimators further confuse patients about real prices. And because they make it difficult for patients to shop for less expensive care, they do not allow market preference to put downward pressure on prices — as real prices do in every other economic sector. (Economic and anecdotal evidence confirm that price transparency can dramatically lower health care prices.)

There's no reason that hospitals can't post their all-in, up-front prices so patients can see them and have immediate recourse if their final bill doesn't match. Under the pricing status quo, patients are required to sign an agreement of

financial responsibilities under penalty of law that requires them to pay whatever hospitals charge — even if they're price gouged or overbilled. This coerced signature amounts to handing hospitals a blank check. Real price transparency flips this perverse dynamic by holding hospitals accountable to bill the same as the posted price.

Some hospitals are demonstrating that publishing real prices can be done. Cook County Hospital in Chicago lists its all-in cash prices for hundreds of commonly shoppable services. These include \$366 for a psychiatric evaluation; \$2,880 for a prostate biopsy; and \$9,770 for a vaginal birth. CCH publishes the cost breakdowns for these services, so patients can see what fraction of the total price is room and board versus physician fees versus supplies. Other hospitals such as MetroHealth in Cleveland and St. Clair in Pittsburgh have published complete lists of their standard charges for thousands of treatments. Then there are the numerous price transparent surgical centers, such as the Surgery Center of Oklahoma and Texas Free Market Surgery, which have long published their service prices, which are small fractions of what big hospital systems charge.

According to a recent Marist poll, a bipartisan supermajority of more than 90% of Americans supports such real published prices. When entrenched hospital systems begin losing customers to transparent providers, they will begin showing their prices to keep them. Widespread consumer demand can therefore usher in the functional, competitive marketplace that Americans deserve.

Only real, guaranteed prices can fix the broken American health care system where patients are blinded from prices then blindsided by inflated bills that come in the mail weeks and months later. Cost estimates are no substitute for actual price transparency, which will finally empower patients to be in control of their health and wealth decisions.

Chicago Tribune

With COVID-19 shots in short supply, some people are getting vaccinated with leftover doses that might otherwise be wasted: ‘Better in your arm than in the trash’

Angie Leventis Lourgos
March 4, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-ethics-leftover-doses-20210304-p467uytqqzflxplirnejbkfeum-story.html>

While taking her mother to get vaccinated against COVID-19, Gillian Malone unexpectedly lucked out and got a shot as well.

Her mom’s appointment was the last slot available at a local grocery store pharmacy. Another patient scheduled around the same time never showed up and couldn’t be reached by phone. So the mom asked the pharmacist if Malone — who didn’t have an appointment and would otherwise be ineligible under current vaccination guidelines — could get that dose, which would have expired within hours and could have gone to waste.

A few minutes later, 29-year-old Malone of the South Loop neighborhood received her first dose and booked an appointment for the booster shot.

“My mom always told me growing up that ‘nothing beats a failure but a try,’” she said. “Better in your arm than in the trash.”

With COVID-19 shots in finite supply — and a complicated and frustrating process to book limited appointments — some people are getting immunized because of no-show or canceled appointments, receiving leftover doses that would potentially be discarded.

South Florida residents have been heading to long-term care facilities and senior communities at the end of the day in search of leftover doses. Crowds recently flocked to a Boston-area mass vaccination site for the chance to snag any extra doses. So-called vaccine chasers have been hanging around clinics and urgent care sites in Sacramento in case any remaining doses might become available.

“I’m hoping to find a place that has cancellations or no-show or extra vaccines so my husband and I can get ours as soon as possible since we are exposed to potential COVID so often due to the nature of his and my (daughter’s) work,” one Chicago-area woman recently posted on Facebook.

She added that her husband is a recovering cancer patient, a comorbidity that puts him at a higher risk for the virus. While access opened up for those with high-risk medical issues in Illinois last week, many health departments in the Chicago area have said they won’t be able to start vaccinating people under 65 with health conditions due to a dearth of supplies.

Supporters of the practice of hunting down leftover doses argue that it helps prevent waste of highly perishable vaccines. Giving the shot to someone — even a person without an official appointment or eligibility according to public health guidelines — contributes in a small way to herd immunity.

Discarded vaccine has been a problem nationwide due to the tricky process of cold-chain logistics and tight time frame for thawing and storing doses, whose potency is threatened with any misstep in the process.

Yet some medical ethics experts caution that this system could reward those who are better equipped to track down leftover vaccine instead of prioritizing those most in need of protection.

University of Chicago bioethicist Laurie Zoloth stressed that the world can't afford to waste doses of these potentially lifesaving vaccines. But she encouraged pharmacies or other vaccination sites to create fair and accessible waiting list systems for any remaining doses.

"If everyone is left to their own devices, then people with more access — to cars, to computers and to information networks — will get to the front of the line, and the poor, non-English speaking or people who have to show up at work every day, who tend to (be) Black and brown citizens of our society, will be at the back of the line," she said. "We know this is not fair, and it is especially unfair in a pandemic whose burdens have fallen disproportionately on these very people."

As for Malone, she credits her good fortune in part to karma: She worked hard to scrounge up vaccine appointments for several older relatives who were eligible and took her mom to get immunized. She said she never tried to manipulate the system, lie or skip the line, and was prepared to patiently wait her turn.

"I think it's important that people understand that it's hard to make this process 'fair' and 'equitable' when time is truly of the essence," she said. "It is inexcusable for a thawed vaccine to go to waste simply because an eligible person did not (attend) their appointment."

Ethical dilemmas

The nation rejoiced when the first two COVID-19 vaccines were authorized in December: The Pfizer and Moderna shots were hailed as humanity's best hope of ending the pandemic.

But these vaccines are also finicky in so many ways, requiring complicated cold-chain logistics, precise freezing temperatures, proper thawing and meticulous preparation before injection. Both need a second booster shot a few weeks after the first dose.

Neither can be refrozen once thawed. The Pfizer vaccine needs to be combined with a separate saline solution and, once mixed, has to be used or discarded after six hours. The Moderna vaccine also must be thrown away after six hours once a multi-dose vial is punctured.

"Potency is reduced every time a vaccine is exposed to an improper condition," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warns in its vaccine handling and storage tool kit. "This includes overexposure to heat, cold, or light at any step in the cold chain. Once lost, potency cannot be restored."

And if there's a little vaccine left in a vial that doesn't amount to a full dose, that portion must be discarded. Because the vials lack preservatives, leftover vaccine from different vials can't be combined or pooled due to the potential for cross-contamination, according to current Food and Drug Administration guidelines, though some medical providers are urging the agency to rethink this prohibition to help meet demand.

As the nation has raced to administer almost 79 million shots so far, vaccine waste has been a major challenge across the country.

A health department in Memphis, Tennessee, reported that more than 2,400 doses were squandered, in part due to severe winter storms in February. An Ohio pharmacy was suspended from the vaccine distribution system after 890 doses allocated to nursing homes were wasted over failure to properly record storage temperatures.

A Phoenix-area health department discarded more than 500 doses from mid-December to late January, in some cases because of damage from shipping or flaws in a vial. But another reason cited was no-show patients or canceled appointments after doses had already been thawed.

These situations can pose tough ethical dilemmas for clinicians, who must sometimes make quick choices to balance preventing waste while still honoring public health priorities.

“We are living in a time where there is so little of this vaccine available, we need to use every dose,” said Craig Klugman, professor of bioethics at DePaul University. “So the idea that at the end of the day when all the appointments are gone there’s still some left over, making sure it goes into arms I think is proper and appropriate action. Better to be in an arm than be thrown away, even if the arm is somebody who’s not in the priority group.”

At the same time, Klugman said there’s inherent unfairness in a “first-come, first-serve” system.

“Because whoever can get there — and has the time and has the transportation — is advantaged,” he said. “So it’s going to perpetuate inequities.”

Like Zoloth, he favors a more equitable process like sign-up sheets for those who are eligible and can be called quickly at the end of the day.

Several local county health departments say that’s how they’re handling extra doses, and the process works.

The Will County Health Department maintains a list of eligible residents who could be at a vaccination site in about 15 minutes. The Lake County Health Department keeps a call list of phase 1a and 1b residents in the event of leftover vaccine.

“It has served us well, and we have not had any wasted doses,” said Lake County Health Department Executive Director Mark Pfister.

While people have shown up at DuPage County Health Department vaccination sites seeking leftover doses, individuals without appointments are turned away and instructed to register and wait for an appointment, said spokeswoman Stephanie Calvillo. To fill any canceled appointments, the county will “conduct real-time outreach to individuals on the registration list.”

The Cook County Department of Public Health only administers vaccine by appointment in part to prevent crowds that could increase transmission of the virus. Any no-show or canceled appointments are reopened to others in the current or previous vaccination phase.

“We discourage people from walking up without appointments to avoid lines at pharmacies and other locations, which increase the likelihood of the spread of COVID, and so we ensure the vaccine is being given to individuals in phase 1a or 1b,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

New vaccine, extending supply

Public health experts carefully crafted a vaccination hierarchy based on those most at risk of contracting — and dying from — the new virus, as well as professions deemed most critical to society.

But reality has sometimes deviated from the script, particularly when clinicians have been faced with the prospect of expiring vaccine and difficult circumstances.

Some local hospitals were reporting that an alarming number of employees were deciding to forgo or delay their shot during phase 1a; the Chicago health commissioner announced that a few older patients with health risks could be vaccinated ahead of schedule if a hospital had extra doses after offering them to all health care workers who were eligible.

In Oregon, a group of health care workers stuck in a blizzard on their way back from a mass vaccination in early February went from car to car inoculating stranded drivers. The shots were intended for other patients, but “the snow meant those doses wouldn’t make it to them before they expired,” the health department said, according to The Associated Press.

Some of this pressure might be eased with a new available vaccine: The Food and Drug Administration a few days ago authorized for emergency use a one-dose shot by Johnson & Johnson that is expected to increase overall vaccine supply.

This vaccine doesn't require many of the complicated cold-chain logistics of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, which could open up more possibilities for access.

In an ideal world, mobile vaccination units would go to barbershops and churches and other community centers where people congregate, Klugman said. He noted that a house-to-house vaccine campaign was successful in fighting smallpox in the 1960s.

While the first two COVID-19 vaccines haven't been amenable to these approaches, Klugman said he's optimistic that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine — which only requires refrigeration — could improve access and equitable distribution.

"The reason this is all appointment-based is that you need to know how many doses to defrost for the day," he said. "And you need to be sure that if you open a vial, you're going to use all the doses in there."

Some of this type of outreach is already in the works locally: The Chicago Department of Public Health on Wednesday announced it would be offering mobile vaccination programs for homebound seniors and those residing in independent living facilities.

Another strategy could be to extend the supply of existing vaccine: Some pharmacists have urged the FDA to allow the "pooling" of vaccine left over in different vials to get an extra full dose rather than discarding it.

Klugman conjectured that if patients were perhaps willing to sign a waiver acknowledging some risk of cross-contamination, providers could have a separate sign-up list or lottery for these pooled doses that would otherwise be thrown away.

As for Malone, she recently shared her experience of getting a leftover dose on the Facebook page Chicago Vaccine Hunters, a site where members offer advice and help one another book COVID-19 immunization appointments.

One member raised concerns that Malone's vaccination skirted protocol, since public health groups have prioritized these shots for seniors and certain front-line professions.

Yet hundreds of others reacted positively to her story, some quickly posting in her defense, some asking for advice on how they, too, might get a leftover dose of vaccine.

The member who posted the negative comment soon deleted it.

"I am so happy for you!" one Chicago woman wrote under Malone's story. "Better in your arm than discarded as medical waste."



Thousands of vaccine appointments open Thursday in Chicago, Des Plaines

Glenn Marshall, Gaynor Hall
March 4, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/more-vaccine-appointments-opening-thursday-in-chicago-des-plaines/>

Nearly 30,000 seniors now have vaccine appointments as the United Center opened registration Thursday, but it wasn't without some headaches.

Starting Thursday afternoon, people were able to start booking their appointments to receive the vaccine at an old Kmart on Oakton Street in Des Plaines. The Des Plaines locations will be the state's first large-scale site to administer the new Johnson and Johnson vaccine that requires only one dose.

About 20,000 vaccine appointments are expected to be available in Cook County for seniors and essential workers starting at 1 p.m. Thursday.

The Des Plaines location will also be the first in Cook County to distribute the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Vaccinations would possibly begin as early tomorrow. That date could change due to the fact that there was a delay in shipment for the Johnson & Johnson vaccination — but once it arrives it will be available for essential workers and people over 65 years old.

Once up and running, officials are expecting up to 3,500 people would be able to get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Des Plaines.

Vaccinations at Des Plaines and other Cook County Health sites are by appointment only. Appointments can be made through vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the hotline at (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday.

Getting the Johnson & Johnson vaccination means less hassle with booking multiple appointments. Because it is a single dose, patients do not have to worry about scheduling a second appointment.

In Chicago, the United Center opened up its vaccination appointment registration at 8:30 a.m. Thursday with more than 110,000 appointments available. However, after the appointments went live, many people complained about phone issues and long wait times to get an appointment online.

Ramon Letkey, an 87-year-old Korean War veteran, was having no luck getting the COVID-19 vaccine. When appointments opened Thursday morning for seniors, who have top priority for signups, his daughter tells WGN she tried several times to reach the call center.

"After two hours and five minutes, it went into another prompt and the voicemail box message was full. You can't leave a message," said JoAnne Baluk. "My heart just dropped and I was so aggravated and disgusted."

Eventually, Baluk was able to get her father an appointment for Wednesday through the Zocdoc website.

After senior appointments are filled, people younger than 65 with underlying health conditions will be able to register Sunday.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot is urging people to remain patient.

“It’s the first opportunity,” Lightfoot said. “I think we have a lot of enthusiastic people, but we’ll get to folks. We just need them to be a little bit patient.”

To sign up for an appointment at the United Center visit zodoc.com/vaccine or call 312-746-4835. The hotline is open Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. and Sunday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. On Thursday, March 4 the hotline will open at 8:30 a.m.

The Illinois Department of Public Health urges residents who have received their first vaccination to sign up for the “V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker” to communicate directly with the CDC about any potential side effects and receive texts reminding them about their second dose.

To learn more about Illinois’ COVID-19 Community Vaccination Program, [click here](#). To contact the Vaccine Sign-Up Hotline, call **833-308-1988** 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday.



United Center, Des Plaines mass vaccination sites begin accepting appointments

Zocdoc.com/vaccine hosting United Center appointments, which are also available by phone

Jessica D'Onofrio, Craig Wall and Eric Hornig
March 4, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/united-center-vaccine-des-plaines-covid-registration-zocdoc-chicago-illinois/10387796/>

The Chicago area's newest mass vaccination sites opened for appointments Thursday.

COVID 19 vaccine appointments for the United Center can now be scheduled at [Zocdoc.com/vaccine](https://www.zocdoc.com/vaccine) and by phone, while a new site in Des Plaines is also accepting new appointments.

A total of 110,000 appointments have been made available for the United Center mass vaccination site. The first appointments opened at 8:30 a.m. Thursday for seniors. After the signup period for seniors, anyone eligible for a vaccine as part of the Phase 1B+ group can begin scheduling appointments at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 7.

As of 3 p.m., 27,819 seniors had signed up for appointments at the United Center.

To register for an appointment at the United Center, visit www.zocdoc.com/vaccine or call the multilingual hotline (312) 746-4835 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

"I think it's a fairer system to put all the availability out there in one place, versus having hidden pockets where you need to either work the system or work your connections," said Oliver Kharraz, founder & CEO of Zocdoc.

Chicago's Dept. of Public Health and the Chicago Fire Department are partnering on a pilot program that will bring vaccines to homebound seniors. Paramedics will administer vaccines in residents' homes if they are unable to travel to a vaccination site. Those interested can complete a survey at: <https://redcap.link/MobileCOVIDVax>.

While tens of thousands of appointments are available, organizers are asking for patience as massive demand threatens to overwhelm the system; the online sign up portal crashed in during the first half hour it was open.

"Some people weren't able to get through right immediately, you know, just a sign of how much demand there is for appointments," said Dr. Allison Arwady, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. "Bu, you know, by within about 20 to 30 minutes, everything was up again and going smoothly."

For 70-year-old Paul Penzick, sign up was a breeze; it only took about 10 minutes for him to get registered for his appointment when he tried around 9 a.m.

"I was expecting a nightmare and it just flew right through," he said. "It's not so much relieved. I'm not frustrated anymore."

Gabriel Alvavara drove from Prospect Heights to the United Center site, He came looking for a number to call to secure a slot for when the site opens next week. He has diabetes and cholesterol issues.

"I'm working at Goodwill and I'm scared because everybody has the second one and I need the first one," Alvavara said.

At 8:30 a.m. Zocdoc was up and running for seniors aged 65 and over to schedule their first vaccine at the United Center. Alvavara called the multi-lingual hotline 200 times with no luck.

ABC7 tried making an appointment on Zocdoc, only to get sent in circles.

"I don't know what happened right now right here in Chicago but I'm looking for somebody to help me," Alvavara said.

Alvavara was able to get through to the phone line at 10 a.m. and was put on hold.

An organization trying to help immigrants and undocumented people get registered online also said the system proved frustrating. The alternative, calling the phone line, was even worse.

"We were on hold for so long, you know, 20, 30, 40 minutes on hold trying to get a hold of somebody," said Sarah Walker of Right 2 Family Vaccine Campaign. And in the end, they never got through to the hotline.

Dr. Arwady said the system is equipped to handle about 600 calls at any one moment, so the amount of demand will affect how easy or difficult it is to get through.

"But keep calling," she said. "There are appointments, and then we'll work to get folks in."

Several people came to the United Center who were confused by all of the information over the past few weeks and days.

Ferry Jordan thought she had an appointment and could get vaccinated Thursday, showing up only to be turned away.

"But it's OK with all this mass vaccination," Jordan said. "I can understand that. It's not the easiest thing to do but you ask questions and you keep trying."

Officials emphasized that appointments cannot be made on site, and must be signed up for either online or by phone.

Zocdoc expects all 110,000 vaccine appointments at the UC to get booked up Thursday, with demand estimated at 300 bookings-per-minute, or more than 18,000 per-hour.

"I think there's a fair chance that all 110,000 will go," Kharraz said. "I think there's still a lot more demand for the vaccine than there's supply."

ABC 7 has learned a portion of those appointments, as much as 19%, will be dedicated to the call center. But some wish the system did more to target communities of color.

"A weighted lottery system," suggested Dr. Marina Del Rios, Vaccine Corp Partnership. "Or else at least have a list of priority people. If you are in these particular zip codes and these particular communities, then you get first dibs."

Located in a former K-Mart store, the new mass vaccination site in Des Plaines is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the northwest suburbs. It opens Thursday and officials hope to begin vaccinations Friday or Saturday for the people in Phase 1B.

Appointments for the Des Plaines mass vaccination site can be made starting Thursday at 1 p.m. at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by phone at (833) 308-1988. The site will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle was joined by other public officials as she toured this new location at 1155 East Oakton Street in Des Plaines Wednesday.

The National Guard-supported site will be the first in Cook County to utilize the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The county is expecting 18,000 J&J doses to arrive from the federal government Thursday. The goal is to vaccinate up to 3,500 people per day.

"Because Johnson & Johnson is a single-dose vaccine, patients do not have to worry about scheduling a second appointment," said Israel Rocha, Jr., CEO, Cook County Health. "That's an advantage that we'll be able to be afforded to make sure that we can actually see even more individuals through sites like today."

"We'll continue to urge patience in this vaccination process. As we know, the vaccine supply has been limited, and while it's improving, we still cannot meet demand," Preckwinkle said.

This Des Plaines site is the fourth large-scale vaccination center in suburban Cook County, joining facilities in Tinley Park, River Grove and South Holland. That's in addition to National Guard-supported sites at several Cook County Health centers.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: United Center Vaccine Appointments, Warning on St. Patrick's Day

March 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-united-center-vaccine-appointments-chicagos-warning-on-st-patricks-day/2454443/>

Of the more than 100,000 appointments that were made available at the United Center mass vaccination site on Thursday, officials say more than 27,000 have been filled.

Meanwhile, Chicago officials are still warning against St. Patrick's Day celebrations even as the city continues to lift restrictions.

Here are the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic across Illinois today:

Illinois' First Case of More Contagious Brazilian COVID-19 Variant Reported in Chicago

The Chicago Department of Public Health reported the city's first case of the Brazilian COVID-19 variant Friday, which also marked the first such case in Illinois, according to health officials.

The case of the coronavirus variant P.1, which was identified by a research team at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, was confirmed in an individual who hasn't recently traveled outside Illinois.

The Brazil variant is a distinct variation from those seen in Britain and South Africa and thought to be more transmissible than the coronavirus strain that was prevalent at the beginning of the pandemic.

Read more [here](#).

Chicago Could Enter Phase 1C This Month, But What About Illinois?

Chicago health officials say the city could enter the next phase of its vaccine rollout as early as this month, but what about the rest of the state?

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Friday that an estimated date was not yet available, saying the state is still working to vaccinate residents under its expanded Phase 1B Plus.

"I don't have a date for you yet again because we're trying to get through we have millions of people still in 1B Plus, 1B and 1A that have not been vaccinated," Pritzker said Friday. "But we want to make sure that we get to a certain level, you know, probably beyond 50% in each of the categories that's allowed before we start to open it up to another category."

Illinois entered Phase 1B Plus in late-February, expanding eligibility to include people with certain underlying conditions and comorbidities, but much of the Chicago area, including the city itself, opted not to join in that expansion, citing a lack of doses.

Chicago, however, remains on track to enter Phase 1C at the end of March, the city's top doctor said earlier this week, adding that the next phase could begin even earlier than anticipated.

Read more [here](#).

O'Hare Hilton Opens as Vaccine Site for Public Transit Employees

The Hilton Chicago O'Hare Airport Hotel on Friday began administering coronavirus vaccines to public transportation workers.

The site, which is not open to the public, will dispense shots from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, according to a statement from the Chicago Department of Aviation.

"These vaccines provide a source of optimism for a return to normal operations as we continue working to keep Chicago connected to the world throughout this pandemic," CDA Commissioner Jamie L. Rhee said in a statement.

Appointments will be required for all vaccinations and walk-ins will not be allowed. The site will administer the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which requires only one dose.

Read more [here](#).

Leftover United Center Appointments Expected to Open to Other Eligible Residents Sunday

If any of the 100,000 appointments now available for seniors at the United Center mass vaccination site remain unclaimed by Sunday afternoon, they are then expected to open up to other eligible Illinois residents, officials said.

The appointments will be reserved for residents 65 years of age and older until 4 p.m. Sunday, according to the city. After that time, if some appointments are still available, they would then open up to an additional group, city health officials said.

"Appointments will stay open only for seniors, people 65 and plus, from Thursday at 8:30 a.m. all the way through Sunday at 4 p.m. So Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday is the time that if you are over the age of 65, you know someone over the age of 65, please help them get an appointment," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said this week. "Then, once we get to Sunday, if we don't see all of the appointments taken by people over 65, starting 4 p.m. on Sunday is when we would then open up to people with underlying conditions."

Of the more than 100,000 appointments that were made available at the United Center mass vaccination site on Thursday, just over 27,000 had been claimed by Thursday evening, health officials said.

Coronavirus in Illinois: 1,442 New Cases, 33 Deaths, Over 131K Vaccinations

Health officials in Illinois on Friday reported 1,442 new cases of coronavirus, along with 33 additional deaths and more than 131,000 vaccine doses administered in the past 24 hours.

According to the latest data from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Friday's new confirmed and probable cases brought the state to 1,194,702 cases of coronavirus since the pandemic began.

The 33 new deaths reported Friday bring the state to 20,700 fatalities during the pandemic, according to IDPH.

Read more [here](#).

All 1st Dose Appointments Booked at Cook County Mass Vax Sites, Health Dept. Says

If you were hoping to sign up at one of Cook County's four mass vaccination locations, including the newly-opened Des Plaines site, it appears all first-dose appointments have been booked for now, county officials said.

As of Thursday afternoon, an alert on Cook County's vaccine registration website said "there are no more first dose appointments available at Cook County Community Vaccination locations."

The county urged patience and said vaccine supply is expected to "increase in the coming weeks."

It was not immediately clear when more appointments would become available, but the alert remained on the site as of Friday afternoon.



Cook County Health Officials Investigate Large Wedding In Niles

March 4, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-health-officials-investigate-040700621.html>

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Thursday night was investigating a large wedding held this week in Niles, where few masks were seen and the dance floor was reportedly open. CBS 2's Charlie De Mar reports.

Video Transcript

IRIKA SARGENT: We begin with the big suburban wedding now under investigation by the Cook County Health Department.

BRAD EDWARDS: Officials want to know if the party violated COVID rules. CBS 2's Charlie De Mar takes us inside the mostly maskless affair. He's live in Niles. Good evening, Charlie.

CHARLIE DE MAR: Good evening, Brad and Irika. To be clear, weddings are allowed to be held, given the current phase of the reopening plan that we are in for the state. But there are guidelines as to how big the weddings can be and what activities can and can't happen. And that is what has the health department taking a closer look.

From the outside looking in through the front doors, a front room full of people are gathered for a wedding. Pictures provided to CBS 2 from inside show the bride posing for pictures. Several groups socializing, not a mask in sight. The wedding was Wednesday night at the White Eagle events and convention center in Niles. An online review posted today reads "incredible wedding, gorgeous furnishings and plenty of space for many guests. Chicago is back in action."

Well, not exactly. In the age of COVID restrictions, weddings are allowed in Illinois, but capacity is limited to 50 people or 50% of the room's capacity, whichever is lower. And dance floors should remain closed. Sources tell CBS 2 there were well over 50 people and the dance floor was wide open.

- Is there someone who can explain how this wedding was allowed to happen?

CHARLIE DE MAR: In December, we were the first to show you a large wedding at the Hilton Chicago Northbrook. The hotel was hit with heavy fines, and even got the attention of Governor JB Pritzker.

JB PRITZKER: It's very irresponsible. And it's also irresponsible of the hotel to host an event like that.

CHARLIE DE MAR: As for the Wednesday wedding at the White Eagle, the county health department has launched a formal investigation to determine if the venue violated state and local guidelines.

Now today, we have emailed, called, messaged, even went inside the banquet to try and get a response for the story, and have yet to hear back. We are live in Niles tonight. Charlie De Mar, CBS 2 News. Brad.

United Center, Des Plaines mass vaccination sites begin accepting appointments

InterNewsCast
March 5, 2021

<https://internewscast.com/united-center-des-plaines-mass-vaccination-sites-begin-accepting-appointments/>

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While tens of thousands of appointments are available, organizers are asking for patience as massive demand threatens to overwhelm the system; the online sign up portal crashed in during the first half hour it was open.

"Some people weren't able to get through right immediately, you know, just a sign of how much demand there is for appointments," said Dr. Allison Arwady, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health. "Bu, you know, by within about 20 to 30 minutes, everything was up again and going smoothly."

For 70-year-old Paul Penzick, sign up was a breeze; it only took about 10 minutes for him to get registered for his appointment when he tried around 9 a.m.

"I was expecting a nightmare and it just flew right through," he said. "It's not so much relieved. I'm not frustrated anymore."

Gabriel Alvavara drove from Prospect Heights to the United Center site, He came looking for a number to call to secure a slot for when the site opens next week. He has diabetes and cholesterol issues.

"I'm working at Goodwill and I'm scared because everybody has the second one and I need the first one," Alvavara said.

At 8:30 a.m. Zocdoc was up and running for seniors aged 65 and over to schedule their first vaccine at the United Center. Alvavara called the multi-lingual hotline 200 times with no luck.

ABC7 tried making an appointment on Zocdoc, only to get sent in circles.

"I don't know what happened right now right here in Chicago but I'm looking for somebody to help me," Alvavara said.

Alvavara was able to get through to the phone line at 10 a.m. and was put on hold.

An organization trying to help immigrants and undocumented people get registered online also said the system proved frustrating. The alternative, calling the phone line, was even worse.

"We were on hold for so long, you know, 20, 30, 40 minutes on hold trying to get a hold of somebody," said Sarah Walker of Right 2 Family Vaccine Campaign. And in the end, they never got through to the hotline.

Dr. Arwady said the system is equipped to handle about 600 calls at any one moment, so the amount of demand will affect how easy or difficult it is to get through.

"But keep calling," she said. "There are appointments, and then we'll work to get folks in."

Several people came to the United Center who were confused by all of the information over the past few weeks and days.

Ferry Jordan thought she had an appointment and could get vaccinated Thursday, showing up only to be turned away.

"But it's OK with all this mass vaccination," Jordan said. "I can understand that. It's not the easiest thing to do but you ask questions and you keep trying."

Officials emphasized that appointments cannot be made on site, and must be signed up for either online or by phone.

Zocdoc expects all 110,000 vaccine appointments at the UC to get booked up Thursday, with demand estimated at 300 bookings-per-minute, or more than 18,000 per-hour.

"I think there's a fair chance that all 110,000 will go," Kharraz said. "I think there's still a lot more demand for the vaccine than there's supply."

ABC 7 has learned a portion of those appointments, as much as 19%, will be dedicated to the call center. But some wish the system did more to target communities of color.

"A weighted lottery system," suggested Dr. Marina Del Rios, Vaccine Corp Partnership. "Or else at least have a list of priority people. If you are in these particular zip codes and these particular communities, then you get first dibs."

Located in a former K-Mart store, the new mass vaccination site in Des Plaines is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the northwest suburbs. It opens Thursday and officials hope to begin vaccinations Friday or Saturday for the people in Phase 1B.

Appointments for the Des Plaines mass vaccination site can be made starting Thursday at 1 p.m. at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by phone at (833) 308-1988. The site will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle was joined by other public officials as she toured this new location at 1155 East Oakton Street in Des Plaines Wednesday.

The National Guard-supported site will be the first in Cook County to utilize the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The county is expecting 18,000 J&J doses to arrive from the federal government Thursday. The goal is to vaccinate up to 3,500 people per day.

"Because Johnson & Johnson is a single-dose vaccine, patients do not have to worry about scheduling a second appointment," said Israel Rocha, Jr., CEO, Cook County Health. "That's an advantage that we'll be able to be afforded to make sure that we can actually see even more individuals through sites like today."

“We’ll continue to urge patience in this vaccination process. As we know, the vaccine supply has been limited, and while it’s improving, we still cannot meet demand,” Preckwinkle said.

This Des Plaines site is the fourth large-scale vaccination center in suburban Cook County, joining facilities in Tinley Park, River Grove and South Holland. That’s in addition to National Guard-supported sites at several Cook County Health centers.

Chicago Tribune

River Forest District 90 seeks to extend in-person school day; could start April 5

Steve Schering
March 4, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/river-forest/ct-rfl-blended-learning-tl-0311-20210304-fmhctbwuyney7bkl3t4tbzfsu-story.html>

With local COVID-19 metrics appearing favorable and a low community positivity rate, administrators at River Forest District 90 say they are looking at extending the school day for both in-person and remote learning students.

Administrators revealed at the March 2 school board meeting preliminary plans to lengthen the instructional day at both the elementary and middle school levels for all students for the remainder of the school year. Officials are hopeful the change can occur when students return from spring break on April 5.

“We aspire to have students here as much as possible, assuming we can do it safely in compliance with what we’re receiving from the state board of education, the Cook County health department and other local entities,” superintendent Ed Condon said.

Condon didn’t offer any specific plans, but said more details will be presented to the school board at its March 16 meeting.

River Forest District 90 began a “blended” learning model in October whereby some students would attend in-person classes while those choosing to remain fully remote would join virtually. In-person learning was paused last fall due to increased COVID-19 metrics; however, the district has been operating under its blended model since mid-December.

Among the issues that need to be addressed prior to increasing the school day include maskless time for students, which includes possible on-site lunch and recess, as well as space issues at Roosevelt Middle School.

“The biggest challenge we’re up against is this middle school density issue,” Condon said. “The reality is with faculty and staff, Roosevelt Middle School, on a daily basis under normal conditions, has just around 765 individuals. This is a school building that was built around 100 years ago and it’s had five additions to try to make it better suited to the needs of the community, but it has some physical limitations.”

Condon said the district could consider sending some students home for lunch and will have to address on-site supervision availability with its faculty union. The district will also have to plan for recess should inclement weather occur.

River Forest Education Association members Shana Joyce, Louisa Staff and Amy McFarlane submitted a comment on behalf of the union, asking the district to follow guidelines established by the COVID-19 advisory panel that met last year when establishing a new schedule.

The RFEA also requested the district prioritize an outdoor lunch option and expressed concerns over desk spacing in some elementary school classrooms.

“It is crucial we maintain a high level of precaution,” the union members said. “We hope a lunch plan can be constructed that meets the goal of in-person learning time, but also respects the preventative measures that are currently in place.”

Administrators say the district has been in constant contact with local health and safety professionals, adding that Condon and three school nurses recently met with three doctors from Rush Hospital's infection prevention team to discuss safety measures.

Condon cited River Forest's COVID-19 positivity rate of less than 5%, as well as the village having fewer than 100 cases per 100,000 residents, as reasons to believe expanding the school day can safely occur.

"The transmission rates and overall positivity rate in River Forest, and generally most surrounding environments, is much lower than it has ever been, or at least since late last spring," Condon said. "This work is occurring and is taking place hopefully in a way people agree has integrity."

As administrators finalize a plan to bring to the public, Condon said district families should soon receive a "quick hit" questionnaire, which will be used to gauge interest from families and better help the district plan for the in-person portion of the extended school day.

Board members appeared supportive of the plan, saying they look forward to seeing additional details later this month.

"This is very fluid throughout the past year," board president Rich Moore said. "One phrase I hope the community continues to hear is we are proceeding in an abundance of caution. It's definitely still front and center that the decisions we're making assure that people, children, teachers and the community at large remain safe."



Des Plaines mass COVID vaccination site opens

WBBM Newsradio Staff Report

March 5, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/des-plaines-mass-covid-vaccination-site-to-open-friday>

The latest mass vaccination site in Cook County is set to open Friday.

The site located in a former K-Mart store at 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines began taking appointments Thursday afternoon. Health officials said the demand for appointments is already high.

The Des Plaines mass vaccination site is the first site in Illinois to distribute the Johnson and Johnson single-shot vaccine.

Once the site is fully operational and vaccine is available, the state said it can provide up to 3,500 doses a day.

“The COVID-19 vaccine site in Des Plaines is our latest step forward in vaccinating Cook County and our most vulnerable communities,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “This new site, which is conveniently located for many residents of the northwest suburbs, will be utilized over the coming months as we progress in our program and vaccine supply increases.”

Anyone in groups 1A or 1B can make an appointment from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Illinois announced the launch of the Des Plaines site Wednesday, along with another location set to open in Quincy.

“With our new operations in Des Plaines and Quincy, Illinois is now operating 18 state-supported mass vaccination sites in addition to the network of more than 800 vaccination locations around the state all trained on one goal: vaccinating as many people as possible, as quickly as possible,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a statement. “One in six Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine, and as the federal government increases Illinois’ deliveries to over 100,000 a day later this month, IDPH and our 97 local health departments are prepared to meet the moment. In the meantime, I encourage all Illinoisans to wear their masks and stay vigilant as we power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic.”



Des Plaines mass COVID-19 vaccination site opens Friday; first to distribute Johnson & Johnson shot

Erik Runge

March 5, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/des-plaines-mass-covid-19-vaccination-site-opens-friday-first-to-distribute-johnson-johnson-shot/>

A new mass COVID-19 vaccination site is opening in Des Plaines Friday.

It is the first site in Illinois to distribute the Johnson and Johnson single-shot vaccine. When the site is fully operational, up to 3500 people a day will be able to get their vaccination with an appointment.

The site, which is Cook County's fourth vaccination center, is located in the 1100 block of East Oakton Street.

Anyone in groups 1A or 1B can make an appointment online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the hotline at (833) 308-1988.

Health officials say the demand is already high.



Des Plaines COVID Vaccine Site Opens Friday

March 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/des-plaines-covid-vaccine-site-opens-friday/2454547/>

A new mass vaccination site in suburban Des Plaines opens Friday, the first large-scale facility to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Illinois.

The Cook County Health Department's fourth large-scale vaccination site is located at 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines.

Appointments at the new location opened at 1 p.m. Thursday and can be made from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Cook County officials said they expected to administer 800 vaccines on the first day Friday, with the goal of giving 2,800 doses per day next week. The health department previously said the site would administer nearly 3,500 doses per day once it's "fully optimized" and vaccine is available. Officials noted the Des Plaines site will be the first large-scale facility statewide to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

"This is a critical time in our fight against COVID-19 and providing all three FDA approved vaccines ensures that our residents are afforded every vaccine option currently available," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. "The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective in protecting people against severe illness and death. The fact that it is a one-dose vaccine is exciting as it allows people to protect themselves in just one visit."

Thousands of doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine were slated to arrive in Cook County on Thursday, after shipments of the third vaccine to receive federal approval began earlier this week.

Chicago and Illinois are expecting to receive an estimated dose count of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine above 100,000 by the end of the week.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said doses are expected across the state, with roughly 22,000 planned for Chicago and another 83,000 for the remaining regions.

More than 90% of the newly authorized vaccine will go to mass vaccination sites throughout the state, with the remaining doses shipped to other providers, officials said. IDPH noted that the total doses does not include those going to Chicago, which will receive its own allocation.

In addition to the Des Plaines appointments, more than 100,000 appointments for seniors also opened Thursday morning for the mass vaccination site at the United Center, with plans to begin vaccinations next week.

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"One in six Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine, and as the federal government increases Illinois' deliveries to over 100,000 a day later this month, IDPH and our 97 local health departments are prepared to meet the moment," he continued. "In the meantime, I encourage all Illinoisans to wear their masks and stay vigilant as we power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic."



All 1st Dose Appointments Booked at Cook County Mass Vax Sites, Health Dept. Says

The Des Plaines site is the first large-scale facility statewide to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine

March 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/all-1st-dose-appointments-booked-at-cook-county-mass-vax-sites-health-dept-says/2454800/>

If you were hoping to sign up at one of Cook County's four mass vaccination locations, including the newly-opened Des Plaines site, it appears all first-dose appointments have been booked for now, county officials said.

As of Thursday afternoon, an alert on Cook County's vaccine registration website said "there are no more first dose appointments available at Cook County Community Vaccination locations."

The county urged patience and said vaccine supply is expected to "increase in the coming weeks."

It was not immediately clear when more appointments would become available, but the alert remained on the site as of Friday afternoon.

The newest mass vaccination site in suburban Des Plaines opened Friday, the first large-scale facility to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Illinois.

Appointments at the new location opened at 1 p.m. Thursday and officials said residents could sign up from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Cook County officials said they expected to administer 800 vaccines on the first day Friday, with the goal of giving 2,800 doses per day next week. The health department previously said the site would administer nearly 3,500 doses per day once it's "fully optimized" and vaccine is available.

"This is a critical time in our fight against COVID-19 and providing all three FDA approved vaccines ensures that our residents are afforded every vaccine option currently available," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. "The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been proven to be safe and effective in protecting people against severe illness and death. The fact that it is a one-dose vaccine is exciting as it allows people to protect themselves in just one visit."

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CRAIN'S 2021 NOTABLE HEALTH CARE HEROES: Christine Haley, Director of housing, Cook County Health

March 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/awards/christine-haley>

As director of housing for Cook County Health, Christine Haley focuses on the needs of patients experiencing homelessness, which disproportionately affects African Americans. The pandemic exacerbated health disparities in Cook County and highlighted the impact of the social determinants of health. Haley worked with community partners to convert a South Side YMCA into a medical respite center to provide isolation and recovery. For COVID-19 patients facing housing insecurity, there were not a lot of options for remaining safely isolated. Under Haley's direction, the South Side medical respite program served 51 individuals, all of whom completed their public health-directed isolation period with medical guidance from a care team. For Haley, the crisis became personal in the spring when her daughter was hospitalized. Haley trained resident assistants while sitting beside her daughter's bed.



Illinois sets single-day vaccine record as Des Plaines mass vaccination site opens

Sun-Times Media Wire
March 5, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/illinois-sets-single-day-vaccine-record-as-des-plaines-mass-vaccination-site-opens>

A new mass vaccination site opened Friday morning in suburban Des Plaines as state health officials announced a new record for most COVID-19 vaccinations administered in a day.

The new site, at 1155 E. Oakton Street, is the first large-scale vaccination center in Illinois administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which only requires a single dose, Cook County Health officials said in a statement.

As many as 35,000 vaccines per day are expected to be doled out when the site "is fully optimized and when adequate vaccine is available," officials said.

Appointments for the Des Plaines location can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the hotline at 833-308-1988.

The opening comes as the state reported a record number of vaccinations in a day.

On Thursday, 131,882 doses were administered in Illinois, breaking the previous high of 130,021 given Feb. 24, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Illinois health officials Friday also reported 1,442 new cases of COVID-19, along with 33 additional deaths. Twelve of the latest fatalities were reported in Cook County.

The latest cases were reported among 103,336 specimens over the last 24 hours, health officials said. The state's positivity rate is now at 2.2%.

So far, Illinois' coronavirus death toll is up to 20,700. Nearly 1.2 million people were confirmed to carry the virus over the past year.



83-year-old grandfather among hundreds to receive COVID vaccine at Des Plaines site

Rob Hart

March 5, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/hundreds-receive-covid-vaccine-at-des-plaines-site>

A former big box store is now a mass vaccination site in the northwest suburbs.

The old K-Mart store at Oakton and Lee Street in Des Plaines was the last K-Mart in Illinois when it closed in April 2020. Now it is the latest mass vaccination site in Cook County, and among the first in the state to distribute the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

Cook County Health officials said 800 vaccine doses will be distributed Friday. They hope to distribute 2,800 doses per day. The site is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

Appointments for the Des Plaines location can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the hotline at 833-308-1988.

Jack Alberts and his wife were among the first in line for shots Friday morning. He started to cry as he talked about how he has not been able to see his grandchildren for a year.

"I haven't seen my grandchildren...in over a year," he said choking back tears.

He said he's looking forward to getting the vaccine.

"I'm 83 years old, and we have all these things where they keep saying that if we get it (COVID-19) we're in big trouble," Alberts said.

Chicago Veterinarian Scott Rovner said the search for a COVID vaccine appointment was like the search for concert tickets. He said he kept refreshing the vaccine registration website until an appointment became available.

He said the vaccine was the most important thing to happen to him in a K-Mart in quite some time.

"The last time I was in a K Mart was 5 years ago. And I never thought it would be such a momentous occasion (when I came back)," Rovner said.

The opening of the Des Plaines site comes as the state reported a record number of vaccinations in a day.

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The state's positivity rate is now at 2.2 percent.



Cook County investigates wedding reception in Niles after photos show no masks, open dance floor

Mike Krauser

March 5, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/health-department-investigates-wedding-reception-in-niles>

A wedding earlier this week in Niles has caught the attention of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The wedding on Wednesday night at the White Eagle Events and Convention Center is under investigation, because of reports about the number of guests, a lack of safety protocols, and the potential it could have been a super-spreader event.

Photos shared with CBS 2 show people were not wearing masks. There was also reported to be a dance floor, which is prohibited under the state's COVID-19 guidelines.

Events, like weddings, are currently capped at 50 people or 50 percent of the room's capacity, whichever is fewer, in Illinois' current phase of reopening.

It is alleged there were many more people than what should have been allowed at the White Eagle, which could be cited and fined. In December, another local wedding with similar circumstances caused the Hilton Chicago/Northbrook to be hit with fines.



Illinois' vaccine leader? It's not Chicago.

The region we all could learn from turns out to be Peoria. Here's why.

A.D. Quig

March 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/illinois-vaccine-leader-its-not-chicago>

Often overshadowed by the metropolis to its northeast, Peoria outshines Chicago and much of Illinois when it comes to coronavirus vaccinations.

Peoria County tops all 102 Illinois counties in pushing vaccines to its most vulnerable residents. As of March 4, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health, 84 percent of county residents 65 or older had received a first dose, two times the rate for Chicago and Cook County. Some 51 percent of Peoria seniors had been fully vaccinated as of that date, well above the statewide rate of 20 percent.

Surprised? So was Monica Hendrickson, public health administrator at the Peoria City/County Health Department, at a Feb. 24 event when Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced that "if Peoria County were a state, it would be No. 2 in the nation for total doses administered per 100,000 residents."

"I'm very happy I had a face mask on, on live TV," Hendrickson says. "Otherwise, my shock would be more expressive."

Planning, partnership, outreach and centralization appear to be key factors boosting vaccination rates in Peoria and neighboring Tazewell and Woodford counties, especially among seniors. Most patients are within 15 miles of major health care providers. East Peoria in Tazewell County was designated as a regional vaccine distribution site, meaning doses were close by. And the local health department has strong ties to large hospitals in the area.

"They have all of the pieces: supply, great partnerships, great efficiency in how to register people. It was centralized," says Courtney Hedderman, the associate state director of advocacy and outreach at AARP Illinois.

Chicago's and suburban Cook's total populations are each more than 13 times the size of Peoria, and more diverse, making their rollouts more complex, health officials say. Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, added that in suburban Cook, hundreds of thousands of health care workers, first responders and essential workers outnumbered seniors in the first phases of the vaccine rollout. Seniors got priority bookings at the United Center mass vaccination site, which serves both jurisdictions. Meanwhile, the city declared March as "Senior Month," as part of a push to catch that population up.

While larger jurisdictions like Chicago and Cook County had to coordinate vaccination campaigns with multiple hospitals, clinics, community groups and government-run sites, Peoria relied on a small number of trusted local organizations with broad reach.

Two big hospitals—OSF and UnityPoint—are located right in the middle of the tri-county area, and Heartland Health Center, a federally qualified health center, is nearby. So when health officials convened the three and crunched patient data, they found roughly 90 percent of the county's seniors were already in their systems.

Each had different attack plans for getting patients signed up, and Hendrickson's team pushed doses to all three to accelerate vaccinations. OSF and UnityPoint also enlisted independent physicians—who are often left out of the loop elsewhere in Illinois—reaching out to ask for lists of patients they could get booked for shots.

"As you can imagine with two large health care entities, we're fairly competitive with each other," says Dr. John Miller, the vice president of medical affairs at UnityPoint Health, noting the chain's downtown Peoria hospital stands just across the highway from OSF St. Francis Medical Center. "But our key to success was cooperation, not competitiveness."

UnityPoint staffed a call center with just under a dozen people to contact patients. At the Methodist Atrium in downtown Peoria, staffers deployed from UnityPoint primary care clinics can jab up to 700 people per day, Miller says. OSF can inoculate a similar number at one of its clinics on Knoxville Avenue. Both facilities are accessible by bus and don't have stairs for seniors to climb.

OSF ranked their oldest patients and reached out first to those with the biggest health risks, booking them through an electronic system. "Patients would call it their golden ticket. They could self-schedule at our clinics and make second-dose appointments. Then we did calls, and we're now starting text-based messages to say, 'Hey, we're waiting to hear from you,'" says Sarah Overton, OSF's chief nursing officer and vice president of clinical services.

AARP's Hedderman says two of the biggest challenges for Illinois counties have been managing public expectations about shot availability and ensuring equitable distribution of vaccines.

Peoria is working on the latter. Hendrickson called on nonprofit ambulance service Advanced Medical Transport to bring shots directly to people not connected to a health center.

"We have the people, the vehicles. We have the ability to take the show on the road," says Josh Bradshaw, AMT's community resource manager. AMT sends vaccine strike teams to homeless shelters, affordable housing buildings and senior-living facilities. The service expects to have fully vaccinated 1,420 people by the end of March.

Bradshaw says AMT already had a years-long working relationship with Hendrickson's department, including collaboration on a testing site for first responders earlier in the pandemic. "By the time we got to the vaccine, we had partnerships, relationships, supply channels, so many things figured out that, I don't want to say it was easy for us, but it wasn't insurmountable that we could make this happen in an efficient manner."

Des Plaines COVID-19 vaccination clinic open; can give up to 3,500 shots a day

March 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/park-ridge/ct-prh-desplaines-clinic-tl-0311-20210306-2wx6haafnzfelhxbbq7pytdzi-story.html>

Cook County Health opened a mass COVID-19 vaccination site at a former K-Mart site on Oakton Street in Des Plaines Friday. It was the first Illinois site to offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The county sent an email earlier in the week to people who had signed up to get vaccinated, announcing that appointment scheduling for the new site would open online and by phone Thursday at 1 p.m. Vaccine seekers snapped them up the slots quickly.

Caryn Stancik, a spokesperson for the county, said more appointments would be released when Cook County Health receives additional doses.

“We only release appointments when we know what vaccine supply we will have,” she wrote in an email. “This is our first shipment of (Johnson & Johnson).”

The Des Plaines site is administering vaccines to people in the phases 1a and 1b. Phase 1b includes individuals age 65 and older and essential workers such as first responders, manufacturing employees and grocery store personnel. The site has not yet expanded to include the 1B+ category.

Illinois National Guard teams are partnering with the county to inject the vaccine into recipients’ arms.

When the site is fully optimized and has enough staffing and vaccine supply, it can vaccinate as many as 3,500 people a day, Stancik said.

“With our new operations in Des Plaines, Illinois is now operating 11 state-supported mass vaccination sites in Cook County in addition to the soon-to-launch United Center, and the network of more than 800 vaccination locations around the state all trained on one goal: vaccinating as many people as possible, as quickly as possible,” said Governor JB Pritzker in a statement.

The site, at 1155 E. Oakton, Des Plaines, offers free parking.

To sign up to get vaccinated, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or phone 833-308-1988 Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Chicago Tribune

How does a mass vaccination site work? Here's a look inside one at a former K-Mart in Des Plaines.

Antonio Perez

March 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-viz-des-plaines-covid-vaccination-site-photos-20210305-ukmne3fyzba7lalhh56fsilmry-photoqallery.html>

Illinois has 18 mass vaccination sites running across the state. To see how they work, the Tribune visited a new site set up inside a vacant K-Mart in Des Plaines. The vaccination site, on Oakton Street, opened Thursday, along with a site at the convention center in Quincy that together can give shots to up to 4,000 people a day once at full capacity. Illinois passed a notable benchmark in its vaccination effort Friday, with more than 1 million people fully vaccinated — 8% of the state's overall population. Residents at the Des Plaines site were administered the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.



Des Plaines mass vaccination site opens for first appointments

Cook County's latest COVID vaccine site opened Friday morning in Des Plaines.

March 5, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-des-plaines-vaccine-172027546.html>

Video Transcript

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Oh, absolutely. That first appointment was at 9:30 this morning and it's in this old Kmart building behind me. And this is one of the first sites to offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Many telling me that they are eager to get their lives somewhat back on track. Another mass vaccination site opened this morning in Des Plaines on Oakton Street, not far from O'Hare Airport.

RATNA KANUMURY: Today with our opening, we are very excited to say that we are offering 800 vaccination slots today.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: 83-year-old Jack Alberts got emotional as he arrived for his appointment, reflecting on how tough it's been not to see his grandchildren.

JACK ALBERTS: I haven't seen my grandchildren. [CHOKES UP] [SIGH] (VOICE BREAKING) Excuse me. [INAUDIBLE] excuse me, in over a year. And that's kind of tough.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Alberts, like many others, scrambled to book an appointment when Cook County health opened them yesterday. All 18,000 spots were booked in a matter of hours. Scott Rovner felt like he won the lottery when he finally got a slot online.

SCOTT ROVNER: When it hit, it was just like, oh my God. Thank God I got an appointment. I just happened to have the day off. So-- yeah, it just all worked out.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: The new Des Plaines site is for Cook County residents only and becomes the state's first large scale vaccination site to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

RATNA KANUMURY: It's a single dose vaccine that is safe and effective 100% from preventing death.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Cook County Health says as the site ramps up, it will be able to offer 2,800 slots on a given day. Right now, four National Guard teams of 18 members are here supporting the effort. The focus is vaccinating people 65 and older, health care workers and front line and essential personnel before opening to the general population.

RATNA KANUMURY: The federal government has reassured us that they will be able to supply enough vaccine to anyone who wants to receive the vaccine by the end of May.

JESSICA D'ONOFRIO: Now Cook County health officials tell me that they don't know when they will offer more appointments to people in the current phase just yet. They say that will depend on vaccine shipments.



Cook County Des Plaines COVID vaccine site opens

Site offering Johnson & Johnson vaccines

Jessica D'Onofrio and Sarah Schulte

March 5, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-des-plaines-vaccine-site-opens/10391055/>

Cook County's latest COVID vaccine site opened Friday morning in Des Plaines.

The site, located on Oakton Street not far from O'Hare Airport, is one of the first to offer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Appointments for the Des Plaines mass vaccination site can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by phone at (833) 308-1988. The site will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"Today with our opening, we are very excited to say we are offering 800 vaccination slots today," said Ratna Kanumury with Cook County Health.

Jack Alberts, 83, got emotional as he arrived for his appointment, reflecting on how tough it has been not to see his grandchildren.

"I haven't seen my grandchildren...excuse me...in over a year and that's kind of tough," he said.

Alberts like many others scrambled to book an appointment when Cook County Health opened them Thursday. All 18,000 spots were booked in a matter of hours.

Jill Walsh is a nursing instructor who thought she'd be administering the vaccine way before she was able to get it, but she was lucky enough to get an appointment on the site's opening day.

"I was going to wait for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and didn't expect to get it until this summer so, when it became available locally I was thrilled," she said.

Scott Rovner felt like he won the lottery when he finally got a slot online.

"When it hit it was like 'Oh my God, thank God I got an appointment,'" Rovner said. "I just happened to have today off so it just all worked out."

Kevin Schneider is a college student who works at McDonald's and he will celebrated his 19th birthday this weekend as a vaccinated man.

"It's like a weight off my chest, I feel a lot safer," he said.

The new Des Plaines site is for Cook County residents only and becomes the state's first large-scale vaccination site to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

"It's a single dose vaccine that is safe and effective 100 percent from preventing death," said Kanumury.

Cook County Health says as the site ramps up, it will be able to offer 2,800 slots on a given day.

Right now, four National Guard teams of 18 members are her supporting the effort.

The focus is vaccinating people 65 and older, health care workers and frontline and essential personnel before opening to the general population.

"The federal government has reassured us that they will be able to supply enough vaccine to anyone who wants to receive the vaccine by the end of May," said Kanumury.

Cook County Health says they don't know when they will offer more appointments for this current phase just yet. They said that will depend on vaccine shipments.

New study shows opioid overdose rates highest on West Side

Study by Cook County health department shows West Garfield Park, Austin leading communities in opioid overdose rates.

Michael Romain

March 5, 2021

<https://www.austinweeklynews.com/2021/03/05/new-study-shows-opioid-overdose-rates-highest-on-west-side/>

Table 4.4: City of Chicago ZIP Codes with the Highest Crude Annual Mortality Rates of Acute Opioid Exposure-Overdose, 2016 to June 2020

ZIP Code	Deaths	Rate per 100k	Area	Neighborhood	Region
60624	160	93.3	Chicago	West Garfield Park	West
60644	185	84.5	Chicago	Austin	West
60612	113	75.0	Chicago	East Garfield Park	West
60651	154	53.3	Chicago	Humboldt Park	West
60601	25	50.0	Chicago	Near Eastside	Central
60619	121	42.1	Chicago	Chatham	Southeast
60621	64	39.6	Chicago	Englewood	Southeast
60607	42	39.1	Chicago	West Loop	Central
60636	71	38.6	Chicago	West Englewood	Southeast
60628	125	38.5	Chicago	Roseland	Far South
60623	153	36.9	Chicago	North Lawndale	West

A chart of opioid mortality rate data by zip codes. The chart is available in the Cook County Department of Public Health's Opioid Epidemic in Suburban Cook County report.

A new report released in February by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) shows that the West Side communities had the highest annual mortality rates of acute opioid exposure-overdose from 2016 to June 2020.

The report — by Alfreda Holloway-Beth and Nhan Nguyen of the county public health department's Epidemiology Unit, and Lee Friedman with the University of Illinois Chicago's School of Public Health — gathered results from the Illinois Poison Center, outpatient and emergency department data from area hospitals, and the Cook County Medical Examiner.

The city of Chicago, which has its own public health department, is not included in the Cook County health department's jurisdiction, but data from certain Chicago zip codes was included in the report "to contextualize the data which has adversely impacted our entire county," the authors wrote.

West Garfield Park (60624) saw an average of 160 deaths caused by acute opioid exposure-overdose between 2016 and June 2020, for a rate of 93.3 per 100,000 residents each year during that period — the highest rate of any zip code in the city.

Austin (60644) saw an average of 185 deaths caused by acute opioid exposure-overdose between 2016 and June 2020, for a rate of 84.5 per 100,000 residents each year during that period — the second-highest rate of any zip code in the city.

The report's other key findings included the "sharp increase in opioid overdose mortality rates" among middle-aged Black men, ages 35 to 64, in suburban Cook County.

"This increase mirrors national trends also showing a marked rise beginning in 2016," the report explained. "Hospital and mortality rates were more than two times lower among Hispanic/Latinx residents compared to Black/African-American and white non-Hispanic residents" in suburban Cook County.

"In addition to the incalculable cost of human lives and the impacts to their families, friends, and communities, there is a high economic burden resulting from opioid use disorders and conditions induced by opioid use," the report explained.

In a statement released Feb. 18, Holloway-Beth said that fentanyl and heroin "continue to be an incredibly lethal combination in opioid use and no group is immune to these factors in overdose deaths."

Dr. Kiran Joshi, the senior medical officer and co-lead for CCDPH, said the report "reveals not only surprising trends, but potential blind spots in our systems that can be improved to save lives."

Joshi added that the department "will use this analysis to inform our activities and customize intervention programs to target the needs of different groups with opioid use disorders. By sharing this data with community leaders and stakeholders, we can leverage our collective expertise and resources to address this crisis."

You can read the entire report at: cookcountypublichealth.org/behavioral-health/opioids.



Centro masivo de vacunación en Des Plaines ya está operando: así ha transcurrido la jornada

March 5, 2021

<https://www.univision.com/local/chicago-wgbo/desinformacion-y-miedo-algunos-de-los-retos-que-aun-enfrenta-la-vacuna-contra-el-coronavirus-video>

El sitio de inmunización abrió sus puertas este viernes y se encuentra ubicado en el 1100 este de la calle Oakton. Allí llegaron personas elegibles de los grupos de inoculación 1A y 1B. Quienes quieran programar una cita deben ingresar a la página www.vaccine.cookcountyil.gov o llamar al teléfono 833 308 1988.



Increíble: el agujero negro que deambula por el espacio

March 5, 2021

<https://www.telemundochicago.com/videos/des-plaines-abre-supercentro-de-vacunacion-contra-covid-19/2158106/>

El centro tiene la capacidad de ofrecer 3,000 vacunas al día y es uno de los 18 centros abiertos por el Departamento de Salud Pública de Illinois.



'I Feel Relieved': What People Are Saying And Doing After They Get Their COVID Vaccine

Megan Hickey
March 5, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/05/post-covid-vaccine-guidelines/>

For the very first time today, hundreds of people in Des Plaines received the Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine.

CBS 2 Investigator Megan Hickey reports many patients are looking forward to "life after vaccine." CBS 2 spoke to patients on Friday who walked out after just a few minutes now fully vaccinated.

But what does that really mean for their day-to-day? The answer still isn't very clear.

Diane Campbell is in the 65-plus group.

"We had cell phones, laptops," Campbell said. "Refresh, refresh, refresh."

Carisa Mitchell works in healthcare.

"I kept trying and trying and trying," Mitchell said. And I finally got in."

They're the latest recipients of the one dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the first large-scale J&J vaccination site in Illinois.

"I used to work for Johnson and Johnson years ago, so I feel like I trust this," said Campbell.

Both said they feel a weight lifted off of their shoulders.

"I feel relieved, definitely," Mitchell said. "I can go into work, I can have patients into my office and not have to worry so much."

But how does life really change for someone who's fully vaccinated? Can fully vaccinated people gather in small groups?

So far the CDC hasn't released its guidelines.

"We are making sure and taking the time to get this right and we will be releasing this guidance soon," said Doctor Rochelle Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC.)

"Yeah, I don't think we know the answer to all of these questions yet," added Doctor Kelly Michelson, Director of Northwestern University's Center for Bioethics

Michelson of Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine said the CDC has said fully vaccinated people don't need to quarantine in certain cases:

"After being exposed in a close contact with someone who has COVID, if you've been vaccinated in the last three months," Michelson said. "So those are the things that we know right now, but we're hoping to hear a little bit more guidance from the CDC coming soon."

Meanwhile these patients are content just thinking about the things they're going to be able to do.

"So if I do go to a restaurant, and I do get to eat in public again, I'll be able to take my mask off and feel a little secure," Campbell said.

On Friday, the Des Plaines site booked 800 appointments. Cook County officials expect to provide as many as 3,500 vaccines per day when the Des Plaines site is fully up and running and when adequate vaccine is available.

New Des Plaines site opens with single-dose COVID-19 vaccine

Jake Griffin and Joe Lewnard
March 6, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210305/new-des-plaines-site-opens-with-single-dose-covid-19-vaccine>

Tom Bucalo doesn't mind being one of the first in the state to get Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine.

The Hoffman Estates man said he was hoping to get the single-dose vaccine when he secured an appointment slot for Friday's opening day of the Cook County Health System's mass vaccination site in Des Plaines.

"Getting an appointment yesterday was a challenge. It was like getting tickets to a rock concert," Bucalo said. "But I was hoping for (Johnson & Johnson). It's one shot, and I was more confident in what they were saying for the future, meaning the other variants."

Chicago health officials reported its first case of a Brazilian COVID-19 variant Friday, noting that while this variant might spread faster, its arrival in Chicago won't change public health strategies or business operation policies.

The new vaccination site in Des Plaines is the first in the state to offer the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine rather than the Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech versions that require a two-dose regimen and ultracold storage. The new vaccine may be somewhat less effective at protecting against illness, but prevented hospitalization and death for all of the trial participants and performs well against certain new variants.

Roselle's Helen Baranowski said she would have preferred the other vaccines, but was fine getting the newer version in the end.

"Needles don't bother me, but if I can get one shot instead of two, that's good," she said.

The new Des Plaines site at a former Kmart can handle upward of 3,500 vaccinations a day, but is expected to only inoculate about 1,900 daily until supplies of vaccines increase.

Appointment slots went fast when registration opened Thursday online. Some were luckier than others.

"I was hoping to jump on the appointment website right as it opened and get an appointment, but I wasn't anticipating how quickly they would be snapped up," said Frank Ress of Arlington Heights. "By the time I realized my reactions would have to be lightning-fast, everything was gone."

Meanwhile, 800 residents in Itasca, Roselle, Bloomingdale and Wood Dale who are 65 and older received word earlier this week they'll receive their first dose of the Moderna vaccine Monday through a vaccination event coordinated by the Itasca Park District, neighboring park districts and villages through a partnership with Jewel-Osco.

"When we'd let these residents know they had an appointment I felt like Ed McMahon with a Publisher's Clearinghouse check, because they were so excited," said Maryfran Leno, the park district's executive director. "And they'll all be automatically registered for their second shot on April 5 at the same time."

Suburban congressional delegates on a conference call Friday were hopeful vaccination clinics like Itasca's will become more common in the weeks to come as supplies of vaccines become more bountiful.

"All of us are passionate about getting people vaccinated as quickly as possible, and when I say all, I mean all 435 members of Congress," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Sean Casten of Downers Grove. "This is a massively complicated logistical problem that people are trying to figure out and get shots into the arms as fast as we can."



PR-COVID-19 Testing now five days a week at SSC

South Suburban College COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Site Now Open Weekdays Only

Patrick Rus

March 8, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/oakforest/pr-covid-19-testing-now-five-days-week-ssc>

The South Suburban College COVID-19 testing site has scaled back its operation from seven days a week to five days a week in response to slowing demand for testing. Testing will continue on Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. through April as part of its most recent intergovernmental agreement renewal with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). No appointment is necessary for the drive-thru tents set up at the College's Main Campus parking lot. Testing site inquiries may be made by calling (888) 297-7208.

Vaccinations continue Mondays through Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Cook County's mass vaccination site within South Suburban College's Gymnasium. Vaccinations at all Cook County Health sites are provided by appointment [###/strongvaccine.cookcountyil.gov](https://strongvaccine.cookcountyil.gov). Individuals without Internet access or who need assistance scheduling may call (833) 308-1988 (from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday). Cook County Health will continue to offer appointment slots based on the amount of vaccine expected and will add appointments as new vaccine shipments arrive. As vaccine becomes available, Cook County Health opens new appointments. South Suburban College cannot answer specific questions regarding testing results or vaccination scheduling.

In addition to Cook County Health sites, the Cook County Department of Public Health has distributed vaccines to more than 90 partner locations including Jewel-Osco, Mariano's, Walgreens, Federally Qualified Health Centers and hospitals who are also offering vaccines by appointment. Additional sites can be found at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>



Mortality rate from opioid overdoses in Brookfield among highest in county

Village ranks 8th among suburbs analyzed in new study

Michael Romain And Bob Uphues

March 9, 2021

<https://www.rblandmark.com/2021/03/09/mortality-rate-from-opioid-overdoses-in-brookfield-among-highest-in-county/>

A new report released in February by the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) shows that, from 2016 to 2020, Brookfield had among the highest mortality rates from opioid overdoses in suburban Cook County.

The report – by Alfreda Holloway-Beth and Nhan Nguyen of the Cook County Department of Public Health’s Epidemiology Unit, and Lee Friedman with the University of Illinois Chicago’s School of Public Health — gathered results from the Illinois Poison Center, outpatient and emergency department data from area hospitals and the Cook County Medical Examiner.

From January 2016 to June 2020, the report found, 1,576 people in the municipalities that fall under the Cook County health department’s jurisdiction died from opioid overdoses, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner. Among those overdose deaths, roughly 83 percent involved heroin and/or fentanyl.

The study also lists a Cook County Medical Examiner analysis of 22 suburban ZIP codes where the mortality rate from opioid overdoses was highest. Brookfield’s ZIP code of 60513 ranked eighth, with a mortality rate of 28 deaths per 100,000 residents.

The analysis of that ZIP code, according to the study, also included sections of North Riverside, LaGrange, LaGrange Park, Lyons, McCook and Riverside. That mortality rate was roughly double the rate of 13.9 per 100,000 for the rest of suburban Cook County, according to the study.

The highest mortality rates in the suburbs, the study concluded, were in the west, southwest and south suburbs – including towns adjacent to areas in the city of Chicago where mortality rates are also among the highest.

“The highest mortality rates were observed in ZIP codes that include the municipalities of Worth, Broadview, Maywood and Forest Park,” according to the study. “These ZIP codes, and others hardest hit by the opioid epidemic, have substantially lower median household incomes and higher poverty rates.”

The analysis of the 60130 zip, which is Forest Park, indicated a mortality rate of 37.6 people per 100,000 residents, which was more than double the state average of 17 per 100,000.

That ZIP code, which ranked fourth highest among Cook County suburbs in mortality rate from opioid overdoses, also included sections of Berwyn, North Riverside, Maywood, Oak Park and River Forest in its analysis.

The report’s other key findings included the “sharp increase in opioid overdose mortality rates” among middle-aged Black men, ages 35 to 64, in suburban Cook County.

“This increase mirrors national trends also showing a marked rise beginning in 2016,” the report stated. “Hospital and mortality rates were more than two times lower among Hispanic/Latinx residents compared to Black/African-American and white non-Hispanic residents” in suburban Cook County.

In addition to the emotional and personal cost, the opioid epidemic also came at an enormous financial cost, the report explained.

“From 2016 to 2019, the cumulative hospital charges to treat suburban Cook County residents for any opioid related issues (including medical conditions induced by opioid use, withdrawal and treatment) was almost \$800 million,” the report added. “Of which, treatment of acute opioid intoxication-overdose cases alone exceeded \$500 million in hospital charges.”

In a statement released Feb. 18, Holloway-Beth said that fentanyl and heroin “continue to be an incredibly lethal combination in opioid use and no group is immune to these factors in overdose deaths.”

Dr. Kiran Joshi, the senior medical officer and co-lead for CCDPH, said the report “reveals not only surprising trends, but potential blind spots in our systems that can be improved to save lives.”

Joshi added that the department “will use this analysis to inform our activities and customize intervention programs to target the needs of different groups with opioid use disorders. By sharing this data with community leaders and stakeholders, we can leverage our collective expertise and resources to address this crisis.”

You can read the entire report at cookcountypublichealth.org/behavioral-health/opioids.

Chicago Tribune

United Center opens as COVID-19 mass vaccination site despite early confusion: 'We are now a live clinic'

Alice Yin, Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella
March 9, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-united-center-opens-mass-vaccinations-20210309-pp2vti4nzfeo3h7v2lmdxitfl4-story.html>

A federally run mass vaccination site at the United Center opened — an hour behind schedule — Tuesday morning amid widespread confusion over ever-shifting guidelines for who is eligible to receive coronavirus inoculations at the facility, announced with much fanfare 10 days earlier as a new option for residents across Illinois who qualify due to age, occupation or medical condition.

The delay in opening led to more than a hundred people standing wrapped around two blocks, with some chatting about who they know who has been vaccinated and others frantically flagging down a volunteer to ask whether they were going to miss their appointments. A security guard strode beside the crowd, urging people to stand 6 feet apart.

Even as immunizations got underway, Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other officials did little during a news conference at the site to bring clarity to a situation muddled by the last-minute decision over the weekend to close appointments to residents outside Chicago and Cook County after an initial sign-up period for anyone age 65 or older.

Hours later, Pritzker spokeswoman Jordan Abudayyeh said that instead of reopening the United Center site to residents outside Chicago and Cook County, the state would redirect the remaining portion of its doses allocated to the site — 10% of the roughly 336,000 doses expected to be administered — to federal mobile vaccination teams, targeting hard-hit communities in the rest of the suburbs and other parts of the state.

The change in eligibility for the United Center was made over concerns from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that not enough Chicago residents were getting appointments, undermining a common goal of equitable vaccine distribution to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Chicago and Cook County residents who weren't among the more than 53,000 people who'd booked an appointment as of late Tuesday morning will have to wait a little longer for additional information on how to sign up, though Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady later said city residents should keep checking Zocdoc.com for appointments that become available due to cancellations.

The city and county, meanwhile, will be doing targeted outreach to encourage people in some of the communities with the highest coronavirus infection and death rates to sign up for the vaccine. In Chicago, those efforts will be focused on five ZIP codes on the South and West sides: 60608, 60619, 60620, 60649 and 60652.

An announcement about how suburban Cook County residents will be able to sign up for future appointments at the United Center is expected later this week, Cook County Health spokeswoman Caryn Stancik said in a statement.

The city's share of the doses — 60% of the total allocated to the United Center — will be made available to people 65 and older, front-line workers in essential industries and those who qualify under state rules based on preexisting health conditions, with the exception of smokers. The city, which gets its own vaccine supply from the federal government, has

not opened up its other vaccination sites to people under 65 with underlying health conditions — a point of contention with the state.

Despite the confusion, several people who had landed an appointment and were in line Tuesday morning said that although the logistics at the United Center weren't perfect, the arrival of their appointment day was a cause for celebration as the anniversary of Pritzker's stay-at-home order last March nears. They said their shots would symbolize the start of a true spring and summer this year, speaking with wide-eyed optimism about plans to reunite with family and leave the house.

First in line was Omelan Kluchnyk, having arrived at 6:30 a.m. after a short commute from Ukrainian Village. His 8 a.m. appointment would not start until about 9 a.m., however, because of unspecified delays. But he shrugged when asked about the hiccup.

"I feel great as long as we get our shots," Kluchnyk said, smiling despite the grumpier demeanors of other people in line. The 70-year-old said he has missed Sunday Mass most and looks forward to attending in person after a year of watching virtual services at home.

Claude Hadley, 73, was so tired he leaned against a shuttle bus with his cane as his appointment time passed. He had gotten to the site at 7:45 a.m. after traveling from the Austin neighborhood, but he said he hadn't gotten an explanation of why he was still waiting after his 8:30 a.m. slot.

"I have no idea what they're doing," Hadley said. "I want to get it and get it over with, but I wish it was more fast than what we're doing now."

Still, Hadley said the frustration couldn't stamp out his excitement as he looked forward to the rest of his family getting vaccinated and finally going on a trip to the Atlanta suburbs after their trip was canceled last year due to the pandemic.

"I want to be out in the backyard, cook, just lay out there, do nothing," Hadley said. "That's it."

Officials struck a celebratory tone at their news conference, belying the behind-the-scenes wrangling over the rules governing who will be able to get vaccinated at the site.

"Starting today, the United Center vaccine site is officially open and will begin to vaccinate tens of thousands of Illinois seniors who secured appointments since registration opened last Thursday morning as well as those who meet new eligibility requirements," Lightfoot said.

The opening of the mass vaccination site comes exactly one year after Pritzker issued a statewide disaster proclamation for the COVID-19 pandemic. At that point, 11 cases of the new coronavirus had been identified in Illinois.

With 1,510 new confirmed and probable cases and 16 additional fatalities reported Tuesday, the state has seen 1,201,027 known cases and 20,781 deaths from COVID-19.

But as of Monday, half of Illinois residents 65 and older had received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine and nearly 1.2 million people, more than 9% of the state's population, had been fully vaccinated, public health officials said.

"We're getting closer every single day to the end of this pandemic, but we're not there yet," Pritzker said.

Some of the people waiting in line Tuesday said the pandemic has been a lonely time during which they seldom saw their family and, during holiday reunions, could only elbow-bump grandchildren. Alexandra Glenke, a 69-year-old woman from Garfield Ridge, said grocery shopping is normally the only time she gets out of the house, but she was optimistic this spring will have better days ahead.

"(I'm) quite hopeful it's going to be a little bit more not as isolated from people," Glenke said. "I'm very happy. I think everybody's happy."

As the minutes passed and parts of the crowd grew antsy, strangers connected over the confusion. One woman passed Kluchnyk, the man at the front of the line, and exclaimed, “We’re going to be here a long time.” A man informed the people waiting at North Wood Street and West Warren Boulevard of how there were still others behind them. “You haven’t been around the corner yet.”

But by 9 a.m., a man via a loudspeaker announced the United Center was up and running, and the metal gates opened up to the first patients.

“The United Center is operational as of 09:00 hours,” the man said. “We are now a live clinic. Thank you.”

The United Center site will be the biggest COVID-19 vaccination center in the state, with a goal of 6,000 vaccines per day. The site will be open seven days a week for eight weeks.

State officials later Tuesday announced a new state-run mass vaccination site in Bloomington, which is set to open Thursday and will be capable of administering 4,600 doses per day, making it the state’s second-largest site. It is restricted to those who live and work in McLean County.

The 6,000 doses per day that the United Center site is capable of providing are in addition to the doses that the city and state already are receiving from the federal government. The doses provided at the center will be the Pfizer vaccine, and people also will receive an appointment for their second dose at the center after receiving their first.

The city may take over operation of the mass vaccination site after the initial eight-week period is up, especially if vaccine shipments increase as expected in the coming weeks, Arwady said.

Lightfoot again defended restricting vaccine access to Chicagoans over the weekend, saying fewer than 40% of sign-ups were city residents, which goes against equity goals.

Appointments also will be set aside for people who live in vulnerable areas, while appointment blocks will be given to organizations for targeted outreach, including for people with disabilities.

“What we do now determines how equitable and inclusive our post-COVID recovery will be,” Lightfoot said.

State Sen. Patricia Van Pelt, whose district is home to the United Center, praised other officials for changing the registration procedures when they determined not enough Chicago residents were signing up for appointments.

“So often, I’ve seen them say, ‘Next time. We’ll get it right next. This time, all the vaccinations went out to the people who we didn’t expect it to go to, but next time we’re going to get it right.’ But you all said, ‘This time,’” Van Pelt said.

The Fresno Bee

United Center opens as COVID-19 mass vaccination site despite early confusion: 'We are now a live clinic'

Alice Yin, Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella

March 9, 2021

<https://www.fresnobee.com/news/nation-world/national/article249822363.html>

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ArcaMax

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Alice Yin, Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella

March 9, 2021

<https://www.arcamax.com/currentnews/newsheadlines/s-2489869>

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Even as immunizations got underway, Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other officials did little during a news conference at the site to bring clarity to a situation muddled by the last-minute decision over the weekend to close appointments to residents outside Chicago and Cook County after an initial sign-up period for anyone age 65 or older.

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The change in eligibility for the United Center was made over concerns from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that not enough Chicago residents were getting appointments, undermining a common goal of equitable vaccine distribution to communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

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Smoking Not Included Under Eligible Conditions for United Center Vaccinations, Arwady Says

March 9, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/smoking-not-included-under-eligible-conditions-for-united-center-vaccinations-arwady-says/2457685/>

Chicago residents eligible under Phase 1B Plus of Illinois' vaccine rollout were able to sign up for appointments at the United Center mass vaccination site, but the city's top doctor said there was one approved medical condition under the state's plan that isn't included at the city site.

Smoking.

Smoking [is on the list of high-risk medical conditions](#) and comorbidities that make someone eligible for the coronavirus vaccine under Illinois' [Phase 1B plus](#).

But Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said it was not included at the United Center.

"In this interim period where we just have very limited vaccine, we're using the state's 1B Plus guidance, but we did not include smokers in that," Arwady said during a Facebook Live Tuesday.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that "being a current or former cigarette smoker increases your risk of severe illness from COVID-19."

Eligibility for the new vaccination site at the United Center narrowed less than an hour before the registration opened further Sunday afternoon.

Following an exclusive registration period for Illinois residents over the age of 65 that began on Thursday, appointments for the United Center were initially slated to expand at 4 p.m. Sunday to all Illinois residents qualified to get vaccinated under Phase 1B Plus.

But just after 3 p.m. Sunday, officials announced that eligibility would change to include only Chicago residents in Phase 1B Plus, which is anyone over 65, some frontline workers, school staff and more, or anyone 18 and up who has certain health conditions or comorbidities.

The last-minute change sparked confusion and frustration for some who had been waiting to book appointments at the new site.

Additional appointments are expected to become available "later this week," Chicago's mayor said, noting that appointments won't just be for Chicago residents.

"We are assessing what the equity numbers look like before we open it up and we'll give further details later this week about how it is that people can sign up," Mayor Lori Lightfoot said as the facility began its first vaccinations Tuesday. "And these are dispersed continuing with city, county and state, but we are adjusting the numbers based upon what we see in terms of the appointments - what zip codes folks are coming from, and other demographic information."

So far, only 50,000 appointments have opened to the public over the past few days, officials revealed - a major walk-back of their initial announcement that roughly 110,000 appointments would be made available.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said Monday that suburban Cook County residents will likely be eligible.

"There is a significant number of appointments that that are being held for suburban Cook residents, but it is a requirement from FEMA that there is some equity focus even on those appointments and that's why we could not just make them all publicly available right now," Arwady said. "So I know it's frustrating for people and I know there was a lot of excitement around getting these appointments, and is still."

Officials did not specify how many additional appointments would be made available and who would be eligible in the next round, but said details would be released later this week.

Cook County said Sunday that it planned to announce the process of scheduling those appointments [through the county's COVID vaccine website](#) "in the coming days."

Opening Tuesday, the United Center site will operate seven days a week for eight weeks and will be able to administer 6,000 shots per day at full capacity, officials said, noting that vaccinations would be by appointment only and that demand was "anticipated to be high." Those doses will be provided directly from the federal government and not diverted from the supply sent to Chicago or Illinois.

Vaccinations will be offered at no cost and insurance is not required, nor will it be requested at the site.

If and when more appointments become available, officials say there are two ways for Chicago residents to register: via zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling (312) 746-4835 between 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.



United Center vaccination site opens after brief delay, scheduling confusion

Jessica D'Onofrio, Michelle Gallardo, Eric Horng and Alexis McAdams

March 9, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/united-center-covid-vaccinations-get-underway/10399242/>

Vaccinations started at the United Center Tuesday, exactly one year after Governor JB Pritzker issued a statewide disaster proclamation for the COVID-19 pandemic.

With only about 2,500 vaccinations scheduled, it was a soft opening at Illinois' largest mass vaccination site, meant to work out the glitches. And there were some, including a one-hour delay getting up and running.

For a while, the line to get into the United Center's brand new vaccination site snaked around the block, but most people were in and out within an hour.

"I did not think it was going to be this easy," said Barbara Carlton, 85. "I thought I would have to wait longer in line."

"My only question was, 'When will I be scheduled for my second shot?'" Joyce Wixson said. "And they said they will send an email in approximately 3 weeks, so I don't have to fight and go online and search and waste time."

Many of those able to be vaccinated Tuesday said they will feel less fearful going out in public. They also said they just want to be with their families.

At full capacity, the federally-run site expects to administer 6,000 doses a day. It will remain open seven days a week for eight weeks, as people get their first and second shots.

The 30,000-square-foot facility under half a dozen climate-controlled tents begins with a check-in station. After checking in, people with appointments will be led to one of three dozen vaccination stations, all spaced 6 feet apart, with shots administered by a medical team from the 101st Airborne, who arrived in Chicago Friday.

The facility also includes a post-injection observation tent as well as bathroom facilities and shuttle services.

Walk-up vaccinations will be done in Parking Lot E, northeast of the arena. Drive-up vaccinations will be in Parking Lot C. People who need parking can use Lot A.

Many United Center appointments remain open. Of the 110,000 total appointments, officials said Tuesday only 40,000 were booked by Illinois residents 65 and older, and only 10,000 by Chicagoans in 1B plus. The rest, set aside after most senior appointments, went to people outside the city.

"We have to do this in a way that is consistent with equity, and that's critically important," Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot

said.

Officials say the 50,000 unfilled appointments are not yet publicly available. Instead, Chicago and Cook County officials are conducting targeted outreach. The city is prioritizing five zip codes: 60608 on the Near West Side, and 60652, 60620, 60619 and 60649 on the South Side.

"If you are in one of these zip codes, there will be additional outreach," Dr. Allison Arwady, Chicago Dept. of Public Health. "There will be ways to sign up. We're going to have more of that to come."

But should officials have anticipated a first-come, first-served appointment system would lead to disparities?

"It's been more than the last couple of days. It's been the past few months," said Prof. Hani Mahmassani, director of Northwestern University Transportation Center. "It's been learn as you go, adjust things, and it's created more confusion and stress."

Mahmassani said there should have been a direct outreach component at the outset. When the United Center site was announced two weeks ago, Mahmassani suggested multiple smaller vaccination centers in targeted areas, rather than one large centralized site, would more efficiently bring the vaccine to communities of greatest need.

"There is no reason why we could not do a better job of targeting folks in an equitable manner," said Mahmassani. Transportation is a key issue as Chicago works to vaccinate people who live in the areas hardest hit by the virus. Uber teamed up with the city to donate 20,000 free rides to Chicagoans to get people to and from the site.

"When you sign up for the appointment, you will be asked if you need transportation, and if you say yes, you will be given info on how to access that ride," Uber's Bobby Kellman said, adding that the company is working to provide free rides to other mass vaccination sites.

People came from all over the city and suburbs and the state Tuesday. They were able to secure appointments before FEMA announced on Sunday that only Chicago residents would be eligible for United Center appointments going forward, in an effort to make shots accessible to people who need them the most.

"There have been appointments set aside for suburban Cook County and they are doing that preliminary work and outreach to make sure the majority of those appointments can be taken by people who most need that vaccine," said Dr. Arwady.

Officials blamed FEMA for the last-minute changes, which left the city, county and state scrambling and many people very confused about what they're supposed to do.

"FEMA came in late in the game here, right, and decided they wanted to change things," Gov. JB Pritzker said. "And, as you can imagine, there is technology involved in this, there are decisions being made like, well, if we're going to exclude other parts of the state like the collar counties, how are we going to serve them? So there's a lot of discussion going on." Promoted as a federally-sponsored state-wide facility, the last-minute residency requirement was made after it was discovered only 40% of appointments had gone to city residents.

A spokesperson for FEMA confirmed their role in limiting remaining appointments to Chicago residents, saying, "We use data from the CDC's social vulnerability index, and work with our state partners to locate community vaccination centers where they will be able to do the most good for the most vulnerable populations....it was agreed by all that these changes were necessary to ensure this goal was met."

A second website is now being set up so that suburban Cook County residents can eventually sign up for vaccine

appointments at the United Center, as well.

Even Chicago residents experienced issues signing up. ZocDoc, the website used to book appointments, went down when registration opened at 4 p.m. Sunday, then reappeared with changes asking people to confirm their location.

Pritzker also said FEMA-run mobile vaccination sites will be set up in the collar counties in the coming weeks.

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Cook County Health Officials Cite White Eagle For Wedding Reception COVID Violations

Tom Robb

March 10, 2021

<https://www.journal-topics.com/articles/cook-county-health-officials-cite-white-eagle-for-wedding-reception-covid-violations/>

White Eagle Banquets in Niles was issued a citation by the Cook County Dept. of Public Health for violating COVID-19 mitigation orders after television news reports showed a Wednesday, March 3 wedding reception held at the venue with many attendees in close proximity and none visibly wearing masks.

White Eagle Banquets is located at 6839 N Milwaukee Ave. "A citation has been issued to White Eagle Events and Convention Center, management canceled several events and has agreed to follow the current Mitigation Order, which includes monitoring capacity and masking, and no dancing," Dr. Rachel Rubin, Cook County Department of Public Health senior public health medical officer and co-lead, said in an email to the Journal, adding that the health department investigation was concluded. "If there are additional violations, the case may be referred to the Cook County state's attorney to determine further action."

A spokesman for the Cook County Dept. of Public Health said this was the White Eagle's first offense and said the citation was a warning.

Although COVID-19 mitigation rules have loosened over the past few months, most recently Tuesday, March 2, restrictions remain in place. Those restrictions include a maximum capacity of 50% of a room's capacity or 50 people, whichever is less, no dancing, a mask-wearing requirement while not actively eating or drinking, and that those being served food or drink be seated. The rules also say, "No congregating of patrons allowed prior to being seated. Customers waiting for a table must wait socially-spaced outdoors."

Video from the news report, shot through the White Eagle's glass front doors, showed wedding reception guests congregating close together in the main hall outside banquet rooms without masks.

Calls to the White Eagle were not immediately returned Tuesday morning.

Niles officials said they have not issued the White Eagle any citations. Village reports show village community development inspectors did respond to the White Eagle on New Year's Day this year.

A village report detailed a "large gathering playing Bingo. Social distancing and masks were used, 5 people per table, no food or drinks served." Assistant Community Development Director Rich Wlodarski said that event conformed to state and county rules at the time and said no citation was issued for the Jan. 1 gathering.

Although White Eagle Banquets was once owned by Niles Mayor Andrew Przybylo and others in his family, the Przybylos sold the business in 2015.

County health officials also issued two citations to the Hilton Northbrook in Prospect Heights last December after the hotel hosted a large wedding reception, an event Gov. JB Pritzker later commented on in his daily COVID-19 press briefings at the time.

State cuts social distancing guidance for schools from 6 to 3 feet

Marni Pyke

March 11, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210310/state-cuts-social-distancing-guidance-for-schools-from-6-to-3-feet>

State officials eased guidance for social distancing in schools Wednesday with the intent of encouraging a return to classrooms as soon as it's practical in each community.

A strict face-covering mandate remains, but social distancing policies are now 3 feet instead of 6 feet under certain conditions, the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Department of Public Health noted. That allows for more students to be in a classroom and school at one time.

"Social distance for in-person learning is now defined as 3 to 6 feet for students and fully vaccinated staff," State Superintendent of Schools Carmen I. Ayala said in a statement on the ISBE website. "Maintaining 6 feet remains the safest distance, but schools can operate at no less than 3 feet in order to provide in-person learning.

Also Wednesday, the state's seven-day COVID-19 vaccination average reached its highest level at 95,369. On Tuesday, 104,777 more people received shots, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported.

The federal government has delivered 470,570 doses of vaccine to Illinois since Sunday and shipped a total of 4,738,045 doses since distribution began in mid-December. The IDPH reported 3,567,927 shots have been administered.

The ISBE also recommended that "unvaccinated staff should maintain 6 feet social distance as much as possible because adults remain more susceptible to infection than children." Strict adherence to social distancing must be maintained and monitored if face masks are removed in limited situations, she said.

Some school officials said they are still reviewing what the revisions might mean for their districts.

"We're working through all the logistics with the new guidelines and working to gather parents' feedback," said Palatine Township Elementary District 15 spokeswoman Becca Latham, "to ensure that we are doing everything we can to follow the guidelines and bring students back as we are able."

At Downers Grove District 58, "these guidelines loosen many of the previous restrictions public schools had to follow and may result in additional changes to our plans," Superintendent Kevin Russell said in a letter to parents.

Elmhurst Community Unit District 205 has allowed 3 feet instead of 6 feet of social distancing in classrooms for elementary students through grade 5 since March 1, and intended to make the same shift for grades 6 through 12 next week, Superintendent Dave Moyer said.

"We just had no choice. We had to move in that direction if we were to get our kids back in school more," Moyer said, noting the ISBE guidance is not a mandate. "We were more conservative with the upper grade levels until we were further on getting teachers vaccinated."

So far, 1,247,781 people -- 9.79% of the state's population -- have been fully vaccinated. Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. require two doses several weeks apart.

The first two waves of vaccinations in Illinois started with medical workers and people in assisted living facilities (Phase 1A) followed by essential workers like teachers and people age 65 and older on Jan. 26 (Phase 1B). On Feb. 25, the state expanded that to people with serious medical issues such as cancer (Phase 1B-plus), but suburban Cook County and the collar counties have held back because of insufficient vaccine doses.

"We continue to make progress in Phase 1B of the vaccination plan in suburban Cook County, and we are reviewing the data daily," Cook County Department of Public Health Senior Medical Officer Kiran Joshi said. "The decision to move to Phase 1B-Plus, and eventually 1C, will be determined by the amount of vaccine we receive in coming days and weeks."

New cases of COVID-19 reached 1,682 Wednesday with 30 more deaths from the respiratory disease.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,157 COVID-19 patients Tuesday night.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 2.3% based on a seven-day average.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,202,709, and 20,810 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 71,488 virus tests in the last 24 hours.

The ISBE's updated guidance reflects new findings from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and "what we have learned about the transmission of COVID-19 in school settings, as more students in Illinois and across the country have returned safely to in-person learning," Ayala said.

As virus caseloads decline, adjustments in COVID-19 prevention policies are ongoing, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said at an event Wednesday. The changes would "allow more kids to be back in the classroom, and as you know, we're trying to get teachers vaccinated."



Cook County lives lost to COVID-19 honored on first disaster declaration anniversary

*Rob Sneed
March 1, 2021*

<https://wqntv.com/news/cook-county-lives-lost-to-covid-19-honored-on-first-disaster-declaration-anniversary/>

Cook County officials held a memorial service Wednesday to honor the lives lost to COVID-19. The ceremony marked the first anniversary of Cook County entering a disaster declaration.

Since then, thousands of lives have been lost.

Office of Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle County president, Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller and top Cook County health officials attended, with many speaking about their own personal connection with the virus.

"In reflecting back over the last year, I and my incredible staff of the health department could never imagine being in the middle of a pandemic of this magnitude," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Cook County officials also thanked first responders.

"I have so much gratitude to every frontline worker in the county and across this country," said Cook County Commissioner Kevin Morrison. "Thank you all very much and thank you to every person in cook county medical examiner's office who witnessed these losses firsthand."

The virtual ceremony commenced inside the Cook County Building Board Room in Chicago. Officials placed a wreath in the building in memory of the lives lost.



Palos Heights teacher thanks National Guard members for kindness during her vaccination

By ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 10, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/national-guard-palos-heights-teacher-good-news-vaccine-thank-you/10405488/>

A high school art teacher is thanking National Guard members for their kindness.

Jennifer Glaz teaches at Shepard High School in Palos Heights. When she got her COVID-19 vaccine at Robbins Health Center, she told Illinois National Guard members she was nervous, so they helped her stay calm.

Eliana Menlik, who administered Glaz's shot, even wrote "Hi Charlie" on the Band-Aid for Glaz's son, who was also nervous about his mom getting the vaccine.

"That level of care and thoughtfulness, it didn't need to happen, but it was exactly what my soul needed," Glaz said.

As a thank you, she delivered a gift of baked goods and a poster with notes from her students saying thanks.

"It was the end of the week, we were tired, we were ready to go home that day and she really brightened our spirits," Menlik said.

Chicago Tribune

At Illinois' biggest nursing home, workers and residents still not vaccinated against COVID-19

Joe Mahr

March 11, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-prem-coronavirus-nursing-home-city-view-vaccination--20210312-c5ivf3wddrbw5ctrvnchgrlqmy-story.html>

Nearly three months into COVID-19 vaccination efforts in nursing homes, workers and residents at Illinois' largest skilled-nursing facility have yet to be offered shots.

City View Multicare Center, in Cicero, suffered a heavy toll earlier in the pandemic, with 249 infections among residents and workers, and 15 deaths, according to state records. Now City View is dealing with a second outbreak, with at least five reported cases in the past 28 days.

"It's kicking back up because nobody in our building has been vaccinated," certified nursing assistant Shantonia Jackson said during an online news conference held by the SEIU Healthcare union.

The union blamed the nursing home's managers for not signing up for the federal program and not seeking shots more aggressively.

"We should have been the first (to get shots)," Jackson said. "They should be on top of this. They should be doing something to make sure we're getting vaccinated, and they're not doing anything."

Local health officials said they have long known of the need to get shots to City View but weren't able to arrange it because of limited supply. The first shots should arrive Sunday, they said.

Federal data shows that 317 of City View's 485 beds were occupied as of late February. A message left for an administrator at the home was not returned Thursday afternoon.

The complaints about City View come after what has largely been hailed as a successful effort nationwide to prioritize long-term care facilities for vaccinations.

The Trump administration set up a program in which pharmacies would administer shots at long-term care facilities. There were some delays, particularly in Illinois, but state officials said all homes in the program got at least a first visit by mid-February. Advocates for senior citizens have credited the vaccine push for sizable drops in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Illinois and elsewhere.

The trends are so promising that the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, which regulates nursing homes, said Wednesday that facilities could allow more visitors depending on a number of different metrics. For example, CMS said an unvaccinated nursing home resident can receive visits if at least 70% of the home's residents are fully vaccinated and less than 10% of COVID-19 tests in the surrounding county are coming back positive.

Federal and state officials have not released figures that would show which facilities have met the vaccination standard. Responses to the Tribune's requests under the Freedom of Information Act have been either denied or delayed. The lack of information also makes it difficult to identify homes where vaccinations have yet to occur.

Federal officials have said the vast majority of long-term facilities signed up for shots under the federal program, but they won't say which did or didn't. The Illinois Department of Public Health, which regulates nursing homes in the state, said 88 facilities didn't sign up for the federal program.

In response to questions submitted Thursday about City View, IDPH said it asked local health departments to arrange for vaccinations at facilities not participating in the federal effort. That included reaching out to Cook County's health department in December and in February about City View.

Cook County health officials said they have been working with pharmacies to try to get vaccines to long-term care facilities and other places with vulnerable and less-mobile residents but a lack of supply has made it difficult. The county could not immediately provide details on which facilities have been reached so far but said the places remaining on the list will get a visit soon.

"They get to them as fast as they can, based on the amount of vaccine they're provided," said spokesman Tom McFeeley. In the case of City View, the first visit should come Sunday, with another one a week later, he said.

The delay in vaccinations at City View caps a tumultuous year for the facility, even by pandemic standards.

Last spring, Cicero officials took the unusual step of filing a lawsuit against not just the nursing home but also state regulators. Cicero alleged the home broke rules intended to limit the virus's spread and the state did little to fix the problems.

Prodded by a Cook County judge, the state inspected the facility weeks after complaints first emerged and said it found no major problems.

Last fall, workers went on strike for 12 days seeking better pay and working conditions, including more equipment to protect against COVID-19.

After returning to work, employees learned the facility had not enrolled in the federal program, and they repeatedly asked management to arrange for vaccinations, said SEIU Healthcare's executive vice president, Erica Bland-Durosini.

"They were not just worried about keeping themselves and their families safe, but also concerned with keeping their residents safe," she said. "They have lost too many residents already, which, to members, is like losing a family member."

Jackson, a union steward who's worked at City View for six years, said at the news conference that staff fear the latest outbreak could include even more infections than have been detected, in part because of the lack of vaccinations.

Jackson said she set up a vaccination appointment for herself at the United Center site in Chicago. Other workers are also trying to obtain shots elsewhere, she said, but it's been difficult.

That frustration has trickled down to residents, who Jackson said have been asking workers when they can get shots so their lives can return to something like normal.

"They see everybody else getting vaccinated, and they wonder, 'Why haven't we gotten vaccinated too?' And I'm wondering too," she said.



At Illinois' biggest nursing home, workers and residents still not vaccinated against COVID-19

Joe Mahr

March 11, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/illinois-biggest-nursing-home-workers-050100341.html>

Nearly three months into COVID-19 vaccination efforts in nursing homes, workers and residents at Illinois' largest skilled-nursing facility have yet to be offered shots.

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Maywood Gets New Pop-Up Vaccination Site

March 11, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/top-videos-home/maywood-gets-new-pop-up-vaccination-site/2459861/>

The lobby of an apartment complex in suburban Maywood is the site of one of Cook County's first on-the-go pop-up vaccination site. NBC 5's Charlie Wojciechowski reports.



Illinois continues vaccine expansion plan

Nate Rodgers

March 11, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/eligibility-continues-to-change-for-vaccine-appointments-at-the-united-center>

Illinois reported 1700 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday and 55 new deaths as the push to get people vaccinated continues.

Gov. Pritzker also announced a massive effort to expand vaccination sites throughout the state.

Thursday was the third day of mass vaccinations at the United Center as eligibility continues to change.

Officials initially said all Illinois residents could get vaccinated there, but then leaders noticed a disproportionate number of appointments given to residents outside of the city and Cook County.

For now, to ensure equity in distribution, United Center appointments are only being given to Chicago residents, seniors 65 and older and/or essential workers.

Those who live in specified zip codes and are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 can [sign up for an appointment](#) as well.

"This site is being run by FEMA," Gov. Pritzker said. "If they want to make changes, we're going to follow their guidance on this."

The Cook County Health Department launched its mobile vaccine unit on Thursday as well.

At the Garden House of Maywood, 85 people received their first dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

The United Center continues to aim at vaccinating 6,000 people a day.



Cook County Pilot Program Brings COVID-19 Vaccines to Residents

Kristen Thometz
March 11, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/11/cook-county-pilot-program-brings-covid-19-vaccines-residents>

A new pilot program launched Thursday will bring coronavirus vaccines to residents at temporary pop-up sites across suburban Cook County.

The sites are “a component of our equity-focused approach to the vaccine distribution,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Thursday at Garden House Apartments in Maywood, where 100 senior residents were set to receive the vaccine. “We’re meeting residents right here where they are at their homes to provide access to the vaccine. ... This is a point-of-distribution site, so it’s for the people in this particular building.”

Cook County is currently vaccinating health care workers, residents at long-term care facilities and those older than 65, Preckwinkle said.

The new pop-up distribution sites will allow the county to focus on vulnerable populations and fill in any vaccination gaps, according to Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha.

“Pop-ups like this are so vital in our fight against COVID to make sure everyone has access to vaccination, including bringing (vaccines) directly (to them) where they live, where they work and where they are,” Rocha said.

“Today’s the start of vaccines on the go, so we go to locations where people live, where they work, where we’re able to do that. We also have a program called vaccines at work, where we’ll be looking at any areas that either had big outbreaks or heavily impacted or having a difficult time being able to get vaccine,” Rocha said, adding the county is also planning on launching a program that will help people travel to vaccination sites.

The county considers multiple factors when deciding where to host a pop-up distribution site, according to Rocha.

“We’re looking at our equity strategy. In partnership with our public health department, we look at communities based on how much vaccine they received, the percentage of vaccination in those areas, the impact of the mortality and morbidity of COVID and also any social or economic risk factors that make it difficult to get to some of our other (vaccination) sites,” he said. “Then we look at clusters of infection, areas that have had greatest need or areas where there’s greatest challenges.”

Organizations that are interested in hosting COVID-19 vaccinations at their facilities [can register online](#), according to Rocha.

“That information goes directly to our public health department who’s helping coordinate this based on the risk, criteria, the social factors and the availability of us being able to operationalize these sites safely,” he said.

Organizations serving adults ages 65 and older, vulnerable populations in congregate settings and essential employees with limited access to care will be prioritized, according to officials.

Cook County Department of Public Health brings COVID-19 vaccines to nursing home residents

Manny Ramos

March 11, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=au89-Dfbzxk>

Linda Blunt sat anxiously in the lobby of the Garden House Apartments in Maywood on Thursday, awaiting her turn to receive the single-shot Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

She chatted merrily with her neighbors, bounced her legs and held her registration papers tight. Blunt, 65, was more than ready to move on, a year after the pandemic led to a lockdown that has kept her away from her family.

“I just want to see this over with and I want to see us finally get back to normal,” Blunt said. “At least with this we can get halfway to normal because we want to get back to visiting our families and enjoying ourselves.”

Blunt was among 100 residents, caregivers and staff of the senior living community, 515 S. 2nd Ave. in Maywood, who registered to get COVID-19 shots at Cook County Public Health’s pop-up vaccination event.

“We’re meeting residents right here where they are, at their homes, to provide access to the vaccine,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. “I know how hard this last year has been. We’ve seen that seniors — particularly Black and Brown seniors — have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and many of us have lost friends and neighbors to the virus.”

Preckwinkle is cautiously optimistic, as vaccines continue to become available for those in more vulnerable communities.



Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle talks to reporters in Thursday about the county’s mobile vaccination program at Garden House Apartments, 515 S. 2nd Ave. in Maywood. Anthony Vazquez/Sun-Times

Israel Rocha, CEO of Cook County Health, said by the end of the day Thursday, 200,000 doses of vaccines would have been administered throughout the county. Still, she wants residents to remain patient.

“It took us about four weeks to hit 100,000 and now, two weeks later, we are at about 200,000,” Rocha said. “We hope that we keep increasing with that pace.”

Rocha said a major part of the county’s plan is to create more “point of distribution” sites in areas most impacted by COVID-19. He couldn’t say how many pop-ups like the one in Maywood will be held or how many vaccines will be designated for those locations.

“Pop-up events like this allow us to hyper-focus on vulnerable populations and fill in the gaps as we look at data to make sure that everyone is getting vaccinated,” Rocha said. “We need to make sure that everyone has access to the vaccine and that includes bringing them directly to where they live, where they work and where they are.”

Illinois House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch grew up just down the street from the Garden House. It was a special moment for him, Welch said, to see his constituents and neighbors finally being vaccinated.



Cook County’s mobile vaccination program visited Garden House Apartments, 515 S. 2nd Ave. in Maywood, on Thursday. Anthony Vazquez/Sun-Times

“It is extremely important ... a year into this global health pandemic, that we make sure hard-hit communities like the village of Maywood are not overlooked,” Welch said.

Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson took a moment to remember the seniors who died before anyone could be vaccinated.

“With all the deaths that we have experienced over the course of this last year, we know that roughly 85% have been seniors,” Johnson said. “An entire generation that made my life possible have been devastated by this wicked pandemic and now, hopefully, we can move forward with better direction and clarity.”

For 72-year-old Eddie Mae Ferguson, Thursday’s vaccination puts her a step closer to hugging her nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

“We have to still wait for them to be vaccinated,” she said, “but I can almost feel them already.”



*Eddie Mae Ferguson, 72, registers to get vaccinated Thursday at the mobile Vaccine Program at Garden House Apartments, 515 S. 2nd Ave. in Maywood.
Anthony Vazquez/Sun-Times*

Pop-up vaccination site visits Maywood senior home

Cook County Commissioner Brandon Johnson took a moment to remember the seniors who died before anyone could be vaccinated and said it's important for the county to help those it can now.

*Manny Ramos
March 11, 2021*

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/11/22326022/coronavirus-cook-county-pop-up-vaccine-site-maywood-seniors-johnson-covid-19-vaccinations>

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No One Has Been Vaccinated At City View Nursing Home In Cicero, Which Has Had Serious Trouble With COVID Before

Lauren Victory
March 11, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/11/city-view-nursing-home-cicero-no-covid-vaccine/>

No one has been vaccinated for coronavirus at the City View Multi-Care Center in Cicero, and it is a place that has made headlines for COVID trouble before.

As CBS 2's Lauren Victory reported Thursday, a viewer reached out to us – concerned about her sister inside the nursing home. The woman was crying on the phone to Victory, scared about recently-confirmed coronavirus cases at the facility at a time when nursing home COVID rates are plummeting around the country because of vaccinations.

She said she has been repeatedly asking questions about a vaccination date -and she's not the only one begging for answers.

Her loved one is stuck in the City View nursing home and has not ventured to the outside world for a whole year.

The distraught viewer also wrote to CBS 2: "Every time I see the news and they report on how the nursing homes and living assisted facilities are the first in line to get their shots, I think, not at City View, [they're] not. They are one of the last on the list and have been forgotten about."

That may be true. No vaccine has made it to the building yet.

"Someone has to answer for this," said Erica Bland-Durosinmi, executive vice president at SEIU Healthcare.

Bland-Durosinmi was floored by CBS 2 inquiries to the union about a lack of COVID shots at City View – especially because of the facility's history.

"These are people that we ask to put their lives on the line every day and go into this facility," Bland-Durosinmi said, "a facility that has had 254 cases, that has had 15 deaths, and five cases in the last 28 days."

With vaccinations well into Phase 1B, how can the most vulnerable people and our healthcare heroes still not have their COVID shots?

"This isn't right. We should've been the first," said City View certified nursing assistant Shantonia Jackson. "They should've been on top of this."

Jackson said she has asked administrators about vaccinations several times.

The vast majority of long-term care facilities in our state signed up for the Federal Pharmacy Partnership and have gotten at least one dose by now.

“What [the administrator] said to me was, ‘We missed the deadline because you guys were on strike and we were in the process of changing over management,’” Jackson said.

That strike asking for better pay and more PPE was in November.

In September, a Medicare inspection of City View found the facility “failed to implement a surveillance plan” for COVID cases between the end of April to mid-July. City View fixed the issue a few weeks later.

Now a March 1, 2021 letter to relatives confirms the virus is back at the nursing home.

There is no mention of vaccines.

“I can’t keep waiting on City View,” Jackson said. “I can’t keep putting my family in jeopardy.”

For some news for Jackson, staff will now be vaccinated at City View on Sunday. All residents who want a shot should have one by next Sunday.

That is according to the spokesperson for Cook County Health who says expanding partnerships – and yes, CBS 2’s inquiries put City View on the schedule.

Chicago Tribune

Cook County deploys mobile vaccination teams as details of United Center sign-ups for suburban residents to come next week

Alice Yin

March 11, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-cook-county-mobile-vaccination-united-center-20210312-tchadorz25fzl5le6qync3qc4-story.html>

Cook County officials launched a new mobile vaccination program Thursday afternoon and said details for how suburban residents of high-need communities can sign up for the United Center mass vaccination site will be released next week.

The pilot program by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System and the Cook County Department of Public Health debuted by inoculating a hundred residents, caregivers and employees at the Garden House of Maywood, a Housing and Urban Development-subsidized senior home, with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Over the next weeks, nurses will head to other sites that have partnered with the county and serve suburban residents in phase 1b, which includes people 65 or older, front-line essential workers and those in congregate living settings.

"I'm sure that you're missing visits from friends and family, sons and daughters, grandchildren," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said at a news conference. "I know that I am. But we have reason to believe, now, that the worst of the virus is behind us, that we will soon be able to hug our grandchildren and visit our friends."

For suburban phase 1b residents hoping to secure an appointment at Chicago's United Center mass vaccination site that launched Tuesday, officials will announce details next week, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha Jr. said. There will be about 30 "communities" that ranked highest for vaccination need that will be eligible for that batch of sign-ups, he said. That list "is still being developed and will be available in the coming days," CCDPH spokesman Don Bolger later wrote in a statement.

It's a similar method the Chicago Department of Public Health used when it reserved United Center slots for five South and West ZIP codes. Cook County officials are determining the 30 communities based on their COVID-19 deaths and infections, percentage of residents vaccinated and socioeconomic factors.

"We are required by FEMA and our partners to look at certain requirements as we're giving out vaccine," Rocha said. "There was public availability for everyone in the state. When that closed on Sunday, we were asked to look at our distribution methodology. Our methodology will be announced next week."

He added there will be "some opportunity" for United Center sign-ups beyond those 30 high-need communities as well.

Officials did not say how many doses were allocated for the mobile vaccination program, but organizations serving vulnerable populations will also be prioritized by the community COVID-19 vulnerability index, Rocha said. Interested groups can [sign up here](#).

"We're looking to bring COVID-19 vaccine into the areas where people live that have been most impacted by COVID-19," Rocha said. "We need to make sure that everyone has access to the vaccine, and that includes bringing them directly where they live."



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March 11, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-deploys-mobile-vaccination-050100863.html>

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Cook County to release 20,000 suburban vaccine appointments Friday

Sun-Times Media Wire
March 11, 2020

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-to-release-20000-suburban-vaccine-appointments-friday>

Cook County health officials announced Thursday that the county will be releasing 20,000 appointments for eligible recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine Friday.

At noon Friday, Cook County residents included in Phase 1A and Phase 1B of the state vaccination program will be able to sign up for 20,000 first-dose appointments at:

Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park;

Triton College, 2000 5th Ave., River Grove;

South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland; and

North Riverside Health Center, 1800 S Harlem Ave., North Riverside.; and

An undisclosed site in Des Plaines.

With the exception of the site at the Tinley Park Convention Center, which will offer the Moderna vaccine, residents signing up for appointments at the suburban sites will be given the Pfizer vaccine.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyl.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Check your vaccine eligibility [here](#).



Cook County Health release 20,000 first-dose vaccine appointments Friday

*WGN Web Desk
March 11, 2021*

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-20000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-friday/>

Appointments can be made at noon Friday at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling our call center at 833-308-1988.

Cook County Health announced Thursday that around 20,000 first-dose appointments will be released on Friday.

More appointments will open up at the following vaccination sites at noon Friday.

Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)

Triton College (Pfizer)

South Suburban College (Pfizer)

North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)

Des Plaines (Pfizer – week of March 15)

All vaccinations are by appointment only and proof of being in Phase 1A or 1B will be required.

“*Due to limited supply of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, Cook County Health will provide the Pfizer vaccine at Des Plaines the week of March 15. As with all Cook County Health sites, the corresponding second-dose appointment will be scheduled on-site during the first-dose appointment,” CCH said.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling our call center at 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Cook County to release 20,000 suburban vaccine appointments Friday

At noon Friday, Cook County residents included in Phase 1A and Phase 1B of the state vaccination program will be able to sign up for appointments in Tinley Park, River Grove, South Holland, North Riverside and Des Plaines.

Sam Kelly

March 11, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/3/11/22326494/cook-county-release-20000-suburban-vaccine-appointments-friday>

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20K COVID Vaccination Appointments to be Released Friday at 5 Chicago-Area Sites

March 11, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/20k-covid-vaccination-appointments-to-be-released-friday-at-5-chicago-area-sites/2459921/>

Approximately 20,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments for those eligible in Phases 1A and 1B will open Friday at noon for five Chicago-area sites, officials announced.

Cook County Health said the following vaccination sites will receive doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines:

- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines (Pfizer, the week of March 15)

All vaccinations are by appointment only, health officials noted, with proof of eligibility in Phases 1A or 1B. The appointments can be made online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Nine rural Illinois hospitals will also be receiving additional COVID vaccine doses from the state as part of a new program aimed at expanding equitable distribution, according to officials.

On Thursday, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health announced the nine rural critical access hospitals that were selected as part of the Safety Net Direct Vaccine Allocation Pilot Program that will provide hundreds of doses to each site per week.

The state will provide a total of nearly 6,000 doses of the vaccine to the nine hospitals in addition to the existing allocations that the state already is distributing to health care sites.

The effort marks the next phase of the vaccine pilot program that was announced last week in which five health centers and four hospitals received vaccine supply from the federal government.

The nine hospitals include:

- Taylorville Memorial Hospital, Christian County
- Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services, Ford County
- Hamilton Memorial Hospital District, Hamilton County
- Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Logan County
- Genesis Medical Center Aledo, Mercer County
- Hillsboro Area Hospital, Montgomery County
- Hopedale Medical Complex, Tazewell County
- Carle Hoopston Regional Health Center, Vermilion County
- Fairfield Memorial Hospital, Wayne County



United Center's mass COVID-19 vaccination site open to 4 more ZIP codes on Chicago's South and West Sides

Illinois politicians demand change to United Center vaccine procedure

Eric Horng and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 13, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/uc-mass-vaccination-site-open-to-4-additional-chicago-zip-codes/10414056/>

The United Center mass vaccination site is now available to residents living in four additional ZIP codes on Chicago's South and West Sides.

"Equity drives all vaccine distribution in Chicago, and we want to ensure that residents from the communities that have been most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic have access to this lifesaving vaccine," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot in a news release Saturday. "For the last week, 59 percent of those who received at least one vaccine dose are Black or Latinx, which matches the demographics of our city."

Currently, blocks of appointments have been set aside for targeted outreach to what the city calls people living in high-need ZIP codes.

List of eligible ZIP codes

- 60608
- 60619
- 60620
- 60649
- 60652
- 60624
- 60644
- 60651
- 60653

A group of Illinois' Democratic U.S. House members sent a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Friday criticizing its decision to restrict appointments to Chicago and Cook County residents on behalf of equity goals.

FEMA defended its decision saying it was acting in the interest of the most vulnerable Illinoisans. But in the letter, members of Congress reminded the agency that people in the suburbs need help, too.

The letter reads in part, "We share and champion the goal of equitable distribution of the vaccine...Nevertheless, many

of our constituents who fall in the vulnerable category ... felt frustrated with the recent determination to limit eligibility at the United Center..."

"I want to make sure that FEMA is getting those vaccines to everyone in Chicago, in the 10th district, in every community in Illinois," said U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider.

The letter was signed by 11 Illinois Democratic members of Congress.

There are people also in suburban areas that are not in Chicago where there are disadvantaged communities," said U.S. Rep. Danny Davis, who represents Chicago and western suburbs.

The remaining United Center appointments are being directed to people in five Chicago zip codes.

And in suburban Cook County, areas in the west and south will likely be targeted.

The state has said FEMA has pledged mobile vaccination sites in the collar counties, but some suburban leaders said they've yet to hear anything about that.

"There are vulnerable folks scattered everywhere," said Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering. "We need to do something more, and we need to do something soon."

The mayor of Morton Grove said more local control of distribution would help with seniors' transportation challenges.

"I know I would rather have our seniors come right here to our local village hall or American Legion center," Morton Grove Mayor Dan DiMaria said.

Those suburban mayors said seniors who don't have a car or anyone to help have had to use public transportation to get the vaccine, and in the suburbs, that can take hours.

Cook County Health opened up approximately 20,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments at five different vaccination sites Friday at 12 p.m., which were quickly booked.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the Cook County Health call center at 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The sites include:

- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines* (Pfizer - week of March 15)

**Due to limited supply of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, Cook County Health will provide the Pfizer vaccine at Des Plaines the week of March 15.*

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Residents will be required to provide proof that they are in Phase 1A or 1B.

As with all Cook County Health sites, second-dose appointments will be scheduled on-site during the first-dose appointment.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Cook County Vaccine Appointments, COVID Relief Bill, St. Patrick's Day

March 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-20k-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-what-covid-relief-bill-does-st-patricks-day-warning/2460183/>

Approximately 20,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments will open Friday at noon for five Cook County sites.

Meanwhile, \$1,400 payments from the COVID relief bill signed by President Joe Biden could hit bank accounts as early as this weekend.

And Chicago officials are warning anyone who may be hosting or celebrating St. Patrick's Day that guidelines are still in place and will be enforced.

Here are the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic across Illinois today:

All 20K Cook County First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments Booked Within 2 Hours

About 20,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments were booked within two hours of opening Friday in Cook County, health officials announced.

The appointments for five Cook County vaccination sites opened at noon for those eligible in Phases 1A and 1B, officials said.

Those who receive vaccines through the Cook County sites will book their second-dose appointments the same day as their first-dose appointments.

Read more [here](#).



20,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Opening In Cook County Friday

Mugo Odigwe

March 12, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/12/cook-county-covid-vaccination-appointments/>

Cook County officials will be releasing 20,000 COVID-19 vaccine appointments at noon Friday for people who qualify for the shots.

The new appointments for first-dose shots will be available at five mass vaccination sites in the Cook County suburbs:

- Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr, Tinley Park (Moderna)
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave, River Grove, IL (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center, 1800 S Harlem Ave., North Riverside (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines vaccine site at 1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines (Johnson & Johnson; Pfizer starting March 15)

To get a vaccine at any of those locations you need to register at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the Cook County Health call center at 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

All vaccinations are by appointment only and proof of being in Phase 1A or 1B will be required. Phase 1A and 1B include healthcare workers, long-term care facility workers and residents, anyone age 65 or older, and frontline essential workers (such as first responders, grocery store workers, teachers, manufacturing workers, corrections officers, postal employees, and public transit workers).

Those who get their first shot will be able to schedule their second dose during their first-dose appointment.

CBS 2's Mugo Odigwe spoke with some people about what getting this vaccine means to them.

"I can't explain. Overwhelming," Margaret Depaz said.

Depaz received her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine on Friday at South Suburban College. It was an emotional and bittersweet moment.

"So many deaths. So many lives lost. I work for two doctors, and they work very hard. So for us to protect ourselves, it's very important for us to all get the vaccine," Depaz said.

While she couldn't hold back tears, Miguel Figueroa couldn't hold back something else: excitement; especially after trying and failing to get secure an appointment numerous times before.

"You never know when someone don't show up then that makes it open for somebody else," Figueroa said.

He's happy to know he'll soon be able to visit family members, including the talented cooks in his family.

"Once I get my two shots, please, all my aunts, have the food ready. I'm coming to visit y'all," he said.

This vaccine appointment opportunity comes just a few days after the United Center site started vaccinating thousands of people.



Staff, residents at Illinois' biggest nursing home still not vaccinated against COVID-19

Judy Wang

March 12, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/staff-residents-at-illinois-biggest-nursing-home-still-not-vaccinated-against-covid-19/>

Nearly three months after the vaccine roll out, City View Multicare Center residents and staff are still waiting for their shots.

The Cicero facility, located at 5825 W Cermak Road, is the largest skilled nursing facility in Illinois. People at long-term care facilities were among those at the front of the line for vaccines in December.

City View has had 259 Covid cases and 19 deaths and has been the target of a lawsuit. Employees of the facility went on strike this past fall.

SEIU blames management for failing to enroll in a federal program to vaccinate people in nursing homes in partnership with major pharmacies. The program has been successful in reducing cases.

On Wednesday, the federal agency that regulates nursing homes said they could soon allow more visitors. Last spring, the town of Cicero sued City View accusing it of not following COVID-19 guidelines. The facility accused IDPH of not enforcing them.

In November, employees went on strike for 12 days over pay, working conditions and lack of PPE. Union steward Shantonia Jackson says she's asked managers repeatedly about vaccines.

Some employees are working on their own trying to get shots at other locations including the United Center.

The Cook County Department of Health released the following statement:

"The Cook County Department of Public Health recently launched a mobile vaccination program to equitably and efficiently vaccinate the residents of suburban Cook County. On Sunday, March 14, 2021, a mobile vaccination team from CCDPH partner Chicago Internal Medical Practice and Research (CIMPAR) will begin vaccinating the residents and staff of City View Multi-Care Center. All residents and staff of City View are expected to be vaccinated by Sunday, March 21."

DON BOLGER, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER, COOK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

WGN has reached out to City View management for a response to union accusations.

The Chicago Tribune reports vaccines could arrive at City View Sunday.



Will County to Open Two New COVID Vaccination Sites This Month

March 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/will-county-to-open-two-covid-vaccination-sites-this-month/2460629/>

Two new coronavirus vaccination sites are set to open in Will County later this month, health officials announced Friday.

Beginning the week of March 22, Will County residents can begin receiving vaccine doses in Wilmington at St. Rose Church, and in Monee at the former Second Place Church starting the week of March 29.

Both locations will provide vaccinations to those eligible under Phase 1B, according to health officials, which includes residents ages 65 and older, as well as frontline workers.

“Access to vaccinations is vital to winning the battle against the devastating effect of COVID-19 and getting our county back to normal,” Jennifer Bertino Tarrant, County Executive, said. “These two clinics will provide critical access to our people who live and work in Will County.”

The two clinics will administer vaccinations by appointment Tuesday through Sunday. To book an appointment, residents and workers in Will County can visit WillCountyHealth.org or call the COVID-19 Hotline at (815) 740-8977.

In Cook County, approximately 20,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments opened Friday for five locations, health officials announced.

The appointments opened at noon for those eligible in Phases 1A and 1B, but proof of eligibility will be required, officials said.

Cook County Health said the following vaccination sites will receive doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines:

- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines (Pfizer, the week of March 15)

All vaccinations are by appointment only, health officials noted, with proof of eligibility in Phases 1A or 1B. The appointments can be made online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Previously, the Des Plaines location was administering Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses, but the county said due to limited supply, the location will instead be provided with the Pfizer vaccine for the week of March 15.

Those who receive vaccines through the Cook County sites will book their second-dose appointments the same day as their first-dose appointments.

The sites are part of several mass vaccination locations in Illinois. Currently, there are 22 statewide. [Here's a full list.](#)

Nine rural Illinois hospitals will also be receiving additional COVID vaccine doses from the state as part of a new program aimed at expanding equitable distribution, according to officials.

On Thursday, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health announced the nine rural critical access hospitals were selected as part of the Safety Net Direct Vaccine Allocation Pilot Program that will provide hundreds of doses to each site per week.

The state will provide a total of nearly 6,000 doses of the vaccine to the nine hospitals in addition to the existing allocations that the state already is distributing to health care sites.

The effort marks the next phase of the vaccine pilot program that was announced last week in which five health centers and four hospitals received vaccine supply from the federal government.

The nine hospitals include:

- Taylorville Memorial Hospital, Christian County
- Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services, Ford County
- Hamilton Memorial Hospital District, Hamilton County
- Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Logan County
- Genesis Medical Center Aledo, Mercer County
- Hillsboro Area Hospital, Montgomery County
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- Carle Hoopston Regional Health Center, Vermilion County
- Fairfield Memorial Hospital, Wayne County



Concerns over Cook County's vaccine security website arise as some residents fear their information was compromised

Meghan Dwyer, WGN Web Desk

March 12, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/concerns-over-cook-countys-vaccine-security-website-arise-as-some-residents-fear-their-information-was-compromised/>

As many Cook County residents try to sign up for COVID-19 vaccine appointments, scams were not thought to be a worry on the county's official vaccine registration portal.

"We didn't go to a rogue site to sign up. We went to a government website," Michele Bacus said.

Bacus has had a difficult time convincing her 90-year-old mother to get vaccinated, with past severe reactions to a flu shot making her weary.

This week she changed her mind, leading Bacus to sign her up for a vaccine appointment on Cook County's official vaccine website, vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

"Then the next day I received a phone call and it seemed 100 percent legitimate. There were no red flags," Bacus said.

Bacus also said the caller was aware of the Walgreens location closest to where her mother lived, and said two appointments were scheduled at the Walgreens closest to them.

When Bacus arrived with her mother however, there was no sign of the appointment ever being scheduled.

While nobody asked her for money, Bacus is convinced her information was compromised from what she provided on Cook County's website.

A statement from the county said there is no indication the security of the site has been compromised at any time, and said they were confident the breach in data did not originate from the site.

Bacus is not convinced by the answer and filed a complaint with the Illinois Attorney General, confident of an internal breach of data.



Concerns over Cook County's vaccine security website arise as some residents fear their information was compromised

*Meghan Dwyer, WGN Web Desk
March 12, 2021*

<https://news.yahoo.com/concerns-over-cook-county-vaccine-014900146.html>

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Cook County Health to open up 20K COVID vaccine appointments at 5 sites across suburbs

March 12, 2021

<https://chicagocrusader.com/cook-county-health-to-open-up-20k-covid-vaccine-appointments-at-5-sites-across-suburbs/>

Cook County Health will open up approximately 20,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments at five different vaccination sites Friday at 12 p.m.

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As with all Cook County Health sites, second-dose appointments will be scheduled on-site during the first-dose appointment.

This article originally appeared on ABC7 News.



20,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Opening In Cook County Friday

Mugo Odigwe

March 12, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-opening-20-000-170700381.html>

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"You never know when someone don't show up then that makes it open for somebody else," Figueroa said.

He's happy to know he'll soon be able to visit family members, including the talented cooks in his family.

"Once I get my two shots, please, all my aunts, have the food ready. I'm coming to visit y'all," he said.

This vaccine appointment opportunity comes just a few days after the United Center site started vaccinating thousands of people.



Cook County Launches Mobile COVID Vaccine Pilot Program

March 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-launches-mobile-covid-vaccine-pilot-program/2460535/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Thursday launched a pilot program to deploy mobile COVID-19 vaccination teams across the suburban portions of the county.

The county will prioritize organizations serving people 65 years or older, vulnerable populations in congregate settings and essential employees with limited access to care, CCDPH said in a statement.

The county kicked off the effort at the Garden House Apartments in suburban Maywood, vaccinating 100 residents, staff and caregivers at the Housing and Urban Development-subsidized senior housing complex. All those vaccinated at the Garden House Thursday received the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, officials said.

"We're meeting residents right here where they are, at their homes, to provide access to the vaccine," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said at the launch.

"Over the coming weeks and months, we are looking to bring COVID-19 vaccine into the areas where people live that have been most impacted by COVID-19," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said, noting that the county had passed the milestone of 200,000 doses administered thus far.

"Pop-up events like this allow us to hyper-focus on vulnerable populations and fill in the gaps as we look at data to make sure that everyone is getting vaccinated and that everyone has an opportunity to be able to get their shot at the vaccine," Rocha said.

The county is in Phase 1B of its vaccine rollout plan, in which frontline essential workers residents age 65 and older are eligible to be vaccinated, in addition to the health care workers and long-term care facility staff and residents who previously qualified in Phase 1A.

The county also operates 11 mass vaccination sites for suburban residents, as well as the site at Chicago's United Center run in coordination with city, state and federal partners.

Cook County planned to open 20,000 appointments at five mass vaccination sites for suburban residents on Friday afternoon.



All 20K Cook County First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments Booked Within 2 Hours

Those who receive vaccines through the Cook County sites will book their second-dose appointments the same day as their first-dose appointments

March 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/20k-cook-county-first-dose-covid-vaccine-appointments-booked-in-2-hours/2460856/>

About 20,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments were booked within two hours of opening Friday in Cook County, health officials announced.

The appointments for five Cook County vaccination sites opened at noon for those eligible in Phases 1A and 1B, officials said.

For those able to book vaccination appointments, Cook County Health said the following sites will receive doses of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines:

- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines (Pfizer, the week of March 15)

All vaccinations are by appointment only, health officials noted, and made online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

Previously, the Des Plaines location was administering Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses, but the county said due to limited supply, the location will instead be provided with the Pfizer vaccine for the week of March 15.

Those who receive vaccines through the Cook County sites will book their second-dose appointments the same day as their first-dose appointments.

The sites are part of several mass vaccination locations in Illinois. Currently, there are 22 statewide. [Here's a full list.](#)

Nine rural Illinois hospitals will also be receiving additional COVID vaccine doses from the state as part of a new program aimed at expanding equitable distribution, according to officials.

On Thursday, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health announced the nine rural critical access hospitals were selected as part of the Safety Net Direct Vaccine Allocation Pilot Program that will provide hundreds of doses to each site per week.

The state will provide a total of nearly 6,000 doses of the vaccine to the nine hospitals in addition to the existing allocations that the state already is distributing to health care sites.

The effort marks the next phase of the vaccine pilot program that was announced last week in which five health centers and four hospitals received vaccine supply from the federal government.

Congressmen to feds: What now for suburbanites with United Center suddenly limited?

Marni Pyke

March 12, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210312/congressmen-to-feds-what-now-for-suburbanites-with-united-center-suddenly-limited>

Eleven Democratic members of Congress complained to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Friday about its decision to exclude collar county residents from the popular United Center mass COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Chicago.

Until Sunday, March 7, federal, Chicago and state officials had promoted the clinic as open to all Illinoisans age 65 and older and people with serious medical conditions.

Many suburban seniors had secured appointments before FEMA pulled the plug Sunday amid concerns participants didn't meet federal goals of vaccinating vulnerable communities hit hard by COVID-19, including residents on Chicago's West Side where the stadium is located.

"Many of our constituents who fall in the vulnerable category, but who don't live in Chicago, felt frustrated with the recent determination to limit eligibility at the United Center Federal Mass Vaccination Center for Illinois residents outside of the city and county," a letter written by U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider of Deerfield and 10 other lawmakers stated.

"Their confusion was exacerbated with the abruptness of the announcement, and the consequent uncertainty surrounding their future access to a vaccination appointment."

Co-signers include U.S. Reps. Sean Casten of Downers Grove, Bill Foster of Naperville, Robin Kelly of Matteson, Raja Krishnamoorthi of Schaumburg, Marie Newman of LaGrange, Jan Schakowsky of Evanston, and Chicagoans Danny Davis, Jesús Garcia, Mike Quigley and Bobby Rush.

Seniors were eligible to make appointments March 4, and the next group, people with significant health problems such as cancer, had been scheduled to begin signing up Sunday.

FEMA Acting Regional Administrator Kevin M. Sligh said the agency is "committed to the equitable distribution of vaccines. Using data from CDC's social vulnerability index, the vaccination site was located in the city of Chicago, and an additional allocation of vaccines was made, to reach the most socially vulnerable communities.

"The decision to change course on registrations had to be made quickly because delaying the decision would only have ensured that the most socially vulnerable Illinoisans would be excluded from this particular effort," Sligh said.

FEMA agreed to provide federal mobile sites in locations including the collar counties and to dedicate vaccine doses for that purpose, but no details have been offered about dates and locations.

The lawmakers asked for plans about future vaccination sites and whether the United Center facility, which debuted Tuesday, will stay open beyond the eight weeks originally announced.

"Pockets of vulnerability exist all across our state, both in the collar counties and downstate, and each of us represent underserved, socially vulnerable Illinoisans that are all hoping for timely and straightforward access to the vaccine," the delegation wrote.

United Center vaccination appointments for seniors made before the change will be kept. Suburban Cook residents also are still eligible for vaccines at the stadium through the Cook County health department, but the agency has yet to release plans for how people can access shots.



United Center's mass COVID-19 vaccination site open to 4 more ZIP codes on Chicago's South and West Sides

Illinois politicians demand change to United Center vaccine procedure

Eric Horng and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 13, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/covid-vaccine-additonal-zip-codes-chicago-does-4-more/10414056/>

The United Center mass vaccination site is now available to residents living in four additional ZIP codes on Chicago's South and West Sides.

"Equity drives all vaccine distribution in Chicago, and we want to ensure that residents from the communities that have been most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic have access to this lifesaving vaccine," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot in a news release Saturday. "For the last week, 59 percent of those who received at least one vaccine dose are Black or Latinx, which matches the demographics of our city."

Currently, blocks of appointments have been set aside for targeted outreach to what the city calls people living in high-need ZIP codes.

List of eligible ZIP codes

- 60608
- 60619
- 60620
- 60649
- 60652
- 60624
- 60644
- 60651
- 60653

A group of Illinois' Democratic U.S. House members sent a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Friday criticizing it's decision to restrict appointments to Chicago and Cook County residents on behalf of equity goals.

FEMA defended it's decision saying it was acting in the interest of the most vulnerable Illinoisans. But in the letter, members of Congress reminded the agency that people in the suburbs need help, too.

The letter reads in part, "We share and champion the goal of equitable distribution of the vaccine...Nevertheless, many

of our constituents who fall in the vulnerable category ... felt frustrated with the recent determination to limit eligibility at the United Center..."

"I want to make sure that FEMA is getting those vaccines to everyone in Chicago, in the 10th district, in every community in Illinois," said U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider.

The letter was signed by 11 Illinois Democratic members of Congress.

There are people also in suburban areas that are not in Chicago where there are disadvantaged communities," said U.S. Rep. Danny Davis, who represents Chicago and western suburbs.

The remaining United Center appointments are being directed to people in five Chicago zip codes.

And in suburban Cook County, areas in the west and south will likely be targeted.

The state has said FEMA has pledged mobile vaccination sites in the collar counties, but some suburban leaders said they've yet to hear anything about that.

"There are vulnerable folks scattered everywhere," said Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering. "We need to do something more, and we need to do something soon."

The mayor of Morton Grove said more local control of distribution would help with seniors' transportation challenges.

"I know I would rather have our seniors come right here to our local village hall or American Legion center," Morton Grove Mayor Dan DiMaria said.

Those suburban mayors said seniors who don't have a car or anyone to help have had to use public transportation to get the vaccine, and in the suburbs, that can take hours.

Cook County Health opened up approximately 20,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments at five different vaccination sites Friday at 12 p.m., which were quickly booked.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling the Cook County Health call center at 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The sites include:

- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- North Riverside Health Center (Pfizer)
- Des Plaines* (Pfizer - week of March 15)

**Due to limited supply of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, Cook County Health will provide the Pfizer vaccine at Des Plaines the week of March 15.*

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Residents will be required to provide proof that they are in Phase 1A or 1B.

As with all Cook County Health sites, second-dose appointments will be scheduled on-site during the first-dose appointment.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Finally! The hunt for COVID-19 vaccine appointments obsessed my family for weeks

Maudlyne Ihejirika

March 14, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/14/22330083/covid-vaccine-coronavirus-finally-hunt-appointments-obsessed-my-family-weeks>

This might more appropriately be titled, “Vaccine Chronicles,” as the hunt for an open appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine has consumed my family for two months.

Vaccine hesitancy remains a challenge among a segment of the African American community — individuals in my immediate family included — based on the Tuskegee Experiment and America’s past history of racism within its health care system.

But another segment of the African American community has frantically grasped, with the rest of the world, for this lifeline that promises a return to some normalcy.

Every day, my family texts and emails about which members are eligible in the vaccine’s phased rollout.

Every day, we’ve shared with each other the latest distribution venue offered by the state, Cook County or city of Chicago.

Every day, there is the surfing of designated websites and calling of phone numbers, each of us armed with every family member’s pertinent information, as we fight through the busy phone lines and constant online response of “No Appointments Available.”

Phase 1A, of course, began Dec. 15, 2020, encompassing health care workers, nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Phase 1B, targeting those 65 and older, non-health care residential settings, and frontline essential workers, opened Jan. 25.

Phase 1B Plus opened statewide Feb. 25 — targeting individuals with underlying health conditions. But in Chicago, the larger population with underlying health conditions, and non-frontline essential workers, won’t be looped in until Phase 1C opens March 29.

Like so many families nationwide, mine was pummeled by the invisible and highly contagious coronavirus outbreak, declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020.

Our 94-year-old matriarch, my mother, has essentially been a shut-in, the pandemic dictating limited contact with her seven children, and no contact at all with grandchildren who are potential asymptomatic spreaders.

My millennial son in Texas caught COVID in July, triggering three weeks of hell for his father and I, who could only worry and pray in Chicago with his grandparents, aunts and uncles. As with most COVID victims his age, he came through unscathed.

Four months later, another family member caught COVID, their descent into inability to breathe, hospitalization and ultimately being placed on a ventilator, sending our family into a traumatized tailspin. They survived.

Another family member in that person's home also caught COVID, causing again a collective holding of breath. They weathered the illness without hospitalization.

A third family member who caught COVID via this cohort also ended up hospitalized, was successfully treated and came home.

Traumatized by this COVID-19 journey, getting our family vaccinated has been priority one since December, though akin to searching for a needle in a haystack.

One sibling, a doctor, got theirs in Phase 1A.

Phase 1B looped in Mom; myself as caregiver for a medically fragile son; a family member who is caregiver for another disabled relative; and two siblings who are frontline essential workers. Like many in Chicago, Cook County and statewide, we began searching for appointments immediately.

Day after day, no appointments on the list of city vaccine sites expanding over time.

Week after week, no appointments on the growing list of Cook County vaccine sites.

No appointments through Walgreens, Osco or other national pharmacies.

Until, finally, the web surfing, phone calling and putting family names on lists paid off.

Mom and I and one essential worker sibling were blessed to get appointments at Mt. Sinai Hospital — one of four hospitals on the city's list. The other essential worker sibling was blessed to get one at Rush University Medical Center.

The family member who is also a caregiver was blessed to get one at North Riverside Health Center in suburban North Riverside.

Another sibling got one through a Loretto Hospital pop-up vaccine event for all ages held at Amundsen Park on the West Side on Saturday — where my special-needs son, who resides between my home and his father's home in West Side Austin, also got vaccinated.

We have a sibling with underlying conditions who initially did not trust the vaccine but has come around. We continue web surfing for that last appointment.

One of my siblings, and one other family member, have no interest in a vaccine whatsoever.

So be it. For those still searching, don't give up. It took weeks of web surfing and phone calls for our family to get this far.

The question I get most: Side effects? They've run the gamut.

Mom, who we were most worried about, experienced none at all. Me? My arm was beyond sore that night and the next day, with accompanying fatigue and cold symptoms diminishing over four days. A sibling's arm was so painful the next day they couldn't move, chills and severe fatigue gluing her to the couch. The symptoms diminished over two days.

As I visited Mom this weekend, the two of us sitting in her living room watching Mass on TV, eating and laughing — maskless, per CDC guidelines — I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that the stress of the hunt for an appointment and the minimal side effects were all worth it.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Health officials: Nearly 9 percent of suburban Cook County residents have been fully vaccinated

Officials said 8.8 percent of suburban Cook County residents have received both doses of the vaccine, along with other updates.

Mary Chappell
March 15, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/15/22332758/health-officials-nearly-9-percent-of-suburban-cook-county-residents-have-been-fully-vaccinated>

In suburban Cook County, 199,501 people — 8.8 percent of residents — have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine as of March 12, health officials said in a Monday town hall.

Data show 409,108 suburban Cook County residents — 18 percent of the population — have had at least one vaccine dose.

Second dose appointments represent 75 percent of all vaccines this week at Cook County Health (CCH) sites.

In efforts to expand capacities and “ensure an equitable distribution of vaccine in vulnerable communities,” CCH has opened dozens of points of distribution (PODs) across Chicago and the suburbs.

As of March 12, 24,063 and 48,599 first- and second-dose vaccines have been administered total at Cook County Health’s Chicago and suburban PODs, respectively.

At CCH’s Mega PODs, 115,311 vaccines have been administered. CCH’s targeted pods, open to specific eligible populations such as teachers or police officers, have administered 9,995 vaccines.

Data from health officials show most COVID-19 vaccines have been given in the northern suburbs, with 21 percent of the population having at least one dose. In the western suburbs, 16.2 percent have had at least one shot; in the southwest suburbs, 18.7 percent and in the southern suburbs, 13.7 percent.

Chicago Tribune

Survey about COVID-19 vaccine finds 46% of African Americans, 35% of Latinos in Cook County have doubts about vaccination, prompting campaign to encourage people to get the shot

Laura Rodríguez Presa

March 15, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-cook-county-survey-campaign-20210315-qpsh25op2bftbhs17ku7>

Cook County officials Monday kicked off a new outreach campaign to encourage residents to get a COVID-19 vaccine after a survey found that 46% of African Americans and 35% of Latinos in the county have doubts about getting the vaccine.

The “My Shot” campaign will feature county residents sharing their experience after getting the vaccine and the reason why they chose to get it, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said during a news conference Monday morning at Proviso Missionary Baptist Church in Maywood that was streamed online.

According to a survey of 1,100 residents conducted in January and February whose data were used to craft the campaign, 32% of Cook County adults are hesitant about coronavirus vaccines, with the largest hesitancy in those 18 to 34 years old. Of those surveyed, 46% of African Americans and 35% of Latinos in the county said they probably will not, definitely will not or are not sure whether they will get a vaccine.

Most cited concerns about the side effects of the vaccines.

While the results of the survey were disheartening, “it is not a surprise,” said Israel Rocha, chief executive of Cook County Health.

“A history of mistrust and racism in health care and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic has contributed to the mistrust,” said Rocha, who added that county officials are committed to “address those concerns to regain that trust.”

The campaign will use radio and TV ads, as well as ads in bus shelters, on billboards and on social media to reach people. It’s one of a number of steps the county is taking to provide resources and educational materials for those who are still unsure about getting the vaccine, so they can make a decision about vaccination, officials said.

Although there are not enough vaccines yet and a timeline to get to the next phase of distribution hasn’t been set, the campaign is needed to slow the spread of misinformation and ensure that once the vaccines are available, as many eligible people as possible will get it, Rocha said.

The campaign will be multilingual and targeted to reach the most vulnerable and those who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

“While many are overjoyed to get the vaccine, I also see reluctance, fear and misinformation,” Preckwinkle said.

“The ‘My Shot’ campaign directly speaks to these individuals who need to hear from their neighbors about the safety of this shot and the importance of making the choice to get vaccinated,” Preckwinkle said.



Survey about COVID-19 vaccine finds 46% of African Americans, 35% of Latinos in Cook County have doubts about vaccination, prompting campaign to encourage people to get the shot

Laura Rodriguez Presa
March 15, 2021

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/survey-about-covid-19-vaccine-finds-45percent-of-african-americans-35percent-of-latinos-in-cook-county-have-doubts-about-vaccination-prompting-campaign-to-encourage-people-to-get-the-shot/ar-BB1eCusM>

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Laura Rodríguez Presa
March 15, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/survey-covid-19-vaccine-finds-223500530.html>

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Cook County launches the 'My Shot' campaign urging residents to get vaccinated

Craig Dellimore
March 15, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-launches-the-my-shot-covid-19-campaign>

Cook County's Health and Hospitals System is launching a major public campaign aimed at erasing doubts about the COVID-19 vaccines.

The "My Shot" campaign, a photographic and social media campaign, involves telling the stories of people who have received the coronavirus vaccine, why they received it and why they urge others to do the same.

Cook County Health and Hospitals CEO Israel Rocha said the numbers are troubling.

"Through our research, we found that among Cook County adults, 32 percent were hesitant about the vaccine, with the most hesitant age group being between the ages of 18- and 34-years old," he said.

The numbers are higher—up to 46 percent hesitancy among African Americans and 35 percent in the LatinX community.

Bishop Claude Porter, who hosted the news conference at Proviso Missionary Baptist Church in Maywood, said the only path back to normal life is through the vaccines.

"Any shot that becomes available is a shot that you need to take. It is a shot that is going to save your life. It will encourage you and help you continue to live..." Porter said.

Porter said some people reluctant to sign up for the vaccine say they want to be able to get together with friends again; but he said people won't be able to safely do that unless they "take the shot."

County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said the only thing keeping Cook from giving out more vaccines is getting the doses here.

"Both at Tinley Park and Des Plaines, which are the sites that do a couple thousand vaccines a day; we have the capacity to do considerably more, so I think if we have the vaccine we can get the shots in people's arms. It is just a question of supply," Preckwinkle said.

But the supply's expected to increase.



Cook County Launches ‘My Shot’ Campaign to Address Vaccine Hesitancy

*Kristen Thometz
March 15, 2021*

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/15/cook-county-launches-my-shot-campaign-address-vaccine-hesitancy>

The Rev. Claude Porter, of Maywood’s Proviso Missionary Baptist Church, says he didn’t hesitate when he became eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Three of his nephews had contracted the virus. One of them is still learning how to walk again.

“I knew there was a need to take the shot,” the 84-year-old said. “The COVID-19 vaccine is my shot to continue to serve God’s mission to take care of his people.”

Now, Porter is among a small group of people sharing their stories as part of a new campaign in Cook County to address vaccine hesitancy and to dispel misinformation about the vaccines.

“Every day I talk with residents across Cook County about the pandemic and now about the vaccine. While many people are overjoyed to get vaccinated, I also hear reluctance, fear and misinformation,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Monday morning. “The ‘My Shot’ campaign speaks directly to these individuals who need to hear from their neighbors about the safety of these shots and the importance of making the choice to get vaccinated.”

Porter said he agreed to participate in the [“My Shot” campaign](#) so he could be an example to others and show them the vaccine is safe.

“There’s nothing wrong with squirming a little bit when the needle hits you. I did the same thing, but I stand here today I feel good right now,” he said. “I want you to feel good because you took the shot. You made a difference in your community and your lives.”

In addition to residents’ stories, the campaign includes vaccine FAQs, including how the vaccine was created and how to schedule an appointment, as well as resources from local, state and federal health agencies and tool kits with graphics and posts for community groups to share.

Expect to see information in English and Spanish popping up on social media, the radio, billboards and bus shelters. “We hope to reach those communities that have seen more than their share of suffering throughout the pandemic,” Preckwinkle said.

The campaign was informed by a survey of 1,100 Cook County residents from various backgrounds and ZIP codes, according to Cook County Health CEO Isreal Rocha. The survey, conducted by Market Probe, found that 32% of all Cook County adults are hesitant about the vaccine, with 46% of African Americans and 35% of Latinos saying they probably will not, definitely will not or are not sure if they will get vaccinated.

“While disheartening, this discrepancy – often called vaccine trust gap – is not surprising. We know that the history of mistreatment and racism in health care and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic has contributed to mistrust in our communities of color,” Rocha said, adding officials need to work on regaining that trust.

Adults ages 18-34 were the most hesitant age group, according to officials, who are urging residents to get vaccinated when they are eligible.

“The science is there. You need to make your decisions. Trust begins by having an open dialogue, open information and resources available to everyone so they can make that decision for their family,” Rocha said. “The ‘My Shot’ campaign is a powerful message because it uses a message of individuals who have decided to take that shot, why they made that decision and share their story.”

The \$1.2 million campaign will be reimbursed by the federal government, according to officials.

For more information about the campaign and to hear residents’ story, [visit the campaign’s website](#).

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Vaccine reluctance in Cook County prompts new advertising campaign

In a survey, 46% of Black residents said they likely would not get the vaccine or were unsure about getting it.

Stefano Esposito
March 15, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/3/15/22331883/coronavirus-covid-cook-county-vaccine-vaccination-reluctance-advertising-campaign-preckwinkle>

Cook County has launched a new COVID-19 vaccine campaign, based in part on a survey showing that 46% of African-American residents say they likely would not get the shot or were unsure about getting it.

“The ‘My Shot’ campaign speaks directly to these individuals who need to hear from their neighbors about the safety of these shots and the importance of making the choice to get vaccinated,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said Monday during a Facebook Live event.

The campaign drew on responses from about 1,100 Cook County residents surveyed earlier this year. Among other things, it found that, overall, 32% of respondents were hesitant about getting the vaccine. Broken down by race, 46% of Black and 35% of Latino residents “probably would not, definitely would not or were unsure if they would get the vaccine.”

The multi-lingual campaign — featuring the stories of actual Cook County residents promoting getting the vaccine — is to be posted on bus shelters and billboards, as well as online and in print media, officials said.

To learn more, go to myshotcookcounty.com

Meanwhile, state health officials on Monday announced 782 new probable and confirmed COVID-19 cases — the lowest daily case total since July 14, when the state reported 707 new cases.

The state also reported an additional 12 deaths Monday, including eight in Cook County. The new cases were found in among 39,145 tests processed by state health officials in the last 24 hours, for a daily positivity rate of 2.2 percent. On Sunday, 62,508 shots of the vaccine were administered in Illinois, according to health officials.



Cook County launches 'My Shot' public awareness campaign to encourage vaccinations

Sean Lewis

March 15, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-launches-my-shot-public-awareness-campaign-to-encourage-vaccinations/>

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle joined public health leaders in announcing the 'My Shot' public awareness campaign, aiming to highlight the motivations for getting the vaccine of Cook County residents.

The \$1.2 million campaign aims to boost vaccine equity by working to encourage those who may be reluctant to get vaccinated.

"The 'My Shot' Campaign speaks directly to these individuals who need to hear from the neighbors about the safety of these shots and making the choice to be vaccinated," Preckwinkle said.

The campaign will work to specifically reach county residents who live in communities that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, utilizing billboards, radio, print and social media.

George Vaughn of Ranch House Meats says he is excited to contribute to a campaign, which he believes will help bring trust for the vaccine.

"I hope that everyone gets a chance to take it and they won't let rumors or negative feedback from the community affect them taking the shot," he said. "I think everyone needs to take it so we can get back to normal."

The campaign's [website](#) features vaccine resources and FAQs as well as graphics and posts for community groups to share.

Cook County Health believes the campaign is money well spent.

"I think we've seen that there are two groups of people. Those who wanted it last month and those who have yet to make a decision," said Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha. "So I think we need to provide every tool to make sure that everybody gets the information they need to make that choice."

A survey of 1,100 Cook County residents found that 32 percent of all adults are hesitant about the vaccine, with nearly half of Black residents responding that they probably will not, definitely will not or are not sure about taking the vaccine.

Among age groups, the most hesitant in Cook County were residents ages 18-34, with concerns about potential side effects being given as the most common reason to not get vaccinated.

Residents not yet eligible are encouraged to sign up at the county's website to receive updates.



Cook County launches COVID vaccine campaign 'My Shot'

Jesse Kirsch and ABC 7 Chicago Digital Team

March 15, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-launches-my-shot-vaccine-campaign/10419577/>

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced the "My Shot" campaign to encourage COVID vaccinations and fight reluctance to get a vaccine.

"I've heard vaccine reluctance from residents across Cook County and understand why people are unsure. This campaign speaks directly to you," said Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners. "Like the featured individuals who shared their stories, everyone can identify at least one motivating reason that may inspire them to learn more and make the choice to get vaccinated. I've been vaccinated because it is safe, it protects us from this devastating virus and it's our best path forward."

Preckwinkle said the \$1.2 million campaign will reach out to communities that rank high on the Social Vulnerability Index in both English and Spanish through bus shelters, billboards and on the radio digital, video, print and social media.

The initiative was strategically developed around a recent survey of more than a thousand Cook County residents, according to officials.

Cook County says the results show nearly a third of county adults being hesitant about the vaccine, with close to half the county's African American population expressing varying levels of doubt. Eighteen to 34 year olds were the most hesitant age group according to the county

The county has also reacted a website, myshotcookcounty.com, that features vaccine resources and FAQs.

"Just as we are bringing the vaccine into areas that have been most impacted by coronavirus, this campaign is hyper-targeted to reach our most vulnerable populations," said Israel Rocha, CEO, Cook County Health. "Essential in this stage of the fight against COVID-19 is this proactive effort to encourage vaccination."

Preckwinkle said right now, vaccine supply is not predictable enough to forecast when the county can move into 1B plus and IC and beyond. She said, "We hope and pray" there's enough vaccine to open eligibility to everyone on President Biden's May 1 timetable. Preckwinkle said with enough doses she thinks those shots can get in peoples arms with the current infrastructure in place.



Cook Co. Looks To Get More People The COVID Vaccine

March 15, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/15/cook-co-looks-to-get-more-people-the-covid-vaccine/>

Getting more people the vaccine is every public agency's goal right now.

Cook county announced its vaccine expansion plan. The idea is to help overcome fear and misinformation and encourage people to get vaccinated.

"This campaign will remind Cook County residents of the many reasons to get this vaccine. this effort is driven by data and rooted in the principle of equity," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle.

Messaging will be hyper targeted to reach the most vulnerable communities that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Cook County health leaders hope online testimonies will help the "vaccine trust gap." A county survey found 32% of adults were hesitant to get a shot.

And 46% of African Americans and 35% of the Latinx community said they would not, definitely not or probably not get the vaccine.

The vaccine expansion campaign will be in both English and Spanish and it plans to reach people via bus shelters, billboards, radio, digital, video, print and social media.

The site myshotcookcounty.com, has vaccine FAQs and resources, and a "toolkit" with graphics and posts for community groups to share.



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JOURNAL & TOPICS

Over 10,000 Vaccines Administered So Far At Des Plaines Facility

Lauren Barry

March 15, 2021

<https://www.journal-topics.com/articles/over-10000-vaccines-administered-so-far-at-des-plaines-facility/>

As of Monday (March 15), over 10,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine have been administered at the former Kmart store at Lee and Oakton streets in Des Plaines.

This week, Pfizer vaccines will be offered at the clinic due to a limited supply of the Johnson & Johnson shots, said Caryn Stancik, chief communications and marketing officer for Cook County Health.

Since March 5, the Cook County Dept. of Public Health and the Illinois National Guard have been operating the 200,000 sq. ft. site as a vaccination center. Just before it opened, physician Jay Joshi of the National Pain Centers in Vernon Hills opened the site as a COVID-19 testing center.

The Kmart was the retailer's last in Illinois and closed last year. Stancik said the former big box store is expected to remain a vaccination site for the foreseeable future. Joshi said he still plans to provide high-quality testing there when possible.

At the site, shots are administered by Cook County Public Health staff, said Stancik. Up to 3,000 shots can be administered there each day, if supply allows. Last week, the 10,000th shot was given and so far the county has been provided with 200,000 shots at all of its four large-scale vaccine locations, she added.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Johnson & Johnson shot is a single shot viral vector vaccine with efficacy around 66%. The Pfizer shots have an 95% effective mRNA vaccine that requires two doses 21 days apart. Side effects for both include pain, redness and swelling as well as tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever and nausea, the CDC says.

From March 5-13, there have been 20 calls for emergency medical service at the Lee and Oakton clinic, said Deputy Chief Pete Dyer of the Des Plaines Fire Dept. He did not provide information about the nature of the incidents.

Illinois is currently in Phase 1B of its vaccination rollout plan. During this phase, individuals eligible for the vaccine include seniors over age 65, healthcare workers and essential workers such as first responders, K-12 education workers, food and agriculture, manufacturing, corrections workers and inmates, USPS workers, public transit workers, grocery store workers and staff at shelters and day cares.

Only Cook County residents can receive vaccines at the Des Plaines site. In addition to Des Plaines, three other large-scale vaccination centers are located in Cook County at: South Suburban College in South Holland, Triton College in River Grove and in Tinley Park.

Those interested in registering for a vaccine at the Des Plaines location can visit vaccines.cookcountyil.gov or call 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m Monday through Friday. Upon arrival at the site, individuals should bring a QR code they receive when their appointment is confirmed as well as ID and proof of eligibility.



COOK COUNTY LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO COMBAT VACCINE HESITANCY

*John Asplund
March 17, 2021*

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-pulse/how-uchicagos-vaccine-rollout-put-equity-first-abbvie-could-sell-womens-drug-portfolio>

Cook County government, Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health, is telling the stories of people who've gotten COVID-19 vaccines in a \$1.2 million campaign aimed at reaching those with vaccine hesitancy, the county said in a statement.

"I've heard vaccine reluctance from residents across Cook County and understand why people are unsure. This campaign speaks directly to you," Toni Preckwinkle, president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners said in the statement. "Like the featured individuals who shared their stories, everyone can identify at least one motivating reason that may inspire them to learn more and make the choice to get vaccinated."

The campaign will reach Cook County residents, specifically those who reside in communities that rank high on the Social Vulnerability Index or have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, in both English and Spanish through bus shelters, billboards, radio, digital, video, print and social media.

Can state strike a balance for a more 'normal' summer? What officials say

Marni Pyke

March 17, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210316/can-state-strike-a-balance-for-a-more-normal-summer-what-officials-say>

A summer more like 2019 than 2020's empty stadiums and canceled festivals could be on the horizon, with Gov. J.B. Pritzker expected to ease COVID-19 limitations on activities in the coming days. But the optimism comes with caveats.

"Assuming that our numbers continue to be stable or decline and that we continue to see really good uptake in vaccine, I fully expect that this summer will look more like two summers ago," Chicago Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady said Tuesday at a briefing.

"But I want to be clear, Europe is seeing surges in COVID-19 again despite the fact they are also rolling out vaccines. There's not a 'for granted' we won't have any more trouble here," she said.

In easing restrictions, it's unlikely the state will jump from its current Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois plan with capacity restrictions and face masks to Phase 5, Illinois Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike said Monday. That last stage, with all sectors of the economy reopened, requires a vaccine and treatment for COVID-19 or no new cases over a sustained period.

Instead, Illinoisans might see a "Phase 4½," said Dr. Michael Bauer, medical director at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital.

The challenge will be to strike "that balance between trying to get back to more 'normalcy' without jumping too fast and putting us at risk for having to step back," Bauer said.

With some restrictions already eased, many suburban schools are moving toward returning to full in-person learning.

And after announcing cancellation plans last week, organizers of Frontier Days in Arlington Heights said Tuesday their nonprofit board planned to meet to possibly reconsider their decision.

"There's all this good news coming out -- the positivity rates, the number of cases are dropping, the number of deaths each day are dropping, hospitalizations and ICU rates are all dropping," Bauer said.

Yet, "people are still getting sick, people are still going to the hospital, and people are still dying. Fortunately those numbers are decreasing rather than increasing, (but) we're not out of this yet," Bauer said.

Nineteen more people died from the respiratory disease and 1,997 more virus infections were reported Tuesday by IDPH. The average daily fatality count in March is 29 people compared to 46 a day in February. Illinois hospitals were treating 1,152 COVID-19 patients Monday night.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,212,110, and 20,973 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

The state also reported 125 cases of more contagious COVID-19 mutations diagnosed in Illinois. Those include 120 of the United Kingdom variant, three of the South Africa variant and two of the Brazil variant.

A move toward greater normalcy began last week when the Pritzker administration changed social distancing requirements for students in classrooms from 6 feet to 3 feet, increasing the capacity of classrooms and school buildings. Numerous suburban districts, including Naperville Unit District 203, Northwest Suburban High School District 214 and Libertyville Elementary District 70, have announced plans to shift from hybrid schedules to full-day in-person learning in April.

The evolving situation is a conundrum for local summer festival organizers.

"Like many of our neighboring communities, the city has decided to cancel our early summer special events, including the Taste of Des Plaines and the first few Friday Night Live events," said Jennie Vana, Des Plaines' director of media services,

"We will continue to monitor reopening plans and can consider making adjustments as this evolves. We know residents enjoy our hometown events and miss them, as we all do."

Sam Toia, president of the Illinois Restaurant Association, agreed the governor's new plan could involve a Phase 4A -- and possibly a Phase 4B.

He's hoping restaurant workers will be included as essential workers under current vaccine eligibility rules, since they come into close contact with the public.

"There's no question, (COVID-19) has been devastating for the industry," Toia said.

Also devastating would be backsliding to increased restrictions for restaurant capacity. "That would be really, really, bad," Toia said. He said 124,000 restaurant industry workers lost their jobs because of the pandemic.

Demand for vaccinations continues to exceed supply.

On Monday, 78,287 more people received COVID-19 shots. The seven-day average is 102,564.

As of Tuesday, 1,563,294 people -- 12.27% of Illinois' population -- have been fully vaccinated, an 87% increase from 835,597 individuals on March 1.

Cook County Health Department spokeswoman Elizabeth Pedersen dismissed social media rumors about leftover vaccines being available to people who show up at the end of the day at mass vaccination sites. Appointments are required for inoculations, she said.

"All of our vaccination sites, including Tinley and Des Plaines, have a strict vaccine no-waste reconciliation process," she said. "Our no-show rate is very low, as it is at all other sites, because the demand for the vaccine is so high."

Also Tuesday, state officials reduced operating times at state-run mass virus testing sites including in Arlington Heights, Aurora and Waukegan to 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The change reflects a drop in people using those test sites and a desire to provide mobile units in high-risk areas.

Chicago Tribune

Chicago to begin vaccinating those with health conditions and remaining essential workers on March 29, Mayor Lori Lightfoot says

Alice Yin and Gregory Pratt

March 17, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-chicago-coronavirus-vaccines-phase-1c-20210317-nbyp7eorojdzdp3zjqvdca7bq-story.html>

Chicago residents who have medical conditions or are essential workers but haven't yet qualified for the coronavirus vaccine will become eligible for the shot starting March 29, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Wednesday while tempering the wide expansion with the need for patience.

The move to phase 1c means much of the city's population will be allowed a vaccine at the end of the month. But the process of vaccinating the upcoming group is expected to take at least two months and will likely see some of the same scramble for limited appointments that Chicagoans in the previous stages have weathered, Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said. Still, she said, the city expects its vaccine supply to increase over time and believes it will have enough to broaden vaccine eligibility.

"This is good news for the tens of thousands who are anxiously awaiting their turn to get the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccine," Lightfoot said at a Wednesday news conference. "Simply put, because of the hard work and sacrifice of so many across our city, we have the opportunity to open up vaccine opportunity to more folks and that's what we're doing."

The requirements for those with health conditions applies to Chicagoans 16 and older and will follow the Illinois Department of Health's guidelines that include cancer, lung disease, heart conditions and other ailments that put individuals at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19. Unlike the rest of the state, however, Chicago will not include smokers in that category and will expand to additional conditions such as HIV/AIDS, liver disease and schizophrenia. Essential jobs will be defined as industries such as restaurants, construction, finance, media and other categories.

Lightfoot made the announcement as city officials continued a push to get seniors vaccinated and eligibility for shots at the United Center remains restricted to people in hard hit ZIP codes.

The expansion to phase 1c follows the current phase which began on Jan. 25 to include Chicagoans age 65 and up, those in congregate living settings and front-line essential workers including teachers and police officers. Before that, vaccination kicked off mid-December for health care workers and nursing home residents and staff only.

Statewide, an in-between phase that expanded eligibility to those with health conditions only began Feb. 25, but much of the Chicago area did not follow suit. Officials from the city, along with Cook County and some collar counties, had said vaccination progress in the current phase 1b was not satisfactory enough to move on, although the introduction of the United Center mass inoculation center last week was set to allow any Illinoisan with those conditions to sign up at the time, until geographic restrictions were added.

On Wednesday, Cook County public health officials announced suburban residents who are 16 or older and have health conditions as defined by the IDPH will be eligible for the vaccine starting Monday. Mass vaccination sites run by Cook County Health in the suburbs also will begin accepting those residents then.

Illinois neighbors, however, are advancing through their vaccine phases, with [Indiana](#) and Ohio this week extending eligibility to all young adults at least 45 and 40 years old, respectively.

Arwady has said she predicts most people in phase 1c will get their vaccine throughout April and May. And those in earlier phases will continue to be prioritized by primary care providers and the city's hotline at 312-746-4835, she said.

Meanwhile, both Lightfoot and Arwady reiterated optimism about President Joe Biden's announcement last week that all adults in the U.S. should be eligible for the shot by May 1, but they prefaced that hope with the caveat that there must be more vaccine sent to Chicago.

"I was honestly surprised to hear President Biden call for eligibility for all adults by May 1 since the vaccine supply we've received to date in Chicago would not necessarily support that timeline," Arwady said. "But I'm taking it as a sign that the federal government is confident the vaccine supply will ramp up even faster over the spring."

Arwady said Tuesday she remains concerned about residents 65 and older getting their share of the vaccines, as only 45.5% of that population had been vaccinated. For the rest of March, city officials will pour resources into reaching those Chicagoans through what she said was a "Senior Month" campaign. That includes home visits from Chicago Fire Department paramedics to get the shot as well as pop-up vaccination events on the South and West sides that are reserved for older residents.

"We need to continue that hard work of making sure that as many of our seniors as possible have access to the vaccine. If you are eligible under the earlier phases or now, please don't hesitate to take advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated," Lightfoot said.

Arwady also added that starting March 29, city-run mass vaccination sites such as the ones at City Colleges of Chicago locations will close to non-Chicago residents. Those centers were first launched as places to inoculate non-hospital-based health care workers, some of whom do not live in Chicago but work in the city.

About 10% of Chicago residents are fully vaccinated, according to IDPH numbers. That lags the overall 12.3% rate statewide, and the 12.5% figure in suburban Cook County.

Lightfoot said she started her day Wednesday with a tour of the United Center site and it gave her optimism after a year of storms, an endorsement that was followed up with Arwady batting away what she said were unsubstantiated rumors that appointments were unfilled and guidelines would once again change. Arwady said the site was booking up to 5,700 appointments per day, of which less than a hundred don't get fulfilled. Though the daily capacity for shots is 6,000, Arwady said they are reserving some doses for drive-thru events starting next week.

"What I came away from that experience feeling today, a memory I will have with me for the rest of my life, is that God's grace is shining on us," Lightfoot said of her United Center tour. "There is truly light at the end of the tunnel."

The Daily Line

County must step up efforts to vaccinate nonwhite suburbanites: commissioners

Alex Nitkin

March 17, 2021

<https://thedailyline.net/chicago/03/17/2021/county-must-step-up-efforts-to-vaccinate-nonwhite-suburbanites-commissioners/>

Cook County health officials vowed on Tuesday to expand access to COVID-19 vaccinations among Black and Latino suburbanites amid prodding from commissioners who said those efforts have so far fallen short.

About 21 percent of residents in the county's north and northwest suburbs have received at least one dose of the vaccine, according to data presented Tuesday by leaders of the Cook County Department of Public Health. But just 13.7 percent and 16.2 percent of residents have respectively been vaccinated in the county's more diverse south and west suburbs.



Cook County Suburbs To Open Vaccine Eligibility For Adults With Underlying Health Conditions On Monday

CBS 2 Chicago Staff

March 17, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/17/cook-county-suburbs-covid-19-coronavirus-vaccine-phase-1b-plus-eligibility/>

While adults in Chicago who have underlying health conditions will have to wait until the end of the month to qualify for a COVID-19 vaccine, those living in the Cook County suburbs will be able to get a shot starting Monday.

The Cook County Department of Public Health said it will move to the so-called “Phase 1B+” of the vaccination plan on Monday. That will expand vaccine eligibility to people with serious underlying health conditions including cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart conditions, a compromised immune system due to an organ transplant, obesity, pulmonary disease, and sickle cell disease; as well as pregnant women, the disabled, and smokers.

“Over the past few weeks, we’ve seen great progress in vaccinating vulnerable groups in phase 1B, including our seniors. This is reflected in the numbers, which indicate that more than 68 percent of individuals 65 and older in suburban Cook County have received at least one dose,” Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and co-lead at Cook County Department of Public Health said in a statement.

All state-supported mass vaccination sites in the suburbs will be included in the expansion, and the county is urging any suburban vaccine providers to follow suit.

Illinois residents who meet Phase 1B+ requirements will be able to register for appointments at mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Appointments will open up starting at noon Friday.

Until now, only people eligible under Phase 1A and Phase 1B of the vaccination plan were eligible for shots in suburban Cook County — including healthcare workers, longterm care facility residents and staff, frontline essential workers, and people age 65 and older.

Most of the rest of the state moved to the so-called “Phase 1B+” of the vaccination plan on Feb. 25, although the city of Chicago, Cook County suburbs, and a handful of other towns and counties did not expand their vaccine eligibility at the time.

The announcement of suburban Cook County’s move to Phase 1B+ comes on the same day Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced the city of Chicago would move to Phase 1C of the vaccination plan on March 29. Phase 1C includes people 16 to 64 with underlying conditions and essential workers who weren’t already eligible in previous phases (such as restaurant staff, clergy, legal workers, media, retail workers, and more).

Cook County officials said they expect to announce plans to move to Phase 1C “in the near future.”

Chicago Tribune

Pritzker expected to expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility starting April 12 to all Illinois residents 16 and older, but Chicago will still set its own rules

Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella

March 17, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-covid-vaccine-illinois-pritzker-expansion-eligibility-april-12-20210318-joiaqf2qzprqp3az7leye4n24py-story.html>

Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Thursday is expected to widely expand eligibility for the coronavirus vaccine starting April 12 to all Illinois residents 16 and older except those in Chicago, sources told the Tribune.

It's part of a revised reopening plan that also includes slightly increased capacity limits for retail stores, theaters and outdoor venues, among other changes, sources said.

The governor's vaccine move comes just days after Democratic President Joe Biden called on governors across the country to open eligibility to all adults by May 1. Pritzker last week expressed confidence in the state's ability to meet Biden's deadline.

"I am confident that not just by May 1 but maybe even a little bit earlier we could open up to everyone in the state, everyone that's eligible," the governor said Friday.

Though Illinois expanded vaccine eligibility to people under 65 with certain health conditions Feb. 25, most Chicago-area health departments and hospitals are not yet vaccinating people in that group, saying they're still focusing on seniors and essential workers because of limited vaccine supply.

Illinois residents under 65 with health conditions have been left to hunt for shots mostly at retail pharmacies, including Walgreens, which has more than 500 stores offering vaccines in the state. Walgreens follows federal, state and local eligibility guidelines when giving vaccines, said Kris Lathan, a Walgreens spokeswoman, in an email.

Chicago gets its own pool of vaccine directly from the federal government and sets its own rules. And on Wednesday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Chicago would advance to phase 1c on March 29, making eligible city residents who have medical conditions or are essential workers but haven't yet qualified for the coronavirus vaccine.

The requirements for those with health conditions applies to Chicagoans 16 and older, and will follow the Illinois Department of Health's guidelines that include cancer, lung disease, heart conditions and other ailments that put individuals at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19. Unlike the rest of the state, however, Chicago will not include smokers in that category and will expand to additional conditions such as HIV/AIDS, liver disease and schizophrenia. Essential jobs will be defined as industries such as restaurants, construction, finance, media and other categories.

The process of vaccinating the upcoming group is expected to take at least two months and will likely see some of the same scramble for limited appointments that Chicagoans in the previous stages have weathered, Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

Still, she said, the city expects its vaccine supply to increase over time and believes it will have enough to broaden vaccine eligibility.

Lightfoot made the announcement as city officials continued a push to get seniors vaccinated and eligibility for shots at the United Center remains restricted to people in ZIP codes hit hard by the coronavirus.

Also Wednesday, Cook County public health officials announced suburban residents who are 16 or older and have health conditions as defined by the state will be eligible for the vaccine starting Monday. Mass vaccination sites run by Cook County Health in the suburbs also will begin accepting those residents then.

While vaccine appointments have been hard to come by in the Chicago area, Pritzker said previously he thinks the state can make the vaccine accessible to a wider range of people because the Biden administration so far has lived up to its promises to increase shipments of doses to the states.

"I feel very confident moving forward that supplies are increasing, that the president is doing everything he can to get us there," the governor said.

Pritzker said Wednesday he's working with business interests and health professionals in developing an incremental reopening plan for Illinois that is expected to be released this week.

"We're working with industry leaders, (and) we're working with our doctors at (the Illinois Department of Public Health) as well as other experts in the state to make sure that the phased reopening is not only healthy for everybody but also good for the economy as we move it forward," Pritzker said outside Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital in downstate Lincoln.

Illinois is in the fourth of five phases in Pritzker's original reopening plan, with the fifth phase essentially being a return to normal.

Earlier this week, a Pritzker spokeswoman said the administration is "working on a phased-in reopening." State public health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike told a state Senate committee that to get "from where we are now to phase five, (is) maybe not just an on-off switch but a dial, so there may be one more phase."



Pritzker expected to expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility starting April 12 to all Illinois residents 16 and older, but Chicago will still set its own rules

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Herald & Review

Pritzker expected to expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility starting April 12 to all Illinois residents 16 and older, but Chicago will still set its own rules

Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella
March 17, 2021

https://herald-review.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/pritzker-expected-to-expand-covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-starting-april-12-to-illinois-residents-16/article_441500e8-35ca-5a8a-905f-d166a8a5b7c8.html

Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Thursday is expected to widely expand eligibility for the coronavirus vaccine starting April 12 to all Illinois residents 16 and older except those in Chicago, sources told the Tribune.

It's part of a revised reopening plan that also includes slightly increased capacity limits for retail stores, theaters and outdoor venues, among other changes, sources said.

The governor's vaccine move comes just days after Democratic President Joe Biden called on governors across the country to open eligibility to all adults by May 1. Pritzker last week expressed confidence in the state's ability to meet Biden's deadline.

"I am confident that not just by May 1 but maybe even a little bit earlier we could open up to everyone in the state, everyone that's eligible," the governor said Friday.

Though Illinois expanded vaccine eligibility to people under 65 with certain health conditions Feb. 25, most Chicago-area health departments and hospitals are not yet vaccinating people in that group, saying they're still focusing on seniors and essential workers because of limited vaccine supply.

Illinois residents under 65 with health conditions have been left to hunt for shots mostly at retail pharmacies, including Walgreens, which has more than 500 stores offering vaccines in the state. Walgreens follows federal, state and local eligibility guidelines when giving vaccines, said Kris Lathan, a Walgreens spokeswoman, in an email.

Chicago gets its own pool of vaccine directly from the federal government and sets its own rules. And on Wednesday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Chicago would advance to phase 1c on March 29, making eligible city residents who have medical conditions or are essential workers but haven't yet qualified for the coronavirus vaccine.

The requirements for those with health conditions applies to Chicagoans 16 and older, and will follow the Illinois Department of Health's guidelines that include cancer, lung disease, heart conditions and other ailments that put individuals at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19. Unlike the rest of the state, however, Chicago will not include smokers in that category and will expand to additional conditions such as HIV/AIDS, liver disease and schizophrenia. Essential jobs will be defined as industries such as restaurants, construction, finance, media and other categories.

The process of vaccinating the upcoming group is expected to take at least two months and will likely see some of the same scramble for limited appointments that Chicagoans in the previous stages have weathered, Chicago public health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said.

Still, she said, the city expects its vaccine supply to increase over time and believes it will have enough to broaden vaccine eligibility.

Lightfoot made the announcement as city officials continued a push to get seniors vaccinated and eligibility for shots at the United Center remains restricted to people in ZIP codes hit hard by the coronavirus.

Also Wednesday, Cook County public health officials announced suburban residents who are 16 or older and have health conditions as defined by the state will be eligible for the vaccine starting Monday. Mass vaccination sites run by Cook County Health in the suburbs also will begin accepting those residents then.

While vaccine appointments have been hard to come by in the Chicago area, Pritzker said previously he thinks the state can make the vaccine accessible to a wider range of people because the Biden administration so far has lived up to its promises to increase shipments of doses to the states.

"I feel very confident moving forward that supplies are increasing, that the president is doing everything he can to get us there," the governor said.

Pritzker said Wednesday he's working with business interests and health professionals in developing an incremental reopening plan for Illinois that is expected to be released this week.

"We're working with industry leaders, (and) we're working with our doctors at (the Illinois Department of Public Health) as well as other experts in the state to make sure that the phased reopening is not only healthy for everybody but also good for the economy as we move it forward," Pritzker said outside Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital in downstate Lincoln.

Illinois is in the fourth of five phases in Pritzker's original reopening plan, with the fifth phase essentially being a return to normal.

Earlier this week, a Pritzker spokeswoman said the administration is "working on a phased-in reopening." State public health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike told a state Senate committee that to get "from where we are now to phase five, (is) maybe not just an on-off switch but a dial, so there may be one more phase."

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Gregory Pratt and Dan Petrella

March 17, 2021

https://thesouthern.com/news/state-and-regional/pritzker-expected-to-expand-covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-april-12-to-all-illinois-residents-16/article_595af51e-109e-588c-966f-8cbb496395dd.html

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CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Chicago to expand vaccine eligibility to most residents March 29

That group includes people 16 and up with underlying conditions such as heart disease, plus more groups of essential workers. The governor, meanwhile, is expected to announce Thursday he will be expanding vaccine eligibility to the rest of the state starting April 12.

Mitchell Armentrout
March 17, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/3/17/22336001/illinois-coronavirus-chicago-vaccine-eligible-cases-deaths-pritzker-lightfoot-covid-19-mar-17>

Most Chicagoans will be eligible to sign up for COVID-19 vaccination appointments starting March 29, the city's top doctor said Wednesday.

Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady outlined the city's plan to expand vaccine eligibility to city residents 16 and up with chronic health conditions, plus additional groups of essential workers.

That means "a major increase" in the pool of eligible recipients, which will soon include the majority of Chicago's 2.7 million residents, Arwady said.

"Most Chicagoans will actually be eligible to be vaccinated beginning March 29, but just because you're eligible, it doesn't mean you're going to be able to be vaccinated right away. It's all going to depend on vaccine supply," Arwady said.

Meanwhile, Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expected to announce Thursday that he will expand vaccine eligibility to the rest of the state for those 16 and older starting April 12.

For the city, residents 65 and older will remain priority. About half the city's seniors have gotten a dose so far, Arwady said.

The soon-to-be-eligible Phase 1C recipients are more likely to start receiving doses through April and May.

That group includes people with underlying conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity and sickle cell disease, among others. Newly eligible workers will include those in transportation, hospitality, food service, finance, media, information technology and others "with a focus on those who can't work from home," Arwady said.

After that, the city plans to follow President Joe Biden's directive to open eligibility to all adults by May 1.

"I'm taking it as a sign that the federal government is confident the vaccine supply will ramp up even faster over the spring, and as vaccine supply ramps up we are more than ready here in Chicago to get it into arms," Arwady said.

"We'll definitely still be vaccinating hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans through the summer and beyond, but this is going to start feeling more like a traditional flu vaccine campaign where the problem is not finding a vaccine, it's having the confidence and making the decision to get a vaccine."

Most parts of the state outside the Chicago area already expanded eligibility last month to people with underlying conditions. Officials in suburban Cook County said they'll do likewise beginning March 22, but haven't yet announced a date for a full Phase 1C expansion.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 102,390 more vaccine doses went into arms Tuesday, marking the state's first six-figure vaccination day since March 12 and increasing Illinois' overall vaccination tally to almost 4.3 million doses administered over the past three months.

From that total, just over 1.6 million residents have been fully immunized, or 12.6% of the population, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

About 28% of residents 16 or older have gotten at least one shot, and about 58% of people 65 or older have gotten a dose, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

The state is now averaging 102,223 shots administered per day over the past week.

While that figure fell slightly from an all-time high set a day earlier, coronavirus infection rates have dipped to all-time lows across the state.

Officials reported 1,655 new cases of the disease were diagnosed among 77,798 tests, decreasing Illinois' average positivity rate slightly to 2.2%, lower than it ever fell last summer.

Hospital admissions are near a record low, too, with 1,143 beds occupied by COVID-19 patients as of Tuesday night.

But the virus claimed 17 more lives, including those of a Cook County woman in her 40s and a Grundy County man in his 30s.

Roughly 26 Illinoisans have died of COVID-19 each day over the past week, a fatality rate that has dipped about 43% over the past month.

Despite that progress, Pritzker warned another surge like the one Illinois suffered last fall isn't out of the question, especially with three more infectious variants of the virus detected in the state.

"We want to be careful here. These variants move faster than the original COVID-19," Pritzker said at a Decatur vaccination site in central Illinois. "We have to react more quickly."

Over the past year, more than 1.2 million residents have contracted COVID-19, and 20,988 of them have died.

Cook County opening vaccinations to people under 65 with medical conditions

Jake Griffin

March 18, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210317/cook-county-opening-vaccinations-to-people-under-65-with-medical-conditions->

Suburban Cook County residents between ages 16 and 65 with certain medical conditions will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccination through the county health department with appointment signup starting at noon on Friday.

The newly eligible residents should register at vaccine.cookcountyl.gov. The Cook County Department of Public Health will begin taking appointments via the website at noon Friday for vaccinations beginning on Monday.

The so-called Phase 1B-plus includes people with cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions, weakened immunity after an organ transplant, obesity, pulmonary disease and sickle cell disease as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women and smokers.

The change affects suburban vaccine providers who receive doses from the agency that serves suburban Cook County residents, as well as state-supported Cook County mass vaccination sites in Des Plaines, Tinley Park, River Grove and South Holland.

The state moved into Phase 1B-plus on Feb. 25, but Cook County delayed, saying too many people over 65 still were unable to access shots. Other suburban counties did the same.

"Over the past few weeks, we've seen great progress in vaccinating vulnerable groups in Phase 1B, including our seniors. This is reflected in the numbers, which indicate that more than 68% of individuals 65 and older in suburban Cook County have received at least one dose," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead, Cook County Department of Public Health.

Meanwhile, state health officials announced 102,390 more COVID-19 vaccine inoculations were administered statewide on Tuesday. That brings the number of vaccine doses administered throughout the state to 4,283,487, while 1,605,112 Illinois residents and workers -- about 13% of the population -- have been fully vaccinated, according to Illinois Department of Public Health records.

Illinois vaccine providers are now averaging 102,223 inoculations a day over the past week, records show.

State officials reported an additional 119,600 vaccine doses arrived in Illinois Tuesday. Illinois has now received 5,516,725 doses of the three brands of vaccines, 77.6% of which have been put into arms, IDPH figures show.

IDPH officials also reported 17 more COVID-19 deaths, as well as 1,655 new cases of the disease.

That brings the state's death toll from the virus to 20,988, with 1,213,765 Illinois residents who have been infected since the outset of the pandemic.

Hospitals statewide are treating 1,143 patients for COVID-19 infections. Of those hospitalized, 259 are in intensive care.

The statewide seven-day case positivity rate is at 2.2%. The percentage indicates how many of the tests taken resulted in a new case of the disease being diagnosed. A seven-day average is used to smooth any anomalies in the daily reporting of new cases and test results.

IDPH officials also unveiled a new data website that allows Illinois residents to track how much of the state's vaccine supply is earmarked for their county each week.

The site shows how the state is allocating this week's supply of 458,100 new doses.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expected to announce plans later this week that would allow for greater reopening of businesses and activities throughout the state as vaccines become more plentiful.

"How do we make sure while we're opening up we don't see a surge of cases as we are vaccinating people?" Pritzker asked rhetorically. "What we want is to get vaccines into people's arms right away. My focus is on making this vaccine as accessible as possible for all of our residents as soon as shipments enter Illinois."

Local health departments have earmarked 200,030 shots intended for first doses. Another 157,230 are being issued to counties for second doses. The first-dose allocations to the local health departments are based on the percent of the state's population served by those agencies, according to the IDPH website.

The Cook County Public Health Department, which serves the suburban portion of the county, is set to receive 45,200 first doses and 18,840 second doses, according to the site.

- DuPage County is expected to receive 18,400 first doses and 700 second doses.
- Kane County is earmarked 10,600 first doses and 2,100 second doses.
- Lake County should be getting 13,900 first doses and 1,000 second doses.
- McHenry County's allocation is set at 6,100 first doses and 500 second doses.
- Will County is in line for 13,800 first doses and 5,540 second doses.

According to the website, the state will allocate the remainder of the week's new doses like this: 5,850 to long-term care facilities; 5,700 to federally qualified health centers, safety net hospitals and critical access hospitals; 63,400 to National Guard sites; 16,160 to retail pharmacies; 6,140 to minority health and mobile teams; 100 to the Illinois Department of Corrections; and 3,500 to dialysis centers.



Suburban Cook County to Vaccinate Residents with Underlying Conditions Starting Monday

*Heather Cherone
March 17, 2021*

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/17/suburban-cook-county-vaccinate-residents-underlying-conditions-starting-monday>

Suburban Cook County residents with underlying health conditions will be eligible for the COVID-19 starting Monday, officials announced Wednesday.

The expansion of the vaccination effort for Cook County residents outside Chicago puts the county in line with the rest of the state of Illinois, which has been vaccinating residents younger than 65 with health problems since Feb. 25.

Starting Monday, vaccine eligibility in suburban Cook County will be extended to those who have cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, heart conditions, obesity, pulmonary disease and sickle cell disease as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women, those who have had an organ transplant and smokers.

“Over the past few weeks, we’ve seen great progress in vaccinating vulnerable groups,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

More than 68% of individuals 65 and older in suburban Cook County have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, Rubin said.

Officials will open new appointments at the county’s five mass vaccination sites for the residents who are newly eligible at noon Friday, officials said. More information is available at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, where people can pre-register.

Those sites are at the Tinley Park Convention Center, the North Riverside Health Center, South Suburban College, Triton College and in Des Plaines.

Cook County officials will ask all pharmacies, doctors and hospitals vaccinating residents to expand their list of those eligible to be vaccinated.

Chicago and Cook County did not expand eligibility along with the state on Feb. 25 because it lacked an ample supply of the vaccine, putting Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle at odds with Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

Those eligible in the first phases of the vaccination effort — health care workers, residents at long-term care facilities and those older than 65 — are still eligible to get the vaccine.

Lightfoot announced Wednesday that Chicago would allow all essential workers and those with underlying health conditions to get the vaccine starting March 29.

Cook County health officials have not yet announced when all essential workers will be eligible for the vaccine.



Cook County's Dr. Rachel Rubin on the Vaccine Rollout in Chicago's Suburbs

Quinn Myers
March 17, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/17/cook-county-s-dr-rachel-rubin-vaccine-rollout-chicago-s-suburbs>

Chicago is pushing ahead with expanding access to COVID-19 vaccines, as officials announced Wednesday the city will enter phase 1C of the vaccination rollout March 29. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden has asked states to make all adults vaccine-eligible by May 1.

But local governments in the Chicago area say further expansion is entirely dependent on vaccine supply.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, says Chicago's suburbs hope to follow the city's lead into 1C shortly, but can't yet commit to a hard date.

"As of this coming Monday, we're moving into the 1B+ tier, because we have been able to vaccinate a fair amount of our 65-year-old and older residents of the county," Rubin said. "And we hope to move into the 1C phase shortly thereafter ... we want to see how things go when we expand to 1B+ this coming week."

So far, about 20% of suburban Cook County residents have received at least one dose, and just over 10% are fully vaccinated. That data does not include Evanston, Oak Park, Skokie and Stickney, which report numbers through their own health departments.

So far, Rubin says she'd give the county vaccine rollout a "B-plus."

"I think we've rolled out vaccine quite efficiently and quite fast, and the limiting step has really been supply of vaccine at this point," she said.

Last week, Cook County launched a pop-up pilot program to expand vaccine access to communities that might not be able to easily access mass vaccination sites across the region.

"We're bringing the vaccine to where people are. We know that ... our Black and Brown communities, our under-resourced communities, they don't have the transportation to get to these big mass sites," Rubin said.

In late 2020 and early 2021, managing the COVID-19 pandemic also became intensely personal for Rubin. In a span of just a few weeks, she lost both of her parents to the virus.

Rubin says the experience makes her "more dedicated to this work."

"I stand with everybody that has lost family members and friends and community neighbors to this pandemic. Nobody has been untouched by this worldwide, and certainly my own personal tragedy is no less than anybody else," she said. "It just spurs me on to continue this work as best I can."



Cook County Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Phase 1B Plus Starting Next Week

Cook County Health will open new coronavirus vaccine appointments Friday at noon

March 17, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-expanding-to-phase-1b-plus-starting-next-week/2464713/>

Cook County will expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to Phase 1B Plus beginning next week, the health department announced Wednesday.

Starting Monday, coronavirus vaccine doses will open to residents with certain high-risk medical conditions and comorbidities, in accordance with Illinois guidelines.

The list of qualifying high-risk medical conditions in Phase 1B Plus includes:

- Cancer
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Diabetes
- Heart Condition
- Immunocompromised State from a Solid Organ Transplant
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary Disease
- Sickle Cell Disease

The health department said all suburban vaccine providers from Cook County were asked to expand to Phase 1B Plus on Monday, as well as the county's mass vaccination sites.

Cook County Health will open new coronavirus vaccine appointments Friday at noon, the department announced. Illinois residents eligible in the next vaccination phase can sign up [here](#).

Illinois opened up vaccine eligibility to Phase 1B Plus in February, with Chicago and some surrounding suburbs choosing to opt out of the increase, citing a lack of doses.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker noted that people eligible in Illinois in the expanded phase will not need to prove they have a high-risk medical condition, though many will likely receive the vaccine from their primary care doctors.

The expansion applies to those 16 and older who weren't otherwise covered in previous eligibility categories, the state said, adding that it plans to work with local health departments and other providers as eligibility increases.



Illinois will expand COVID vaccines to everyone age 16 and older in April

The state move follows news that most Chicago adults can qualify for shots at the end of March. But, despite these big expansions in the pool of eligible people, vaccine demand will still exceed supply for several weeks.

A.D. Quig

March 17, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/government/illinois-will-expand-covid-vaccines-everyone-age-16-and-older-april>

Gov. Pritzker will announce Thursday that on April 12, vaccine eligibility will expand to any Illinoisan 16 and over, according to two people familiar with the state's plans. The sources could not confirm a Chicago Tribune report that the expansion will not apply to Chicago. The city receives a separate vaccine allocation from the federal government than the state.

Others Illinoisans in vulnerable groups will become eligible for vaccinations in the weeks before that date. Supply will still not be sufficient to vaccinate everyone eligible on that date, but city and state officials have said they expect supply to pick up in April and May.

Further guidance on large indoor gatherings and outdoor events like weddings, graduations, festivals, parades and sporting events will be released Thursday.

The state is also expected to announce details tomorrow on a "bridge phase" between the current Phase 4 and the coming Phase 5. During the bridge phase, more pandemic restrictions will be lifted.

That interim phase will begin when 70 percent of people 65 and older have received at least one vaccine dose. Currently, 59 percent of seniors have received their first dose.

Phase 5 would begin when at least half of Illinois residents 16 and older have received their first dose. Currently, 18 percent of those between 16 and 64 have received theirs.

A source familiar with Chicago's vaccine rollout plans said the city could move to the next phase of its rollout plan—Phase 2, which would include people 16 and older—sooner than its planned May 31 expansion, if supply increases. Currently Chicago is in Phase 1B, with plans to move to 1C at the end of this month.

Chicago will move to its next vaccination phase—1C—as expected on March 29, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced today, citing progress the city has made in fighting COVID-19. But health officials say the supply of doses still isn't matching demand.

Phase 1C includes a majority of adult Chicagoans, people ages 16 to 64 with underlying medical conditions, and all other essential workers, including in these industries: finance; food and beverage; retail; higher education; IT and communications; legal; media; government; personal care services; construction; real estate; hotels; and transportation and logistics workers.

The city will not have enough vaccine for every newly eligible person in Chicago right away, Lightfoot warned. "April will even look better. . . It will take us some time, because of the limited supply that we are still getting, but hope is on the way." *Watch the whole news conference below.*

Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said she was surprised to hear President Biden's announcement that all adults would be vaccine eligible by May 1, but she took it "as a sign that the federal government is confident the vaccine supply will ramp up" quickly over the spring.

Roughly 600 health care providers are signed up and ready to administer vaccines in Chicago, but most have been waiting for supply to increase. Arwady promised the launch of more mass vaccination sites, in addition to the ability to get shots at regular health care providers and pharmacies.

Another change coming March 29: Chicago will limit eligibility at city-run vaccination sites to Chicago residents only. Roughly 170,000 shots administered in Chicago have gone to non-Chicago resident, according to city data. Some of that covers people who live outside the city but work here, including health care workers.

Arwady said 1 in 5 Chicagoans have gotten their first vaccine, and the city will have administered more than 1 million doses by next week. She hailed the progress the city and the nation have made in vaccinating people in the first 12 weeks of the campaign.

She said 70 percent to 75 percent of those eligible in Phase 1A have received at least one dose.

"We're now getting twice as much vaccine as we were getting in Phase 1A. It's still not enough to meet demand, but it's a major improvement," Arwady said. The city will be providing both a detailed list of underlying conditions and eligible jobs on its website soon.

"We do expect (Phase 1C eligible people) will be able to make a vaccine appointment in April or May," Arwady said. "It's likely to be May before we have enough vaccine to be able to partner in large ways with employers at a significant scale. We're not going to be done vaccinating Chicago in May."

Lightfoot responded to news that ineligible workers at Trump Tower have received shots from Loretto Hospital officials. "We have a finite amount of vaccine in this city. We've been really, really careful to be sure we're using it in a way that prioritizes the most vulnerable people who are most at risk of spreading it," she said. "This is one event. I don't think it overall affects the hard work that we've put into making sure that this is a distribution process that begins and ends with equity, but we just can't have something like this happen again."

Lightfoot gave a few other examples of 1C eligible people, including restaurant and hotel workers, hairdressers, clergy, and delivery and warehouse workers. The city will still continue vaccinating people who were eligible in 1A and 1B, as well as seniors, one of the most vulnerable populations.

"You've got to wear a face covering when you go out. It's critically important, the most important tool that we have to help prevent the spread of the virus," the mayor said.

Chicago's vaccination campaign began on Dec. 15, covering health care workers as well as residents and staff in long-term care facilities. Phase 1B, which included frontline essential workers and those above 65, kicked off on Jan. 25.

But officials have held off expanding eligibility to those ages 16 to 64 with underlying health conditions. While other parts of the state have made that population eligible, Chicago and Cook County officials have both cited low supply as the reason for not moving forward.

As of March 16, 10.4 percent of Chicago's population was fully vaccinated, and 19.3 percent had received their first dose.

Chicago is running behind the state's average: 12.6 percent of Illinois' overall population is fully vaccinated.

Chicago's test positivity rate is up slightly over this time last week. It's now 2.9 percent, compared to a rolling seven-day average of 2.7 last week. That's still well below the city's target positivity of 5 percent, but average daily cases are also up 10 percent compared to last week. The city is averaging 292 cases per day, up from 266 last week. Arwady has said she'd like to see that number fall below 200.

Arwady also sought to swat away social media rumors that doses at the FEMA-run United Center site were being wasted or that eligibility there had changed to help use up available doses.

"No vaccine is going to waste at the United Center, and yes, we are at capacity at the United Center. We are booking up to 5,700 appointments per day," she said. The site continues to offer Pfizer vaccine only. "There's the capacity to do a full 6,000. We've held it to 5,700, partly because we're opening up a drive-through next week."

Chicago's list of underlying conditions that make people eligible for 1C is slightly broader than the state's, Arwady said. The state allows those with diabetes, pulmonary diseases, heart conditions, chronic kidney disease and cancer; solid organ transplant recipients, pregnant people, smokers, and the disabled who were not covered in previous phases to receive a vaccine. The city's eligibility will also include people with HIV, liver disease, obesity (a body mass index over 30) and schizophrenia.

The Cook County Department of Public Health also announced today suburban Cook will move to phase 1B+ on Monday, March 22. That means eligibility will expand to those 16 years and older with underlying health conditions, but not yet to other essential workers.

Eligible underlying conditions include: cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), diabetes, heart conditions, obesity, pulmonary disease, sickle cell disease as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women, smokers, and those that are immunocompromised from an organ transplant.

"Over the past few weeks, we've seen great progress in vaccinating vulnerable groups in phase 1b, including our seniors," Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health said in a release. More than 68 percent of seniors in suburban Cook have received their first dose. [More information here.](#)

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

“Got my shot!” I texted, feeling pretty proud

This entire pandemic has been like an apocalyptic science fiction movie. I shouldn't have been surprised that my visit to a mass vaccination site continued the bizarre adventure.

Phil Kadner
Mar 17, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/2021/3/17/22335897/covid-vaccination-tinley-park-convention-center-phil-kadner>

“Don't worry, he's got his shots.”

That sentence has most often been used in the past to reassure humans bitten by a dog that they would not soon be frothing at the mouth.

I was thinking about how the meaning has changed as I received my second COVID-19 vaccination a few days ago. “Don't worry,” I can reassure people. “I have my shots.”

This entire pandemic has been like an apocalyptic science fiction movie. People wearing masks. Stores closed due to quarantine. Folks giving out “air hugs” to avoid touching each other.

It shouldn't have surprised me that the scene at the COVID-19 mass vaccination site continued this bizarre adventure.

I went to the Tinley Park Convention Center for my second shot because I couldn't break the secret code on Walgreen's web site, where I had arranged for my first shot. But somebody had told me to phone Cook County's vaccination hotline, which I did. I spoke to an actual human after only a few minutes on hold, and was given a date and time at the convention center.

As I approached the center, I was immediately struck by the efficiency of the operation. There were traffic cones lining a route through the parking lot and arrows and signs directing everyone to an entrance point inside.

Drivers could park their cars a short distance away or be dropped off about 100 yards from the door. There were National Guardsmen in uniform spread out nearby to make sure we didn't fight for position or — more likely given our ages, for the most part, of 65 and over — wander off.

We all carried our papers and smart phones.

You had to flash a special invitation containing a two-dimensional data matrix barcode to a National Guardsman soon after stepping inside the convention center. The email advised using a cell phone to display the code but some of us, being old and cynical, decided to print out copies.

After the initial identification, we were instructed to step up to people sitting behind a long row of folding tables and hand them our government-issued identification, such as a driver's license, and our electronic reservation code.

And then it was on to another station for further checks. At some point I was asked to show a small card containing information about my first injection. This card (now containing info about both my vaccinations) is a sacred thing. I have a laminated copy now, as well as a photo of it stored in my smart phone. I fastened the original to my refrigerator with a magnet.

I figure I may need proof of my shots in the future, in the same way that I sometimes need to show proof of my Social Security number now.

Anyway, the entire process was run with military efficiency and I must say all the guardsmen I ran into were very polite.

Nevertheless, I kept thinking of the great Apple Macintosh commercial that played during the Super Bowl, the one that featured long lines of people in gray uniforms marching in step as a Big Brother-type spoke from a massive TV screen:

“Today, we celebrate the first glorious anniversary of the Information Purification Directives,” he said.

Sleeve rolled up, I sat down at a nurse’s station. The vaccination was almost painless, and I was then directed to a 15-minute holding area with folding chairs for people who might experience a negative reaction.

We timed ourselves. No one seemed to have a problem. One by one we got up and followed more signs and traffic cones out into the parking lot.

Everyone seemed to be on their cell phones.

“Got my shots!” I texted.

I was proud. Some people don’t properly care for their pets, or for other people.



Cook County Launches ‘My Shot’ Vaccination Campaign

March 18, 2021

<http://www.lawndalenews.com/2021/03/cook-county-launches-my-shot-vaccination-campaign/>

Barber Lonnie Hodges doesn't want to see any more suffering in his family or in his community of Jackson Park. Cicero mom Diana Hernandez longs for her sons to have a "normal" childhood again. Registered nurse Mia Webster-Cross of Harvey simply wants to go back to church. Those are a few of the reasons given by Cook County residents for why they will get the COVID-19 vaccine, which are captured in a new public awareness campaign launched called "My Shot." A collaboration of Cook County Government, Cook County Health and the Cook County Department of Public Health, the \$1.2 million campaign is data-driven and rooted in the principles of equity to encourage people who may be reluctant to get vaccinated, especially among the county's most vulnerable communities. The most hesitant age group were Cook County residents ages 18-34. Health, protection and family were the top reasons given for wanting the vaccine, while concerns about side effects were volunteered most often as the reason not to get vaccinated. The campaign is part of a larger joint effort to ensure equitable distribution of the coronavirus vaccine in Cook County. In addition to the Cook County Health sites, the Cook County Department of Public Health has distributed vaccines to more than 145 partner locations including Jewel-Osco, Mariano's and Walgreens along with Federally Qualified Health Centers and hospitals. A complete listing of these sites can be found at www.cookcountypublichealth.org.



Suburban Cook County to expand to Phase 1B+ on Monday

Beginning next week, Cook County sites will also receive an additional vaccine allocation allowing them to serve all Illinois residents who qualify in 1A, 1B or 1B+.

March 18, 2021

<https://www.radio.com/wbbm780/news/local/suburban-cook-county-to-expand-to-phase-1b-on-monday>

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced Wednesday that suburban Cook County will move into Phase 1B+ on Monday, March 22.

The 1B+ phase of the coronavirus vaccination plan includes individuals 16 years and older with underlying health conditions, such as, cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions, immunocompromised from organ transplant, obesity, pulmonary disease, and sickle cell disease; as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women, and smokers.

“Over the past few weeks, we’ve seen great progress in vaccinating vulnerable groups in Phase 1B, including our seniors. This is reflected in the numbers, which indicate that more than 68 percent of individuals 65 and older in suburban Cook County have received at least one dose,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and co-lead, Cook County Department of Public Health.

All suburban vaccine providers who receive vaccine from the Cook County Department of Public Health are being asked to expand to 1B+ as well.

Additionally, the state supported Cook County mass vaccination sites in the suburbs, including the Tinley Park Convention Center, South Suburban College, Triton College, and the site in Des Plaines, will also expand to 1B+ starting Monday, March 22, 2021.

Until now, these sites were only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County. Beginning next week, these sites will receive an additional vaccine allocation allowing the sites to serve all Illinois residents who qualify in 1A, 1B or 1B+.

Individuals residing in Illinois who meet the current eligibility criteria and are interested in traveling to a Cook County mass vaccination site should sign up at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Cook County Health will release new appointments at noon on Friday following notification of the next vaccine allocation on Thursday.

CCDPH will continue to monitor vaccination rates as it plans for advancement to Phase 1C in the near future.

For the latest COVID-19 vaccination information in suburban Cook County, and to make an appointment to be vaccinated, visit: <https://cookcountypublichealth.org/>.



Illinois COVID vaccine: IL to expand vaccination eligibility to residents 16 and over on April 12

Gov. Pritzker also announced a new Bridge reopening phase in between Phases 4, 5

Diane Pathieu, Craig Wall, Eric Horng and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 18, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-covid-vaccine-governor-jb-pritzker-il-eligibility-opening-up/10428597/>

Gov. JB Pritzker announced Thursday that Illinois is expanding vaccine eligibility to anyone aged 16 and older starting on April 12.

But Pritzker and health officials continue to warn the public that due to limited vaccine supplies, not all who become eligible that day will be able to get vaccinated on the first day they are eligible.

Residents who don't have access to or need assistance navigating online services can call the toll-free IDPH hotline at 833-621-1284 to book an appointment. The hotline is open 7 days a week from 6 a.m. to midnight with agents available in English and Spanish.

Gov. Pritzker also announced that the state will be adding a bridge phase between reopening Phases 4 and 5, based on science and offering incremental approaches towards a full Illinois reopening.

"COVID-19 has not gone away, but the light we can see at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter and brighter as more people get vaccinated," Pritzker said.

If vaccinations continue at their current rate, in a matter of weeks the state will allow more people to shop, dine out, and attend social events

The step between Phase 4 and 5 will allow for greater capacity limits for bars and restaurants, social gatherings, museums and zoos, etc., depending on whether they are indoors or outdoors. Bars, specifically, will be allowed 20% standing capacity, but six-foot social distancing will still be required.

"We'll move into this bridge phase when 70% of our 65 and older population receives at least one dose of the vaccine," Pritzker said. The state's mask mandate will continue.

"We're working with industry leaders," Governor Pritzker said. "We're working with our doctors at IDPH as well as other experts in the state."

For now Chicago is not adopting the new state guidelines for vaccinations or reopening, but will be reviewing the plans and an update is expected next week.

The bridge phase will mean people can look forward to more traditional summer activities like concerts, because capacity will increase to 60%. Retail, offices, salons, health clubs and museums would also be allowed 60% capacity.

Social events like weddings could have up to 250 people inside, and 500 guests outside.

"It's super exciting because we work with a lot of brides, a lot of social functions, and everyone just wants to meet with each other, they want to get back out there, they want to create a sense of normalcy again," said Rachel Westberg, director of sales and catering for The Rose Hotel.

The state must also maintain a 20% or lower ICU bed availability and hold hospital admissions and case rate steady over a 28-day period. As of Thursday morning, 58% of people over 65 had received at least one vaccine.

So far, 28% of Illinoisans 16 and older have gotten one dose, and if that increases to 50% and health metrics remain stable for 28 days, Illinois would finally move on Phase 5. If everything goes perfectly, that could happen as early as the beginning of May.

Individuals who have proof of vaccination or a negative PCR COVID test 1 to 3 days prior do not count against capacity limits

The state will revert back to an earlier phase if there is an increase in cases and hospitalizations.

There are also talks about allowing conventions to return. For the Rose Hotel in Rosemont near O'Hare, it means more employees can come back to work.

"I think there's a lot of people who are eager to get back to work and I do think talking to clients waiting for things to open up people are ready to go so I think when we get the green light things are going to be explosive," Westberg said.

Chicago also announced Wednesday that it will expand vaccine eligibility to Phase 1C on March 29.

"I'm excited for it because I've been trying, and I can't get it," said Christopher Hunt, owner of Seek Vintage in West Town. "So now that means I may be able to get it."

And along with retail workers, those in hospitality, personal care services, law construction and more are eligible in phase 1C.

In 1C, Chicagoans 16 to 64 are also eligible, but only if they have chronic health conditions. The state will lift that health requirement for that group on April 12, but it's unclear if the city will, too.

Suburban Cook County is expanding its eligibility starting Monday, March 22, as the county moves to Phase 1B+, which includes people younger than 65 with underlying conditions.

The county said nearly 70% of its seniors have received at least one dose, and that progress is also leading to this expansion announcement.



Suburban Cook County Starting 1B+ Vaccinations March 22, Allowing Pregnant People, Others With Underlying Conditions To Get Shots

Kelly Bauer
March 18, 2021

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/03/18/suburban-cook-county-starting-1b-vaccinations-march-22-allowing-pregnant-people-others-with-underlying-conditions-to-get-shots/>

Suburban Cook County will move into 1B+ vaccinations next week, allowing people with certain underlying conditions to get the shots.

The suburbs will officially move into Phase 1B+ on Monday, according to a news release from the Cook County Public Health Department. Illinoisans 16 and older who have a qualifying medical condition will then be eligible to get vaccinated against coronavirus.

The move is being made because the county has seen “great progress in vaccinating” other vulnerable groups, particularly people 65 and older, according to the health department.

All providers within suburban Cook County will be asked to expand eligibility to 1B+ people, including state-supported mass vaccination sites in Des Plaines and at the Tinley Park Convention Center, South Suburban College and Triton College. Those mass vaccination sites will also receive additional doses to serve more Illinois residents, according to the health department.

- Qualifying underlying conditions:
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, known as COPD
- Diabetes
- Heart conditions
- Immunocompromised from organ transplant
- Obesity
- Pulmonary disease
- Sickle Cell Disease
- People with certain disabilities
- Pregnancy
- Smoking

The move will mark a break with the city of Chicago, which is sticking with Phase 1B until March 29. It will then move into 1C, when people with certain underlying medical conditions will be eligible to be vaccinated.

People who wish to sign up to be vaccinated through the county can do so by registering online or by calling 833-308-1988 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday.

State says all adults can get shots starting April 12, but suburban counties stay cautious

Marni Pyke

March 19, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210318/state-says-all-adults-can-get-shots-starting-april-12-but-suburban-counties-stay-cautious>

Gov. J.B. Pritzker is expanding COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to all Illinoisans age 16 and older effective April 12 and loosening restrictions on activities using a gradual approach to reopen the state based on the number of people inoculated.

"It's time to begin to cautiously move toward normalcy, and it's imperative that we do so in a way that maintains all the progress we've made to date," Pritzker said, citing a trend of decreasing COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

He introduced a future "Bridge Phase" that would increase capacity at shops, restaurants, conventions, festivals and social events like weddings from the state's current Phase 4 rules.

Pritzker has said the White House is promising to ramp up delivery of vaccines to Illinois, including the one-dose Johnson & Johnson shot.

He noted that federal vaccine shipments to Illinois this week have surpassed 800,000 doses. That number should top 1 million doses a week in April, and the state is averaging about 100,000 shots in arms a day.

"COVID-19 has not gone away, but the light at the end of the tunnel is brighter," he said.

But it's unclear whether the thousands of suburban seniors age 65 and older plus essential workers who are currently eligible for vaccinations, but who can't get appointments, will be vaccinated by April 12, when the next stage opens up to millions more people.

Despite talk of light, "we're still in the tunnel," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said at a briefing. "We're clearly still in the middle of struggling with the pandemic."

The vaccination bottleneck could delay reaching the Bridge Phase.

To reach the Bridge Phase, 70% of Illinoisans 65 and older must have received at least one dose of a vaccine, plus the state must have 20% or more of its ICU beds available for patients and hold steady on COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths over 28 days.

About 58% of seniors have had one shot, and the state is vaccinating about 1% of adults a day.

Pritzker said the state's face mask mandate will remain in place until the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lifts that rule.

Currently, the state is allowing inoculations for essential workers such as police and people age 65 and older -- Phase 1B -- plus individuals under 65 with serious medical conditions like cancer that could cause worse outcomes from the virus, or Phase 1B-plus.

Collar county health departments have limited shots to the Phase 1B group because of an insufficient supply of vaccines.

"DuPage County will continue to provide vaccinations to all eligible residents while addressing the reality of vaccine availability constraints," DuPage County Health Department spokeswoman Stephanie Calvillo said.

"DuPage County is receiving about 18,000 doses of vaccine next week, and we will continue to work through our higher-risk populations, including individuals 65 years and older, front-line essential workers, and then individuals age 16 to 64 with underlying medical conditions or disabilities as the statewide eligibility expands."

Cook County is not starting Phase 1B-plus until Monday.

"We are confident in the state and federal government assurances that much more vaccine is on its way, and we look forward to moving quickly through the next phases in an equitable and efficient manner," Cook County Department of Public Health spokesman Don Bolger said. "We'll continue to study the data and monitor progress and announce future phases when appropriate."

If over a 10-day period, cases, hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 trend up as ICU beds decrease, the state will revert to a previous phase.

"Rather than flipping a switch and saying we're now in Phase 5, we're looking at it more like a dial -- dialing back some of the capacity restrictions that helped reduce transmission," Illinois Department of Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike said.

"I think the idea of using vaccine metrics to opening things is a good one," said Jonathan Pinsky, Edward Hospital's medical director of infection control and prevention. However, "I think we run into trouble if we start allowing gatherings with people who have not been vaccinated."

Some examples of Bridge Phase changes are doubling the number of participants at festivals, expanding museum attendance to 60% from 25%, and expanding store and fitness center capacities to 60% from 50%. Weddings and social gatherings rise from the lesser of 50% or 50 people indoors to 250 individuals.

The Bridge Phase would also permit meetings, conventions and conferences with up to 1,000 people or 60% of capacity.

"Every bit helps. ... Getting our convention business going again and putting fans in stadiums puts diners in seats in our local restaurants," Illinois Restaurant Association CEO Sam Toia said.

Asked why he didn't use a solid time frame, Pritzker said, "I'm not going to set a date. (The pandemic) ebbs and flows." And instead of using an 11-region approach that has been the model, the shift to the Bridge Phase will be based on metrics for the entire state.

The state also adjusted some Phase 4 rules Thursday, such as allowing large movie theaters with space for 200 or more viewers to operate at 25% capacity.

"This is huge and exciting," said Classic Cinemas CEO Chris Johnson, who can now reopen his vintage Tivoli Theater in Downers Grove.

The state also announced that effective Thursday people with proof of full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 PRC test one to three days before an activity do not count toward capacity limits.

The final step in reopening Illinois and moving to almost pre-pandemic conditions is Phase 5.

To reach Phase 5, 50% of Illinoisans 16 and older must have been vaccinated and the same metrics used for the Bridge Phase for cases, deaths, hospital admissions, and ICU beds will apply.



‘They Had Basically Every Time Slot’: Suburban Chicagoans Travel Hundreds Of Miles, Across Illinois, To Get A COVID Vaccine

Marie Saavedra

March 18, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/18/travel-covid-vaccine-adams-county/>

Promise of more vaccine is what so many searching for appointments are hanging onto. Demand in our biggest counties is huge and the frustration is real.

Enough for some to make a trip that’s five hours by car, one and a half by plane, all to get one shot and be done with it. CBS 2’s Marie Saavedra reports from the United Center with why people feel it’s still worth it to travel for their shots.

Part of the reason is confusion over sites like the United Center, and many others that are available to Illinois residents, but then change to specific counties or zip codes. CBS 2 found several people who were done with the back and forth, and booked an appointment all the way in Quincy.

Because they could.

“I’ve been pretty much hunting for a vaccine before they were approved.”

Dan Beider of Glencoe had done his research, and had a good idea of his vaccine plan going in.

“I actually was pretty committed to finding the Johnson and Johnson vaccine,” Beider said. “I wanted a one shot vaccine.”

So he, like so many of us, started scouring the internet for appointments. He found it impossible to book himself a Johnson & Johnson shot in Chicagoland, so he looked west. All the way to Quincy and the Adams County mass vaccination site, open to anyone in the state who’s eligible.

“Lo and behold, they had basically every time slot,” Beider said. “Every day open for appointments.”

Beider had the time and resources. So last Tuesday, he hopped on a plane, got the shot, and was back all in a day.

Adams County is a bright spot when it comes to vaccinations. The data team at CBS 2 mapped numbers from the Illinois Department of Public Health and found that county is leading in the state in the percentage of its population that’s already fully vaccinated.

As of Wednesday, that’s 26.6% of Adams County, compared to just 12.8 percent of Cook County. Zoom out to the collar counties of Lake, Kane and Will and they’re all at 10% of residents fully vaccinated. So you can see why people who can travel for a shot would consider it.

“I say that as a public health physician, it warms my heart that someone would want to be vaccinated that badly.”

Dr. Kiran Joshi with Cook County Department of Public Health understands the desire to look elsewhere, but he's encouraging those in Suburban Cook County to take heart that more eligibility groups and shots are coming, here at home.

And maybe soon enough, the experience here will be as smooth as Beider's in Quincy.

"The entire appointment, once we walked in, I want to say we were out of there in less than 25 minutes," Beider said.

That's the dream, isn't it?

Cook County did announce this week it's opening up to phase 1B+ starting this coming Monday. Communities including Evanston, Skokie and Oak Park that were locked out of the county's mass vaccination sites can get it.

Both are signs that access to vaccine is growing.



Cook County Vaccines: More Appointments to Open as County Moves to Phase 1B-Plus

March 18, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/cook-county-vaccines-more-appointments-to-open-as-county-moves-to-phase-1b-plus/2466034/>

As Cook County prepares to move into Phase 1B Plus of the state's coronavirus vaccination plan next week, new appointments will be opening up through the county's website beginning on Friday.

According to officials with the Cook County Department of Public Health, those new appointments will become available at 12 p.m. Friday.

Individuals residing in the state of Illinois who meet eligibility criteria will be permitted to sign up for information on the county's coronavirus website, and appointments will open at noon Friday.

Under Phase 1B Plus, all Illinois residents 65 and older will be eligible for COVID vaccine appointments. Residents 16 years of age or older with specific comorbidities, including cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions, obesity, pulmonary disease and sickle cell disease, will all be eligible.

Pregnant women, smokers and individuals with disabilities will also become eligible.

That eligibility will officially begin on March 22, according to Cook County officials.

CCDPH says it will continue to evaluate whether to move forward into Phase 1C along with the rest of the state of Illinois later this month, according to officials.



COVID-19 Testing now open Saturdays at SSC

South Suburban College COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Site Adjusts Weekday Schedule, Reopens Saturdays

Patrick Rush, Community Contributor

March 18, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/oakforest/covid-19-testing-now-open-saturdays-ssc>

The South Suburban College COVID-19 testing site has further scaled back its operation from seven days a week to four days a week in response to slowing demand for testing. Testing will now continue on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. through April as part of its most recent intergovernmental agreement renewal with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). No appointment is necessary for the drive-thru tents set up at the College's Main Campus parking lot. Testing site inquiries may be made by calling (888) 297-7208.

Vaccinations continue Mondays through Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Cook County's mass vaccination site within South Suburban College's Gymnasium. Vaccinations at all Cook County Health sites are provided by appointment [###/strongvaccine.cookcountyil.gov](https://strongvaccine.cookcountyil.gov). Individuals without Internet access or who need assistance scheduling may call (833) 308-1988 (from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday – Friday). Cook County Health will continue to offer appointment slots based on the amount of vaccine expected and will add appointments as new vaccine shipments arrive. As vaccine becomes available, Cook County Health opens new appointments.

South Suburban College cannot answer specific questions regarding testing results or vaccination scheduling.

In addition to Cook County Health sites, the Cook County Department of Public Health has distributed vaccines to more than 90 partner locations including Jewel-Osco, Mariano's, Walgreens, Federally Qualified Health Centers and hospitals who are also offering vaccines by appointment. Additional sites can be found at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccination-location>.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Uber offering drivers access to streamlined vaccination booking process through Walgreens

Mari Devereaux

March 19, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/19/22338659/uber-drivers-streamlined-vaccination-booking-process-walgreens>

Illinois Uber drivers will now have access to a simpler process to schedule COVID-19 vaccination appointments through Walgreens.

The initiative stems from Uber and Walgreens' partnership formed in early February to help COVID-19 vaccines become more accessible to underserved communities.

According to the Cook County Department of Public Health, ride-hailing service drivers are considered public transit workers and are eligible to be vaccinated in Phase 1B — which began Jan. 25 — along with first responders, educators, corrections workers, inmates and grocery store workers, among others.

Carrol Chang, Uber's head of driver operations for the U.S. and Canada, said an authorization code sent to drivers and Uber Eats delivery people allows them to provide proof of eligibility and book a vaccine appointment through Walgreens' existing scheduling system whenever a time slot is available.

Chang said the codes are meant to make the process easier to navigate for drivers. But it does not give Uber drivers priority access to vaccine appointments over others, Chang said.

Lyft spokesperson Julie Wood said the company has been advocating for drivers to receive vaccine eligibility since December and has created a web page to help drivers find information about how to get vaccinated in their state.

Jason Gross, vice president of mobility at Curb, a taxi app, said the company has thousands of Chicago drivers and communicates with them about vaccine eligibility status and safety guidelines.

"We ... provide drivers with the resources they need to get vaccinated, including information provided by the regulators such as dates, locations and codes needed to book appointments for the vaccine," Gross said in an email to the Chicago Sun-Times.

Tom McFeely, communications manager with the county Health Department, said drivers are often overlooked and it is important they are vaccinated to stay healthy so they can offer rides to people who lack transportation.

"Nobody's supposed to be jumping the line, because we have these people like [ride-hailing] drivers who need to get vaccinated first, because they're in touch with more people [and] they're providing essential services," McFeely said. "We want them to be safe."

Column: She couldn't save her father from COVID-19, but this Chicago nurse hopes to save others

Mary Schmich, *Chicago Tribune*

March 19, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/column-she-couldn-t-save-102700273.html>

Every night for the past few months, Noemy Godina has cried for her father.

"I'm sorry I failed you," she tells him, over and over, though only in her mind. "I'm sorry I didn't say 'I love you' enough."

And over and over, she tells herself, "I'm a nurse. I should have done better."

Eventually she goes to sleep, then in the mornings she goes to work, fortified by the thought that even though she couldn't save her father from COVID-19, she may save someone else's.

Her drive from the Far Southeast Side to the Cook County health department's North Riverside clinic takes over an hour. She doesn't mind. She has always loved her job, but she loves it even more now that the clinic, in a strip mall on busy South Harlem Avenue, doubles as a vaccination site.

In the clean, no-frills clinic, she spends a lot of time transferring COVID-19 vaccine from small vials into syringes, a procedure that is both simple and hard: Draw saline into the syringe. Then plunge the needle into the vaccine vial. As the vaccine drips into the syringe, tap the syringe with a fingernail however many times it takes to eliminate the air bubbles.

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.

Six syringes per vaccine vial. Thousands of taps per hour. Godina has tapped so much that at times her fingers are left swollen and bruised.

"Sometimes we ice them when we get home," she said the other day, tapping away along with three other nurses in a small, windowless, white-walled room that sounded as if it were filled with woodpeckers. The nurses fixed their gazes on the clear, slender tubes, sometimes holding them to the light, squinting in search of bubbles.

"By the time we're done," Godina said, "we're cross-eyed."

She wasn't complaining. It makes her happy to think that every syringe full of vaccine and free of bubbles — the bubbles take up space, reducing the dose — represents someone less likely to end up like her dad.

Godina's father, Ignacio Godina, was an auto body repairman who emigrated from Zacatecas, Mexico, to Chicago with her mother, Ofelia, shortly before Godina was born. Her mother's entire sibling group — 10 kids in all — emigrated too, coming to join their father, who worked in a steel mill.

Ignacio and Ofelia went on to have four kids, and took pride in raising two electricians, a teacher and a nurse.

Godina's father was in some ways, she says, a "hard man." Proud. He had a temper. Wasn't a hugger. But family was his life, and he often said, "I love you."

When COVID hit, her parents took precautions. They left the house only for daily visits to Godina's grandfather, making sure he was bathed and fed. Her father always double-masked. But last October, both her parents began feeling sick.

"I think they were afraid to tell me they were not feeling well," Godina says. They let her know on a Wednesday. Two days later, she insisted they go to the hospital, trailing them in her car because her dad refused to let her ride in theirs, afraid he would infect her.

"OK, Dad," she told him in the parking lot outside the hospital, "Don't forget your insurance card."

If she'd known it was the last in-person conversation she'd have with her father, she would have told him she loved him.

To this day, Godina doesn't know how her parents caught the virus, or how any of the 11 members of her extended family who got sick did. Her best guess is that some of them met after her grandfather died in September, at 96, of simple old age. Maybe, she thinks, someone consoled her dad with a hug.

Her mother didn't have to stay in the hospital, but her father did. No visitors allowed. It was the first time in his life he had been away from family, and he wanted to come home.

"I'm sorry, Dad," she told him on one of their FaceTime calls, "you just have to be there a few more days." She had trouble understanding him over the loud hospital machines.

Shortly after that call, Ignacio Godina, who was 67, had a bout of violent delirium and was put into a forced coma. Two weeks after he entered the hospital, his daughter made the decision to remove him from the ventilator. The decision had fallen to her because, after all, she was the nurse in the family.

Everyone assures Godina that she did everything she could. The virus is cruel and capricious. Nurses aren't magicians. She takes consolation in the fact that her mother has survived. But her mother, who used to work helping elderly people in their homes, still feels COVID's effects, notably back pain and shortness of breath, and has had to quit her job, yet another loss in the cascade of losses.

And Godina can't shake the feeling that she could have, should have done more for her father. What she can do now is help others avoid her father's suffering, and her family's. She takes that mission seriously.

At the clinic, where many of the patients are Hispanic, she has become a COVID counselor of sorts, explaining to people why they should get the vaccine. People call or come in, full of questions and worries, often based on rumors from neighbors. No, she explains kindly, in response to the most common fear, the shot won't give them the virus.

Since January, the clinic has administered 12,000 vaccinations. Three hundred fifty on an average weekday, up to 600 on a weekend day. After each dose is prepared, it's slipped into a small brown bag labeled with the date, the time diluted and the "use-by" time six hours later. Godina goes out of her way to say she is grateful for co-workers who care so much about getting people vaccinated, who care so much about why it matters to her.

And every now and then, as she stands tapping at syringes, Godina gets an extra dose out of a vaccine vial. A miraculous seventh that arrives like a gift from her father.

"Oh, Daddy," she thinks. "Thank you. That's an extra life you can help save today. That's someone else who will get a Father's Day."

Column: She couldn't save her father from COVID-19, but this Chicago nurse hopes to save others

Mary Schmich

March 19, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/mary-schmich/ct-met-schmich-covid-nurse-vaccinations-20210319-uiwvvtvtsnaalqz6vyjgsiany-story.html>

Every night for the past few months, Noemy Godina has cried for her father.

"I'm sorry I failed you," she tells him, over and over, though only in her mind. "I'm sorry I didn't say 'I love you' enough."

And over and over, she tells herself, "I'm a nurse. I should have done better."

Eventually she goes to sleep, then in the mornings she goes to work, fortified by the thought that even though she couldn't save her father from COVID-19, she may save someone else's.

Her drive from the Far Southeast Side to the Cook County health department's North Riverside clinic takes over an hour. She doesn't mind. She has always loved her job, but she loves it even more now that the clinic, in a strip mall on busy South Harlem Avenue, doubles as a vaccination site.

In the clean, no-frills clinic, she spends a lot of time transferring COVID-19 vaccine from small vials into syringes, a procedure that is both simple and hard: Draw saline into the syringe. Then plunge the needle into the vaccine vial. As the vaccine drips into the syringe, tap the syringe with a fingernail however many times it takes to eliminate the air bubbles.

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap.

Six syringes per vaccine vial. Thousands of taps per hour. Godina has tapped so much that at times her fingers are left swollen and bruised.

"Sometimes we ice them when we get home," she said the other day, tapping away along with three other nurses in a small, windowless, white-walled room that sounded as if it were filled with woodpeckers. The nurses fixed their gazes on the clear, slender tubes, sometimes holding them to the light, squinting in search of bubbles.

"By the time we're done," Godina said, "we're cross-eyed."

She wasn't complaining. It makes her happy to think that every syringe full of vaccine and free of bubbles — the bubbles take up space, reducing the dose — represents someone less likely to end up like her dad.

Godina's father, Ignacio Godina, was an auto body repairman who emigrated from Zacatecas, Mexico, to Chicago with her mother, Ofelia, shortly before Godina was born. Her mother's entire sibling group — 10 kids in all — emigrated too, coming to join their father, who worked in a steel mill.

Ignacio and Ofelia went on to have four kids, and took pride in raising two electricians, a teacher and a nurse.

Godina's father was in some ways, she says, a "hard man." Proud. He had a temper. Wasn't a hugger. But family was his life, and he often said, "I love you."

When COVID hit, her parents took precautions. They left the house only for daily visits to Godina's grandfather, making sure he was bathed and fed. Her father always double-masked. But last October, both her parents began feeling sick.

"I think they were afraid to tell me they were not feeling well," Godina says. They let her know on a Wednesday. Two days later, she insisted they go to the hospital, trailing them in her car because her dad refused to let her ride in theirs, afraid he would infect her.

"OK, Dad," she told him in the parking lot outside the hospital, "Don't forget your insurance card."

If she'd known it was the last in-person conversation she'd have with her father, she would have told him she loved him.

To this day, Godina doesn't know how her parents caught the virus, or how any of the 11 members of her extended family who got sick did. Her best guess is that some of them met after her grandfather died in September, at 96, of simple old age. Maybe, she thinks, someone consoled her dad with a hug.

Her mother didn't have to stay in the hospital, but her father did. No visitors allowed. It was the first time in his life he had been away from family, and he wanted to come home.

"I'm sorry, Dad," she told him on one of their FaceTime calls, "you just have to be there a few more days." She had trouble understanding him over the loud hospital machines.

Shortly after that call, Ignacio Godina, who was 67, had a bout of violent delirium and was put into a forced coma. Two weeks after he entered the hospital, his daughter made the decision to remove him from the ventilator. The decision had fallen to her because, after all, she was the nurse in the family.

Everyone assures Godina that she did everything she could. The virus is cruel and capricious. Nurses aren't magicians. She takes consolation in the fact that her mother has survived. But her mother, who used to work helping elderly people in their homes, still feels COVID's effects, notably back pain and shortness of breath, and has had to quit her job, yet another loss in the cascade of losses.

And Godina can't shake the feeling that she could have, should have done more for her father. What she can do now is help others avoid her father's suffering, and her family's. She takes that mission seriously.

At the clinic, where many of the patients are Hispanic, she has become a COVID counselor of sorts, explaining to people why they should get the vaccine. People call or come in, full of questions and worries, often based on rumors from neighbors. No, she explains kindly, in response to the most common fear, the shot won't give them the virus.

Since January, the clinic has administered 12,000 vaccinations. Three hundred fifty on an average weekday, up to 600 on a weekend day. After each dose is prepared, it's slipped into a small brown bag labeled with the date, the time diluted and the "use-by" time six hours later. Godina goes out of her way to say she is grateful for co-workers who care so much about getting people vaccinated, who care so much about why it matters to her.

And every now and then, as she stands tapping at syringes, Godina gets an extra dose out of a vaccine vial. A miraculous seventh that arrives like a gift from her father.

"Oh, Daddy," she thinks. "Thank you. That's an extra life you can help save today. That's someone else who will get a Father's Day."



Pandemic popcorn, doctor's notes, Red Lantern Award: News from around our 50 states

March 19, 2021

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/50-states/2021/03/19/pandemic-popcorn-doctors-notes-red-lantern-award-news-around-states/115577868/>

Illinois

Chicago: The city will expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility this month to include people with underlying health conditions and more categories of workers, including in food service and construction, Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Wednesday. The expansion to so-called Phase 1c is expected March 29. It's the last category before vaccines are available to the wider public. Illinois has allowed people with some underlying health conditions to receive the shots since last month, but Chicago and its surrounding areas have largely held off because supplies are limited in the densely populated region. The expansion includes workers in finance, higher education and retail. Still, issues persist with snagging limited appointments and eligibility confusion. Criteria have changed several times at a federally backed mass vaccination site at the United Center, which has allowed people with underlying health conditions since it opened this month. Initially, it was supposed to be open to Illinois residents but then was narrowed to Chicagoans. Later, those in city ZIP codes hit hard by the pandemic were given priority, with officials saying suburban Cook County residents would be offered limited access. Also Wednesday, Chicago schools officials announced staff and vendors can sign up for vaccinations at four dedicated sites for educators.



With More Vaccines On The Way, A ‘Vaccine Brigade’ Volunteers To Put Shots In Arms

Becky Vevea

March 19, 2021

<https://www.wbez.org/stories/with-more-vaccines-on-the-way-a-vaccine-brigade-volunteers-to-put-shots-in-arms/64d40460-8238-48a1-b0cb-07264b432507>

As Illinois continues to ramp up vaccinations, getting people vaccinated for COVID-19 more quickly not only depends on how many doses are shipped, but how many people are trained and available to actually inject shots into arms.

Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and the National Guard have all been deployed to do this work. But there is still a need.

“We can’t just completely flip into being vaccination centers,” said Dr. Ali Khan, Executive Medical Director at Oak Street Health. “When we’re trying to keep normal operations that keep people healthy and out of trouble from a primary care perspective, you have to find new, new workforces.”

That’s where a small group called the Chicago Vaccine Brigade is hoping to help.

What’s going on with the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, and what does it mean for you? Subscribe to The COVID Report, WBEZ’s new weekly newsletter, and get answers to your questions — Wednesdays, straight to your inbox.

Peg Dublin retired as a public health nurse at the end of 2019, but when the pandemic started, she knew it would be the biggest public health event of her lifetime.

“I immediately wanted to do something so starting in March I started signing up to volunteer with the city with the state, and I never heard anything and I was so frustrated,” Dublin said. “And then finally, with the vaccine I saw my moment.”

She started calling nurses she knew and emailing people she volunteered with on political campaigns.

“Within, it feels like, minutes our group went from five or six nurses to now about 45 or 50 people,” Dublin said.

Since January, the brigade has connected volunteers with four large health providers — Rush University Medical Center, Oak Street Health, Erie Family Health and Cook County Health.

Dublin and others have worked at some of the equity-focused sites launched by the City of Chicago under the Protect Chicago Plus program, which targets vaccines to people living in the hardest-hit ZIP codes.

Some large health systems, like University of Chicago Medicine, have been able to staff their own vaccination clinics without any volunteers. But that is not the case everywhere and that need could grow as more people become eligible and more vaccines are shipped.

One member of the brigade, Dr. Ellen Mason, is also an internal medicine doctor at Cook County.

“We have a fraction of the workforce we had 10 years ago,” Mason said. “[My colleagues] are all just working 24 hours a day right now.”

Rush University Medical Center has a vaccination clinic on their main campus that takes about 80 people to staff. It’s a mix of regular employees and volunteers, said spokeswoman Polly Tita. There are a number of retired Rush nurses who are volunteering to help administer shots.

It’s not always easy to volunteer. There can be valid but time-consuming hoops to jump through, like background checks and fingerprinting. On-boarding can also be a challenge. Take, for instance, when Oak Street ran a pop-up vaccination clinic for the city’s Protect Chicago Plus program at Steinmetz College Prep in Belmont-Cragin.

“We had to jump through a series of hoops with Chicago Public Schools to be able to be able to bring volunteers who didn’t need fingerprinting, to be able to enter the high school even if there were no students there,” Khan said.

Early in the pandemic, Gov. JB Pritzker had urged retired doctors and nurses to come back and help fight COVID-19 and made it easier for them to renew lapsed licenses. But some retirees worried about the risk of getting sick.

That’s less of a concern now. Many members of the Vaccine Brigade have now been vaccinated. Dublin said she got inoculated in January and volunteering to give shots was the first thing she did in-person in almost a year.

“I put, I think, 42 shots in arms, and it was a very intense and emotional experience,” she said. “The beauty of volunteerism is that it builds connection with people, so you feel compassion when you’re doing this work and you feel connected to other neighbors in the city. And this city needs to heal for so many reasons.”

The vaccine, she said, could be one way to do that.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Loretto Hospital, COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Open, 'Bridge Phase'

March 19, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-loretto-hospital-controversy-covid-vaccine-eligibility-to-open-pritzker-unveils-bridge-phase/2466265/>

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has announced that all Illinois residents age 16 and older outside the city of Chicago will become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine next month.

Pritzker also unveiled an overhaul of Illinois' reopening plan, including changes to the current Phase 4 and a new "Bridge Phase" before the state can fully reopen in Phase 5.

Meanwhile, Chicago says it will withhold first doses of the coronavirus vaccine from Loretto Hospital amid controversy over improper vaccinations of Trump Tower employees as well as Cook County judges.

And Cook County will open new vaccination appointments at 12 p.m. Friday as the county prepares to move into Phase 1B Plus next week.

Here are the latest updates on the coronavirus pandemic across Illinois today:

First Ever Double Lung Transplant Between COVID Patients Performed in Chicago

Chicago doctors completed one of the first known double lung transplants from one former coronavirus patient to another.

The procedure not only made history, according to Chicago doctors, but is also opening doors for donors and recipients as demand increases because of the pandemic.

The history-making procedure lasted about 10 hours, almost double that of a traditional lung transplant. The recipient was an Illinois man in his 60s, who had a severe COVID-19 infection, according to Northwestern Medicine.

Dr. Ankit Bharat, Northwestern Medicine's director of the lung transplant program, said the patient was on ECMO life support for four months and on a ventilator since May 2020.

He said the lungs came from a donor who had a mild case of COVID-19, but died from an unrelated matter.

Read more here.

Lightfoot Honors COVID Victims, Outlines Next Steps in Chicago's Recovery

Calling on Chicagoans to help build a "better, more equitable and inclusive city," Mayor Lori Lightfoot on Friday detailed what she referred to as "bold actions" to help residents recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marking the one-year anniversary of the pandemic, Lightfoot led a moment of silence in remembrance of the 5,000 Chicagoans who died from COVID-19 in the past year.

"This has been a year of loss. A year of pain," the mayor explained during her evening address at City Hall. "But through that shroud of pain and grief, Chicago has continued to be the resilient city that we have always been."

Lightfoot touted the city's creation of the Racial Equity Rapid Response Team, which addressed "the horrific number of Black folks dying from COVID" and "the disproportionate impacts of the virus in the Latinx communities."

Looking ahead to the future, the mayor pledged that "no longer will ZIP code determine destiny."

Read more here.

Cook County COVID Vaccine Appointments Booked as Region Opens Up to 1B Plus

All first-dose appointments at Cook County's community vaccination locations were booked as of Friday afternoon as the county prepares to expand coronavirus vaccine eligibility to include those in Phase 1B Plus.

Registration for the appointments opened at 12 p.m. on the Cook County vaccine website. Appointments could also be made by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

But as of 3 p.m., the county's website displayed a message that read "There are no more first dose appointments available at Cook County Community Vaccination locations."

"Please be patient," the website states. "We anticipate vaccine supply to increase in the coming weeks."

Read more here.

Chicago Works to Expand Outdoor Dining With New Design Initiative

As the city continues to administer thousands of COVID-19 vaccines, Chicago officials announced a new design initiative in hopes to expand outdoor dining.

The Chicago Alfresco initiative provides an opportunity for businesses and community organizations to obtain a grant for designing long-term outdoor dining spaces, according to a release.

Chicago Alfresco guidelines promote designs that show a sense of "ownership, belonging and safety" through physically transforming the space while engaging with the community, officials said.

All design plans must be for a six-month minimum, with priority given to those made for three years, according to the city's website. Proposals can be created for the following project types: existing plaza programming; street and alley activation; and curbside use.

The first round of proposals for Chicago Alfresco will be accepted until April 15 and be approved by April 30. For people looking to learn more information, a virtual webinar will be held March 26 at 3 p.m.

Read more here.

Loretto Hospital Vaccinated Members of CEO's Suburban Church

Chicago's Loretto Hospital, which is at the center of controversy for improperly vaccinating a number of city residents and workers, also vaccinated members of its CEO's suburban church, according to video obtained by NBC 5.

Oak Forest's Valley Kingdom Ministries International honored Loretto Hospital CEO and President George Miller for his role in bringing the vaccine to the church during a service on Feb. 28. In accepting his award from the church, Miller acknowledges that he and the church's leader are longtime friends.

In a statement, Loretto said Miller "reached out directly to CDPH before the hospital agreed to provide vaccines to eligible recipients at his church."

"CDPH informed Mr. Miller that as long as the recipients lived, worked, or received medical care in the city and were 1A or 1B-eligible they could be vaccinated," the statement read.

Read more here.

Essential Workers Will Be Eligible for COVID Vaccine in Illinois This Month, State Announces

Essential workers not currently eligible under Illinois' Phase 1B Plus will soon qualify for the COVID vaccine under new eligibility guidelines released by the state Friday.

According to the updated guidance, Illinois will expand eligibility beginning Monday to higher education staff, government workers, and media. Then, beginning March 29, food and beverage workers, construction trade workers, and religious leaders will be eligible for the vaccine.

Here's a look at the full schedule of vaccine eligibility.

Chicago Withholding 1st Doses of COVID Vaccine From Loretto Hospital Amid Controversy

The Chicago Department of Public Health says that it will withhold first doses of the coronavirus vaccine from Loretto Hospital after officials admitted that members of its staff improperly vaccinated employees of Chicago's Trump Tower, as well as more than a dozen Cook County Circuit Court judges.

The CDPH confirmed that it will not send shipments of first doses to the hospital, but said that it will allow residents who received their first dose of the vaccine at the hospital to receive their second doses in the coming days.

"The hospital will not receive first doses until we can confirm their vaccination strategies and reporting practices meet all CPDH requirements," the department said in a statement.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot also released a statement, saying that the city "will not tolerate providers who blatantly disregard" CDPH guidelines.

Read more here.

COVID Vaccine Cook County Appointments Open Friday for Phase 1B Plus

Cook County will release new COVID-19 vaccine appointments on Friday for all Illinois residents qualified in Phase 1B Plus as the county prepares to expand eligibility.

Registration for the appointments will open to all eligible Illinois residents at 12 p.m. on the Cook County vaccine website. Appointments can also be made by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced Wednesday that it will move to Phase 1B Plus beginning Monday, expanding eligibility to residents 16 years of age or older with specific health conditions.

All vaccine providers in suburban Cook County have been asked to move to Phase 1B Plus, as will the state-supported mass vaccination sites in the area. Those sites are:

- The Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive

- South Suburban College, 15800 State St. in South Holland
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave. in River Grove
- A former K-Mart at 1155 E Oakton St in Des Plaines

Those mass vaccination sites were previously only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County, but CCDPH said that beginning next week, they will receive additional vaccine supply to enable the sites to serve all eligible Illinois residents.

As such, the appointments made available on Friday will be open to Illinois residents who are qualified to get vaccinated in Phase 1B Plus as well as in Phase 1A or the earlier iteration of Phase 1B, which largely included certain essential workers.

Coronavirus in Illinois: 2,325 New COVID Cases, 34 Deaths, More Than 91K Vaccinations Reported

Health officials in Illinois on Thursday reported 2,325 new coronavirus cases and 34 additional deaths, along with more than 91,000 vaccinations in the past 24 hours.

According to figures from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the 2,325 new confirmed and probable COVID cases reported in the last day brought the state's total to 1,216,090 cases since the pandemic began last year.

The 34 new deaths lifted the state's death toll to 21,022 fatalities related to the virus, according to health officials.

In the last 24 hours, state health officials say 89,817 new test specimens were returned to state laboratories, bringing the statewide total to 19,389,098 tests performed. According to health officials, the seven-day positivity rate on all tests currently stands at 2.4%, while the positivity rate for individuals tested is at 2.7%, both a slight increase from the day before.

As of Wednesday evening, 1,120 Illinois residents were hospitalized due to the virus. Of those patients, 252 were in ICU beds and 100 were on ventilators.

A total of 91,684 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the past 24 hours, a drop from the more than 102,000 shots given the day before, IDPH said. The latest figures brought the rolling seven-day average for daily vaccinations to 99,210. In all, Illinois has received 5,587,315 doses of the vaccine and of those, a total of 4,375,171 have been administered across the state.

Are You Eligible? Here's Who Qualifies for COVID Vaccine Under Chicago's Phase 1C

As Chicago prepares to expand vaccine eligibility to more residents as it moves to Phase 1C later this month, who will become eligible?

Phase 1C, set to begin on March 29, will include those with underlying health conditions and essential workers like restaurant employees, those in personal care services, retail workers and more, officials announced Wednesday.

But the list of underlying conditions is not the same as the one being used for the state's Phase 1B Plus. Vaccinations at city-run sites will also be limited to city residents only.

For a full list of who is eligible in Chicago's Phase 1C, [click here](#).



Cook County COVID Vaccine Appointments Booked as Region Opens Up to 1B Plus

March 19, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-covid-vaccine-appointments-booked-as-region-opens-up-to-1b-plus/2466845/>

All first-dose appointments at Cook County's community vaccination locations were booked as of Friday afternoon as the county prepares to expand coronavirus vaccine eligibility to include those in Phase 1B Plus.

Registration for the appointments opened at 12 p.m. on the Cook County vaccine website. Appointments could also be made by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

But as of 3 p.m., the county's website displayed a message that read "There are no more first dose appointments available at Cook County Community Vaccination locations."

"Please be patient," the website states. "We anticipate vaccine supply to increase in the coming weeks."

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced Wednesday that it will move to Phase 1B Plus beginning Monday, expanding eligibility to residents 16 years of age or older with specific health conditions.

Those include cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions, immunocompromised from an organ transplant, obesity, pulmonary disease and sickle cell disease, as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women and smokers.

All vaccine providers in suburban Cook County have been asked to move to Phase 1B Plus, as will the state-supported mass vaccination sites in the area. Those sites are:

- The Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St. in South Holland
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave. in River Grove
- A former K-Mart at 1155 E Oakton St in Des Plaines

Those mass vaccination sites were previously only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County, but CCDPH said that beginning next week, they will receive additional vaccine supply to enable the sites to serve all eligible Illinois residents.

As such, the appointments made available on Friday will be open to Illinois residents who are qualified to get vaccinated in Phase 1B Plus as well as in Phase 1A or the earlier iteration of Phase 1B, which largely included certain essential workers.

CCDPH says it will continue to evaluate whether to move forward into Phase 1C "in the near future."

Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Thursday announced that all Illinois residents age 16 and older outside the city of Chicago will become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine next month.

For a complete look at where and how you can make an appointment in Illinois or where you can receive vaccine information for your area, [click here](#).

Vaccine eligibility expands in suburban Cook County as state reports 135K more shots administered

Mitchell Armentrout

March 19, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/3/19/22340076/illinois-coronavirus-cook-county-vaccine-eligible-cases-deaths-pritzker-reopen-covid-19-mar>

Public health officials on Friday announced 135,525 more COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered statewide as Cook County expands eligibility for the coveted doses.

The Cook County Department of Public Health started accepting appointments at noon Friday from people 16 and older with underlying health conditions. Vaccinations for the expanded pool of recipients will start Monday at the county's four mass vaccination sites. Other providers in the county have been asked to open registration as well.

Signups are open at vaccine.cookcountylil.gov. The county's signup hotline is open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. until 7 p.m., at (833) 308-1988.

The expansion means hundreds of thousands of additional suburban residents can try to snag appointments, including those with cancer, COPD, diabetes, heart disease, sickle cell disease, pulmonary disease and other such "co-morbidities" that put people at higher risk for severe coronavirus cases.

Under guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the county's newly eligible recipients also include pregnant women, smokers, organ transplant recipients and people who are obese.

Cook County's expansion marks the latest wrinkle in what has turned into a confusing web of overlapping eligibility criteria across the metro area.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker opened appointments last month statewide to people with underlying health conditions — what the Democratic governor dubbed "Phase 1B+" — but most Chicago-area health departments opted against that guidance due to scarce supply. Chicago receives its vaccine shipments from the federal government separately from the rest of the state, and Pritzker has given local health departments leeway to distribute doses as they see fit.

While the county finally enters Phase 1B+ Monday, city officials earlier this week said Chicago will bypass that intermediate phase in favor of a March 29 move to Phase 1C. Besides the letter, the only difference between those phases is that 1C includes an expanded pool of essential worker groups (hospitality, food service, information technology, media, communications and more).

Pritzker, meanwhile, will open eligibility for the rest of the state to all residents 16 and over starting April 12. The governor announced that Thursday as part of his new "bridge" plan to start gradually reopening businesses as early as next month, once 70% of seniors have gotten at least one dose.

The governor announced Friday that some groups of essential workers will be given the green light before then. Starting Monday, higher education staff, government workers and journalists will be able to try to set up appointments, and starting March 29, restaurant workers, construction workers and religious leaders will be eligible.

That still won't apply in Chicago and Cook County. Officials there haven't set a date on opening the full eligibility floodgates but have indicated they'll hedge closer to the directive from President Joe Biden urging states to open

appointments to all adults by May 1. Either way, phases 1B+ and 1C include the majority of Chicago and Cook County residents, officials said.

About 28% of adults statewide have gotten at least one shot so far, including about 60% of people 65 or older, according to Pritzker. The feds have delivered about 800,000 doses to Illinois this week. Those weekly allotments are expected to top 1 million by April.

Thursday's 135,525 administered doses marked Illinois' second-highest one-day shot total. On average over the past week, the state has vaccinated 102,775 people per day.

"COVID-19 has not gone away," Pritzker said at a Carbondale news conference. "Not yet a third of our population has been vaccinated, so although the light at the end of the tunnel is getting brighter, we're not there yet."

An even smaller portion of the population is fully vaccinated — about 1.7 million residents, or 13.3% of the state, after the latest doses administered Thursday.

The Illinois Department of Public Health also reported 2,380 new cases of the disease were diagnosed among 92,161 tests. That raised the state's rolling average positivity rate for a third straight day, now up to 2.5%. The infection rate had hit an all-time low of 2.1% last weekend.

And the virus claimed 12 more lives, including seven Chicago-area residents. Illinois' current average of 19 deaths per day over the past week has shrunk by more than half compared to mid-February.

COVID-19 hospital admissions remain near an all-time low, too, with 1,132 beds occupied as of Thursday night.

Over the past year, more than 1.2 million Illinoisans have been infected with COVID-19, and 21,034 of them have died.



Chicago Doctor Shares Experience Getting Vaccinated Against COVID-19 While Pregnant

Kate Chappell

March 20, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/chicago-doctor-shares-experience-getting-vaccinated-against-covid-19-while-pregnant/2467192/>

A Chicago doctor is sharing her experience with the COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant in hopes of encouraging others to explore their options.

Dr. Carmen Adams, a gynecologist at Cook County Health, received the first dose of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine at 36 weeks pregnant, and the second dose one week post-partum.

"I really only had just a little arm soreness, which is pretty similar to any other vaccine I've received," said Adams. "No fever or anything else."

Adams said receiving the vaccine was a personal choice, and it came down to weighing the risks and benefits.

"My own personal risk of being in the hospital and being pregnant, as pregnant women tend to have more risk of severe complications if they were to get COVID, as well as being an African American female being at higher risk," said Adams.

"[I was] thinking about those risks as well as the benefits of being protected from COVID, so ultimately I made the decision to get the vaccine," she said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pregnant women are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. However, there is limited data on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant people.

The CDC said any of the currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines can be offered to people who are pregnant or breastfeeding. For questions about getting vaccinated, officials recommend a conversation with a healthcare provider, but it is not required.

Adams gave birth to her first child, a boy, on Jan. 12. She and the baby are both doing well.

Adams said she hopes sharing her story will encourage other mothers to talk to their doctors about their personal risks and medical history. She said it's important as an African American physician to share her experience with those who may be skeptical.

"I really wanted to show that this vaccine is safe, and I think that when women see other women getting the vaccine while pregnant, if you see people in a similar situation as you, it helps to make you feel more reassured that it's safe and help dispel some fears," said Adams.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Cook County to prioritize vaccinations in 32 suburbs

The municipalities are located mostly in the west and south suburbs and are predominantly communities of color, the Cook County Department of Public Health said in a statement.

Sun-Times Wire

March 19, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/3/19/22340654/cook-county-to-prioritize-vaccinations-32-suburban-communities>

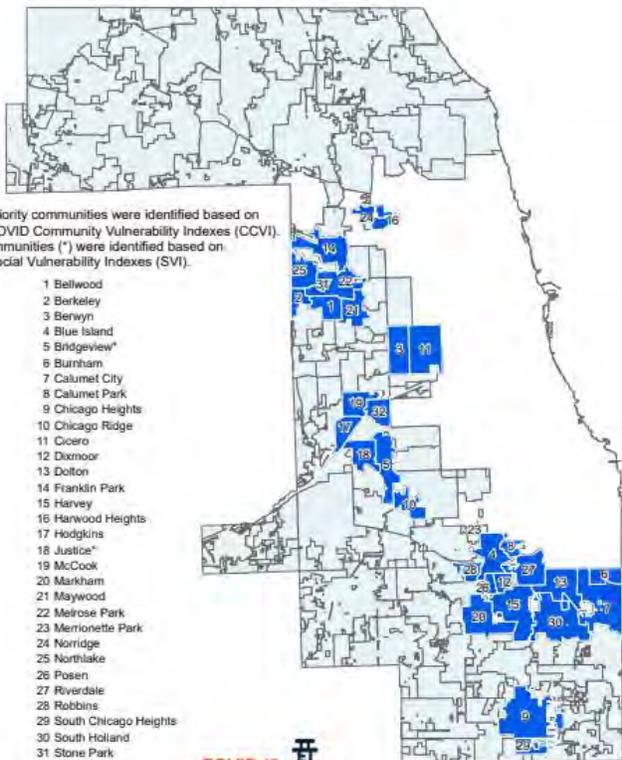
Cook County health officials will prioritize coronavirus vaccine appointments in more than two dozen of the hardest-hit suburbs to ensure equal access to the life-saving shots.

The 32 suburbs given high priority for shots were predominantly communities of color in the west and south suburbs, the Cook County Department of Public Health announced Friday.

The department used two risk-factor indexes to identify the municipalities most adversely impacted by COVID-19. Those indexes — the COVID-19 Vulnerability Index and Social Vulnerability Index — considered factors including socioeconomic, household composition and disability, minority status and language.

Residents can register for an appointment online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

CCDPH COVID-19 Priority Communities



Provisional Data
CCDPH Epidemiology Program, 03/18/2021

Cook County Department of Public Health

The health department's senior medical officer Dr. Kiran Joshi said there's a "well-deserved distrust in government and health care systems because of historically racist practices."

"This means we simply have to work harder to earn back that trust," Joshi said in the statement. "Our goal is not just herd immunity, but to do an even better job in communities of color and traditionally underserved regions of our county."

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said the county remains committed to distributing the vaccine in an equitable way, "with an emphasis on communities that have been most dramatically impacted by COVID."

About 70% of those 65 and older in suburban Cook County have received at least one vaccine dose, the health department said. On Monday, suburban Cook County will move to phase 1b+ of the vaccine rollout, which includes individuals 16 years and older with underlying health conditions.

The 32 communities given high priority are:

- Bellwood
- Berkeley
- Berwyn
- Blue Island
- Bridgeview
- Burnham
- Calumet City
- Calumet Park
- Chicago Heights
- Chicago Ridge
- Cicero
- Dixmoor
- Dolton
- Franklin Park
- Harvey
- Harwood Heights
- Hodgkins
- Justice
- McCook
- Markham
- Maywood
- Melrose
- Merrionette Park
- Norridge
- Northlake
- Posen
- Riverdale
- Robbins
- South Chicago Heights
- South Holland
- Stone Park
- Summit



Cook County to prioritize vaccinations in 32 suburbs

Sun-Times Wire
March 19, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-to-prioritize-vaccinations-in-32-suburbs>

Cook County health officials will prioritize coronavirus vaccine appointments in more than two dozen of the hardest-hit suburbs to ensure equal access to the life-saving shots.

The 32 suburbs given high priority for shots were predominantly communities of color in the west and south suburbs, the Cook County Department of Public Health announced Friday.

The department used two risk-factor indexes to identify the municipalities most adversely impacted by COVID-19. Those indexes — the COVID-19 Vulnerability Index and Social Vulnerability Index — considered factors including socioeconomic, household composition and disability, minority status and language.

Residents can register for an appointment online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

The health department's senior medical officer Dr. Kiran Joshi said there's a "well-deserved distrust in government and health care systems because of historically racist practices."

"This means we simply have to work harder to earn back that trust," Joshi said in the statement. "Our goal is not just herd immunity, but to do an even better job in communities of color and traditionally underserved regions of our county."

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said the county remains committed to distributing the vaccine in an equitable way, "with an emphasis on communities that have been most dramatically impacted by COVID."

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Thousands More Illinois Residents Eligible For COVID Vaccine Beginning Monday, But Different Rules For Different Jurisdictions Leave Many Confused

Steven Graves
March 22, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/22/illinois-cook-county-covid-vaccine-eligibility-rules/>

Thousands more people are eligible to sign up for the COVID-19 vaccine beginning Monday in suburban Cook County and around Illinois.

But as CBS 2's Steven Graves reported Sunday night, confusion over the process to get a shot is growing with more openings.

As it is now, confusion is rampant over the different eligibility rules in different areas. But one doctor said more vaccine will hopefully aid in the situation.

Come Monday, if you are in higher education, a government worker, or a member of the media, Illinois is opening up vaccines to you.

In suburban Cook County – if you are a part of 1B+ – 16 and older with underlying conditions like cancer diabetes or pregnancy – Monday is also your day.

But Chicago doesn't expand beyond seniors and essential workers until next week.

This is a lot to take in – especially if you qualify.

"There's just a mass amount of confusion," said Vaccine Angel Caryn Davidson.

"So it's complicated and it's kind of hard to get around the system," said Vaccine Angel Sarah Summers.

As Vaccine Angels, Davidson and Summers help other people around Illinois find appointments. Each eligibility phase opens a new set of issues booking slots under state, city, county, and pharmacies' guidelines.

"And then if that varies from pharmacy to pharmacy," Davidson said.

For example, if you go on Walgreens' site for eligibility, it directs you to state guidelines.

Jewel-Osco said it is a combination of state and local county rules.

And then there are those county mass-vaccination sites open for Illinois residents.

"But then other counties, you have to be part of the county," Summers said.

Starting on Monday, suburban Cook County will open their sites to anyone across the state. They are instructing pharmacies it provides with doses to expand to 1B-plus.

“I hear you loud and clear on the concerns about confusion,” said Dr. Kiran Joshi of the Cook County Department of Public Health. “We don’t want that.”

So, bottom line is that Cook County said if you’re eligible and sign up, they’ll try to vaccinate you.

Doctors said there is more capacity to take people after increased state and federal resources.

“Our focus is always on the residents of our jurisdiction,” Joshi said. “So then I think it behooves us in the spirit of cooperation to open up our sites to residents outside of suburban Cook County.”

Cook County also plans to join Illinois in offering vaccine appointments to everyone sixteen and older April 12. Again, the City of Chicago has its own rules.



COVID vaccine: Cook County to open new Forest Park vaccination site as Illinois, Indiana expand eligibility

More than 900 vaccine locations open statewide, including at CVS, Walgreens and Jewel-Osco

Jesse Kirsch and Craig Wall
March 22, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/illinois-covid-vaccine-forest-park-mass-vaccination-site-walgreens-cvs/10440104/>

COVID-19 vaccine eligibility is expanding in Illinois and Indiana and Cook County announced plans for a new mass vaccination site in Forest Park.

Starting Monday, higher education staff, government workers and members of the media are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines at more than 900 locations, including at Walgreens, CVS and Jewel-Osco.

On Friday, a former big box store in Forest Park will be up and running as Cook County's second largest mass vaccination site coordinated with effort with the Army National Guard.

"This location which will be able to administer up to 1,000 doses per day, at launch, and then over 2,000 soon after," Gov. JB Pritzker said.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said it will be able to increase that to 5,000, depending on supply. The goal of the site is to vaccinate those most in need.

"If we are going to put an end to this pandemic and resume our regular lives, we need to prioritize the vaccine for those who are most at risk and marginalized from access to medical care," said Rep. Emanuel "Chris" Welch, Illinois House Speaker.

Gov. Pritzker spoke to concerns about eligible people still seeking a vaccine.

"It is true that we don't have enough vaccine anywhere in the nation to satisfy demand," Pritzker said. "However, we are not in the next phase of eligibility for everyone 16 and over. Yes, we have three more weeks, and during this period there are a number of particular clinics focused on those 65 and over."

He also reported that Illinois continues to make progress towards further reopening the state under the bridge plan announced last week, noting that as of Monday, 64% of seniors have now been vaccinated.

When that number reaches 70%, which could happen in about a week, capacity limits for many venues will be expanded.

Pritzker has set a date of April 12 to open vaccines up to all residents over 16.

In Cook County, people in Group 1B+ are now eligible, which includes anyone 16 and older with certain health conditions. The county is also now receiving extra doses for its state-run mass vaccination sites so that it can offer shots to all Illinois residents in Groups 1A, 1B and 1B+.

Just a week ago, Preckwinkle said vaccine supply wasn't predictable enough to know when 1B+ would be possible, so it is certainly promising news to see the county now move into that phase just days later with more shots on the way.

Chicago, meanwhile, will be moving to group 1C next Monday. Starting Tuesday, the United Center will be able to offer drive-thru as well as walk-up options for those getting vaccinated at the super site.

Residents who don't have access to or need assistance navigating online services can call the toll-free IDPH hotline at 833-621-1284 to book an appointment. The hotline is open 7 days a week from 6 a.m. to midnight with agents available in English and Spanish.

For the latest COVID-19 vaccination information in suburban Cook County, [cookcountypublichealth.org](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org). To register to receive an appointment, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

Starting Monday in Indiana, people over 40 will be eligible for the vaccine. The age limit had been 45.

Health care workers, long-term care residents, teachers, and other school workers will also be eligible regardless of age. In Indiana, you can call 211 to make an appointment.



Fifth Cook County COVID Mass Vaccination Site Opening in Forest Park

March 22, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/fifth-cook-county-covid-mass-vaccination-site-opening-in-forest-park/2467868/>

Cook County is opening its fifth mass COVID vaccination site Monday in suburban Forest Park.

The site will be located at 7630 West Roosevelt Rd in Forest Park. State and county officials will mark the opening at a news conference at 9:30 a.m. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, Gov. J.B. Pritzker and Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch will be in attendance. The event can be watched live in the video player above.

Cook County moved to Phase 1B Plus of its COVID vaccinations on Monday, expanding eligibility to residents 16 years of age or older with specific health conditions like cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, diabetes, heart conditions, immunocompromised from an organ transplant, obesity, pulmonary disease and sickle cell disease, as well as individuals with disabilities, pregnant women and smokers.

The Cook County Department of Public Health released about 12,500 first-dose appointments on Friday ahead of the eligibility expansion, all of which were booked within a few hours.

All vaccine providers in suburban Cook County have been asked to move to Phase 1B Plus beginning Monday, as have the state-supported mass vaccination sites in the area. The four previously opened sites are:

- The Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St. in South Holland
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave. in River Grove
- A former K-Mart at 1155 E Oakton St in Des Plaines

The mass vaccination sites were previously only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County, but CCDPH said that beginning this week, they will receive additional vaccine supply to enable the sites to serve all eligible Illinois residents.

As such, available appointments at those sites moving forward will be open to all Illinois residents who are qualified to get vaccinated in Phase 1B Plus as well as in Phase 1A or the earlier iteration of Phase 1B, which largely included certain essential workers.

CCDPH said it will continue to evaluate whether to move forward into Phase 1C "in the near future."

Pritzker [on Thursday announced](#) that all Illinois residents age 16 and older outside the city of Chicago will become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine next month. The following day, he announced that [more essential workers would become eligible](#) ahead of that expansion.



Cook County health officials identify 32 communities in need of more vaccination resources

March 22, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/913393>

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, talks about what they're doing to make sure underserved communities are getting access to the vaccine.



New Forest Park Vaccination Site Opens To All Illinoisans Friday

The IL National Guard will begin giving shots in Forest Park's former HOB0 store March 26, and rural vaccine clinics will start this week.

J. Ryne Danielson

March 22, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/forestpark/new-forest-park-vaccination-site-opens-all-illinoisans-friday>

A new mass vaccination site in Forest Park will be open to all Illinoisans, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Monday. The Illinois National Guard will begin giving shots in the former HOB0 store on Friday, adding to more than half a million vaccinations already administered by Guardsmen across the state.

Officials hope the new site, along with recent additions at South Suburban College, Tinley Park Convention Center, Triton College and the former Des Plaines K-Mart, should make it easier for Illinoisans to get a shot in the coming weeks.

"Since day one, our Illinois COVID-19 Vaccination Plan has been an all-hands-on-deck effort, and as the national supply has expanded, so too has the number of locations Illinoisans can get vaccinated," the governor said in a statement.

"With this location in Forest Park, we have now strategically established three of our largest mass vaccination sites – open to all Illinoisans – at Tinley Park in the southwest, this new site in the western suburbs, and Des Plaines in the northwest, meaning that our highest density Cook and Collar Counties communities all have a convenient state-supported option for getting vaccinated."

Pritzker thanked the Illinois National Guard and health care professionals across the state, citing their "amazing progress" toward opening up vaccinations to all adults starting April 12.

Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, a Hillside Democrat, said the new vaccination site would ensure community members of all races have access to the life-saving shot.

"It is critical that we move as quickly as possible to allow our most vulnerable residents to get vaccinated to defend themselves against the virus," she said. "There is no other pathway to getting families back together and our lives back to normal than ensuring Illinois residents get the opportunity to be vaccinated."

State health officials said they are coordinating with state and local health departments, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and the National Guard to identify more locations for vaccine clinics in the weeks ahead of the April 12 expansion of eligibility to anyone over 16 years of age. As of today, anyone in Phase 1a, 1b or 1b plus, including higher education staff and media personnel, can get shots at multiple sites in Sangamon, Jackson, Winnebago, Madison, St. Clair, Adams, Kane, DuPage, and Cook Counties.

"Getting as many people to trust and believe in the vaccine's power is important and half of the battle. Illinois must have trusted partners like Pastor Winston and his team," said Representative LaShawn Ford, a Chicago Democrat. "The Governor should be commended for bringing this site to Forest Park, and I will work with the team to get the word out about the availability of this life-saving shot in the arm."

Over the weekend, the state National Guard surpassed 500,000 shots given out at more than 39 vaccination sites across the state. More than 1,400 Guard troops working in 86 teams took part in the effort, officials said.

"It has been a historic year for the Illinois National Guard and I could not be more proud of the Soldiers and Airmen who have answered the call to duty," said Illinois National Guard commander Maj. Gen. Rich Neely. "We are also grateful to the Guard service members' and support of the families, employers, and universities and colleges. Without their understanding and flexibility it would be very difficult for our troops to serve their communities, state and nation."

In addition to state mass vaccination sites, the National Guard is also running equity-focused vaccine programs in partnership with local health departments in Cook, Lake, DeKalb, McHenry, St. Clair, Jackson, Sangamon, Madison, Winnebago, Rock Island, McLean, Grundy and Vermilion counties and the Southern Seven Health Department. The Guard is working in Lake, Vermilion, McLean, Rock Island, DeKalb and Grundy counties to improve local vaccination rates, and has established one-stop, single-shot Johnson & Johnson rural vaccination clinics to reduce travel and time barriers for rural residents.

The rural Vaccination Program will visit five counties this week, providing shots to about 2,700 people, state health officials said.

Rural Vaccination Pilot Program dates:

March 22: Oil Belt Christian Service Camp, Clay County

March 24: Edwards County — Appointments are booked through Wabash County Health Dept. at 618-263-3873

March 25: Lawrence County, Central Christian Church — call 812-213-0199

March 26: Cumberland County, Toledo Christian Church — call 217-849-3211, Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

March 27: Edgar County, Paris Cooperative High School — register online or call 217-294-2729

March 29-30: Stephenson County, Highland Community College — register online or call 815-599-8412

In all, there are now more than 900 public vaccination sites across Illinois, including local hospitals, pharmacies and county health departments. For help making an appointment, **call the state Vaccine Appointment Call Center at 1-833-621-1284**. The call center is available from 6 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. Agents will help callers navigate online registration sites or make an appointment on the caller's behalf if they are unable to get online.

New cases of COVID-19 rose by more than 22% last week in Illinois

Marni Pyke

March 23, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210322/new-cases-of-covid-19-rose-by-more-than-22-last-week-in-illinois>

New cases of COVID-19 have risen by more than 22% in the last seven days, Illinois Department of Public Health data showed Monday.

Daily cases from March 16 to Monday totaled 12,970, or 1,853 a day, compared to 10,596 infections, or 1,514 a day, March 9-15.

There have been fluctuations in caseloads recently with tallies from early this month reaching 11,678, or 1,668 a day, March 2-8. But experts are watching the numbers as the state loosens restrictions on activities and cases of more contagious variants of COVID-19 inch up.

The IDPH recorded 143 COVID-19 variant cases Sunday: 135 of a COVID-19 mutation originating in the United Kingdom, five of a Brazilian version, and three of a South African variant. That contrasts with 126 reported Tuesday: 120 of the United Kingdom variant and three each of the Brazilian and South African ones.

However, the state is on track to surpass 5 million COVID-19 vaccines in arms this week.

On Sunday, 41,343 more people received COVID-19 shots. The seven-day average is now 92,148; typically, vaccinations drop over the weekend.

The federal government has delivered 5,756,795 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 4,747,845 shots have been administered.

So far, 1,771,103 people -- 13.9% of Illinois' 12.7 million population -- have been fully vaccinated. Nationwide, a total of 13.5% people have been fully inoculated.

Vaccines currently used in Illinois are two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna versions and a one-dose shot by Johnson & Johnson.

AstraZeneca, which has also produced a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine used in other countries, announced Monday that advanced trials in the U.S. showed it was 100% effective at preventing severe disease and 79% effective at preventing mild cases.

The Cook County Health Department participated in the trials.

"It's definitely great news," said infectious disease expert Dr. Temitope Oyedele, Cook County Health's principal site investigator on the study. "I think from the beginning everybody said it's going to take more than one or two vaccines to help make it out of the pandemic. (AstraZeneca's vaccine) is very effective at preventing the most important thing, which is severe disease."

AstraZeneca's vaccine had caused concerns it was linked to blood clots, but European medical authorities last week ruled it was "not associated with an increase in the overall risk of blood clots." There were no serious side effects in U.S. trials, Oyedele said.

The vaccine is easier to store than Pfizer's or Moderna's, Oyedele said. It's expected AstraZeneca could apply to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for emergency approval next month and "hopefully by the end of April it will be authorized," he said.

Officials also announced 1,220 new cases of COVID-19 and 22 more deaths from the respiratory disease, Illinois hospitals were treating 1,182 COVID-19 patients Sunday night.

The state's seven-day average positivity rate is now at 2.6%.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,223,083, and 21,103 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 47,374 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



AstraZeneca vaccine prevents 100% of hospitalizations: study

March 22, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/chicago-wont-open-a-24-hour-vaccination-site-yet-arwardy-says>

FOX 32 told you about the success of AstraZeneca's vaccine study in the United States. Now, we talk with Dr. Temitope Oyedele of Cook County Health about it.



AstraZeneca COVID Vaccine Studied in Cook County Ahead of Potential Request for FDA Clearance

In the U.S., Cook County was one of 88 “sites” used to study the vaccine on participants.

Chris Hush
March 22, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/astrazeneca-covid-vaccine-studied-in-cook-county-ahead-of-potential-request-for-fda-clearance/2468416/>

A fourth coronavirus vaccine expected to become a player in the fight against COVID-19 when it's submitted for emergency use authorization with the FDA in the next few weeks was studied in Cook County as part of that process.

New data released this week shows the AstraZeneca vaccine is 79% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection, and is 100% effective at preventing severe infection and hospitalization.

In the United States, Cook County was one of 88 “sites” used to study the vaccine on participants.

Cook County Health's Dr. Temitope Oyedele, the principal investigator of the local trial, says more than 250 people participated, half of whom were minorities.

“They told me stories about how they interacted with people that had confirmed COVID,” Oyedele said. “They didn't get sick.”

The vaccine has been under intense scrutiny worldwide after reports of blood clots in patients who had received the treatment. Several European countries suspended its use, but most have resumed after further study.

“There were a very small number of cases that were reported. There really hasn't been a proven link that this vaccine is what caused those,” Oyedele said. “If you hold any dose of AstraZeneca, around the world, it could be a potential life that is lost due to COVID.”

Three other vaccines are already being administered under emergency use authorizations in the U.S.: Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Both Pfizer and Moderna use messenger RNA (mRNA) to produce an immune response.

Both require two doses, three to four weeks apart, and are at least 94% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine doesn't use mRNA and could be an option for those with allergies to the first two. It's a viral vector vaccine, technology that's been studied since the 1970s. It requires just one shot and is 72% effective in the U.S. at preventing COVID-19 infection.

AstraZeneca uses similar viral vector technology to produce an immune response in the body but requires two shots 12 weeks apart, and has been found to be 79% effective against infection.

More importantly, studies showed all four of these vaccines were 86% to 100% effective at preventing severe COVID-19 infection and hospitalization.

The company is expected to submit an application for emergency use authorization in April, but it is unclear when that application will take place.



Illinois amplía elegibilidad para las vacunas: lo que sabemos y lo que no

March 22, 2021

<https://www.telemundochicago.com/noticias/local/elegibilidad-de-la-vacuna-covid-de-illinois-se-extendera-esto-es-lo-que-sabemos-y-lo-que-no/2161654/>

La elegibilidad para la vacuna COVID-19 se ampliará a todos los residentes de Illinois mayores de 16 años fuera de Chicago en abril, anunció el gobernador J.B. Pritzker.

Aquí hay un vistazo a lo que sabemos sobre la expansión y las preguntas que quedan:

¿Quién es actualmente elegible para la vacuna COVID en Illinois?

Illinois entró en lo que se llama la Fase 1B Plus de su plan de lanzamiento de vacunas a fines del mes pasado, ampliando la elegibilidad a personas con ciertas condiciones médicas de alto riesgo y comorbilidades.

Eso se suma a los trabajadores de atención médica que ya son elegibles y el personal y los residentes del centro de atención a largo plazo que calificaron en la Fase 1A, más los trabajadores esenciales de primera línea, así como todos los residentes de 65 años o más que se volvieron elegibles en la iteración anterior de la Fase 1B .

Pero cuando Illinois entró en la Fase 1B Plus, varios departamentos de salud locales, sistemas hospitalarios y condados del área de Chicago dijeron que no se expandirían junto con el estado debido a la baja oferta. Eso incluyó a Chicago y el condado de Cook suburbano, entre otros, que permanecen en la Fase 1B.

¿Cuándo se ampliará la elegibilidad para la vacuna COVID en Illinois?

Pritzker anunció el jueves que todos los residentes de Illinois mayores de 16 años fuera de la ciudad de Chicago serán elegibles para recibir la vacuna COVID-19 el 12 de abril.

"En esa fecha, todos los sitios de vacunación masiva apoyados por el estado, los departamentos de salud locales, las farmacias asociadas, en resumen, todas las jurisdicciones que reciben la vacuna de la asignación del estado de Illinois, recibirán instrucciones para pasar a una elegibilidad generalizada", dijo la oficina de Pritzker en una declaración.

¿Quiénes serán elegibles el 12 de abril?

Los funcionarios de salud de Illinois dicen que todos los residentes del estado mayores de 16 años serán elegibles para recibir la vacuna COVID-19, pero eso no incluirá a los residentes de la ciudad de Chicago.

¿Alguien más será elegible para la vacuna COVID antes del 12 de abril?

Chicago entrará en la Fase 1C de las vacunas COVID el 29 de marzo, ampliando la elegibilidad a trabajadores más esenciales como meseros, camareros, estilistas y más, junto con residentes que tienen problemas de salud subyacentes.

El condado suburbano de Cook ampliará la elegibilidad para la vacuna a la Fase 1B Plus a partir del lunes, abriendo citas para los residentes con las mismas condiciones médicas de alto riesgo que califican que el estado.

Pritzker dijo el jueves que "puede haber" ciertas poblaciones a las que el estado permitirá que sean elegibles por separado antes del 12 de abril.

"Estamos buscando permitir grupos específicos desde ahora hasta entonces", dijo Pritzker. "Un ejemplo de eso podrían ser los empleados estatales, podría ser cierto ... trabajadores esenciales vulnerables que aún no han sido incluidos en esos grupos anunciados".

Si seré elegible el 12 de abril, ¿puedo programar una cita para vacunas ahora?

"Los residentes de Illinois que actualmente no son elegibles para recibir la vacuna no pueden programar una cita para una fecha futura", dijo la oficina de Pritzker en un comunicado anunciando la expansión, y agregó: "Se alienta a los residentes a ser pacientes en los días y semanas posteriores al 12 de abril ya que las citas pueden ser limitadas".

¿Qué pasó con la Fase 1C en Illinois?

Pritzker dijo el jueves que "nunca se ha anunciado una Fase 1C para el estado", pero ha hecho referencia a una posible Fase 1C en múltiples ocasiones. Más recientemente, dijo el lunes que no había "anuncios todavía sobre cómo se vería 1C", y señaló solo que el estado se abriría a todos antes de lo que pensaba que la gente esperaba.

El plan de vacunación del estado en el sitio web del Departamento de Salud Pública de Illinois ha enumerado durante meses un marco preliminar de la Fase 1C basado en recomendaciones federales. Esos borradores de directrices incluían aproximadamente 1.5 millones de trabajadores esenciales en una posible Fase 1C que aún no eran elegibles en fases anteriores, en campos como servicio de alimentos, construcción, finanzas, energía, medios de comunicación, seguridad pública y más.

Ahora, excluyendo cualquier población aún por anunciar que pueda ser elegible por separado antes de la expansión del 12 de abril, esos trabajadores esenciales serán elegibles al mismo tiempo que los aproximadamente 900,000 otros residentes de Illinois previamente programados para la Fase 2.

¿Por qué Chicago no está incluida en la expansión?

Chicago recibe su suministro de vacunas del gobierno federal asignado por separado del estado. Como tal, Chicago opera en su propio marco y horario y no abrirá las vacunas para todos los residentes de la ciudad el 12 de abril.

"Si bien tenemos la esperanza de poder ampliar la elegibilidad para incluir a todos los residentes relativamente pronto, la capacidad de hacerlo dependerá del suministro de vacunas", dijo una portavoz de la alcaldesa Lori Lightfoot en un comunicado el jueves. "Hemos establecido un sistema de distribución de vacunas integral y eficiente y estaremos listos cuando aumente el suministro de vacunas, y si eso sucede antes de lo esperado, es posible que podamos ajustar nuestro cronograma. Por ahora, continuaremos dando prioridad a los trabajadores esenciales y las personas mayores, y esperamos pasar a la Fase 1C en una semana y media".

Pritzker reconoció el jueves que la ciudad opera independientemente del estado, pero dijo que esperaba que los funcionarios de Chicago avancen rápidamente.

"Mire, la ciudad de Chicago recibe envíos separados del gobierno federal del resto del estado", dijo. "Representa el 21% de la población del estado de Illinois, la ciudad de Chicago lo hace, y puede tomar decisiones por sí misma; tiene la capacidad de hacerlo".

"Espero que avance rápidamente hacia una apertura aún mayor. Eso es lo que estamos haciendo en el resto del estado de Illinois. Y creo que será difícil para la ciudad si la gente ... que vive más allá de las fronteras de la ciudad pueden conseguir una cita para ir a vacunarse, pero es posible que las personas que están dentro de la ciudad no puedan hacerlo porque no lo han abierto".

¿Quién es actualmente elegible para vacunarse en Chicago?

A partir del jueves, solo las personas en la Fase 1A y la Fase 1B son elegibles para vacunarse en Chicago. La Fase 1A incluye a los trabajadores de la salud y los residentes y el personal de las instalaciones de atención a largo plazo, mientras que la Fase 1B incluye a ciertos trabajadores esenciales de primera línea, así como a todos los residentes de Chicago de 65 años o más.

La ciudad pasará a la Fase 1C a fines de marzo, ampliando la elegibilidad a más trabajadores esenciales y residentes de Chicago con ciertas condiciones de salud que califiquen, aunque esas condiciones diferirán de las pautas del estado.

¿Cuándo aumentará Chicago la elegibilidad?

Chicago entrará en la Fase 1C de las vacunas COVID el 29 de marzo, ampliando la elegibilidad a todos los trabajadores y residentes esenciales restantes que tengan condiciones de salud subyacentes que califiquen.

La comisionada del Departamento de Salud Pública de Chicago, la Dra. Allison Arwady, dijo durante una transmisión en vivo de Facebook el jueves por la mañana que la ciudad "seguramente se expandirá a todos" para el 1 de mayo, que es la fecha en que el presidente Joe Biden dijo la semana pasada que dirigiría todas las jurisdicciones. poner la vacuna a disposición de todos los adultos.

Arwady no ofreció una fecha específica para cuando la ciudad expandirá completamente las vacunas. Los funcionarios de Chicago habían estimado previamente que la ciudad entraría en la Fase 2, que abre la elegibilidad a todos los habitantes de Chicago de 16 años o más, el 31 de mayo, aunque esa línea de tiempo pondría a la ciudad atrasada tanto en el estado como en la fecha límite de Biden del 1 de mayo.

¿Está Illinois listo para ampliar la elegibilidad a todos los adultos?

Pritzker dijo el jueves que creía que los sistemas de software utilizados por los departamentos de salud pública estatales y locales estarían listos para la expansión y agregó que los funcionarios de Illinois han alentado a los 97 departamentos de salud del estado a abrir citas "tan pronto como sepan que la oferta, que hasta ahora el gobierno federal ha garantizado un mínimo y lo han cumplido en todo momento".

La oficina de Pritzker dijo que el gobierno federal entregó más de 800,000 dosis a proveedores y agencias en todo el estado esta semana, casi ocho veces las 109,000 dosis que Illinois recibió en su primer envío en diciembre. Su oficina dijo que las proyecciones indicaban que el estado comenzaría a recibir más de un millón de dosis por semana en abril.

Pero los funcionarios señalaron que todas las vacunas en el estado se mantendrán solo con cita previa, y agregaron que "concertar una cita puede llevar tiempo".

¿Cuántas vacunas ha realizado Illinois hasta ahora?

Funcionarios de Illinois dijeron el jueves que el estado ha administrado más de 4.3 millones de dosis de las tres vacunas COVID-19 disponibles desde que comenzaron las vacunas en diciembre, actualmente con un promedio de alrededor de 100,000 dosis por día a medida que el suministro ha aumentado.

Social Media Dashboard



Insights and Activity Report

February 23, 2021 – March 22, 2021



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Social Media Summary

February – March Activity

During February 23 – March 22, 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 – 31 posts

<https://www.facebook.com/Cookcountyhhs/>

Instagram – 19 posts (*does NOT include stories*)

<https://www.instagram.com/cookcountyhealth/>

Twitter – 33 (*includes retweets*)

<https://twitter.com/CookCtyHealth>

LinkedIn – 12 posts

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cook-county-health/>

Social Media Insights

As of March 22

Twitter (28-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **45.6K**
- Profile visits: **4,287**
- Mentions: **141**
- Followers: **3,898** (up **202**)

LinkedIn (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **22.7K**
- Unique visitors: **590** (up **23%**)
- Followers: **6,402** (up **141**)

Facebook (28-Day Summary)

- Post reach: **360.5K** (up **934%**)
- Post engagement: **15.0K** (up **141%**)
- Page views: **4,116** (up **96%**)
- Page likes: **5,218** (up **195**)
- Page followers: **6,200** (up **233**)

Instagram (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **13,908**
- Reach: **1,524**
- Profile visits: **600**
- Followers: **2,344** (up **59**)

Top Social Media Posts

February 23 – March 22



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **2.2K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **156**

The image shows a Facebook post from Cook County Health. The post is a live stream announcement for a panel celebrating Black History Month. The video thumbnail features the text "Stream Is Starting Soon" and "Celebrating Black History Month, a Conversation with African Americans in Medicine". The post has 2,193 people reached, 347 engagements, and 156 reactions, comments, and shares. The analytics panel on the right provides a breakdown of these metrics.

Performance for Your Post

2,193 People Reached		
989 3-Second Video Views		
156 Reactions, Comments & Shares		
63 Like	61 On Post	2 On Shares
21 Love	18 On Post	3 On Shares
69 Comments	58 On Post	11 On Shares
7 Shares	7 On Post	0 On Shares
191 Post Clicks		
46 Clicks to Play	7 Link Clicks	138 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
3 Hide Post	3 Hide All Posts	
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page	

Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts

Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **9.8K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **112**
- 3-second Views: **5.5K**

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from Cook County Health, published on March 15. The post features a video titled "My Shot - Cook County, this is our shot to beat COVID-19. Are you taking it?" with a "Learn More" button. The video shows a man, Lonnie, in a shop setting. The post has 9,789 people reached, 1,518 engagements, and 112 reactions, comments, and shares. The performance analytics on the right show 5,585 3-second video views, 72 likes, 68 on-post reactions, 4 on-share reactions, 5 love reactions, 5 on-post comments, 11 on-share comments, 13 comments, 22 shares, 22 on-post shares, 0 on-share shares, 1,407 post clicks, 208 clicks to play, 441 link clicks, and 758 other clicks. The post was boosted on March 16, 2021, by Sean Joy McNamara, with 8.7K people reached and 436 link clicks. The boost finishes in 3 days. Negative feedback options include 0 hide posts, 0 hide all posts, 0 report as spam, and 0 unlike page.

Performance for Your Post		
9,789 People Reached		
5,585 3-Second Video Views		
112 Reactions, Comments & Shares		
72 Like	68 On Post	4 On Shares
5 Love	5 On Post	0 On Shares
13 Comments	11 On Post	2 On Shares
22 Shares	22 On Post	0 On Shares
1,407 Post Clicks		
208 Clicks to Play	441 Link Clicks	758 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
0 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts	
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page	
Reported stats may be delayed from what appears on posts		

Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

- Impressions: **886**
- Reach: **791**
- Profile visits from post: **19**



Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

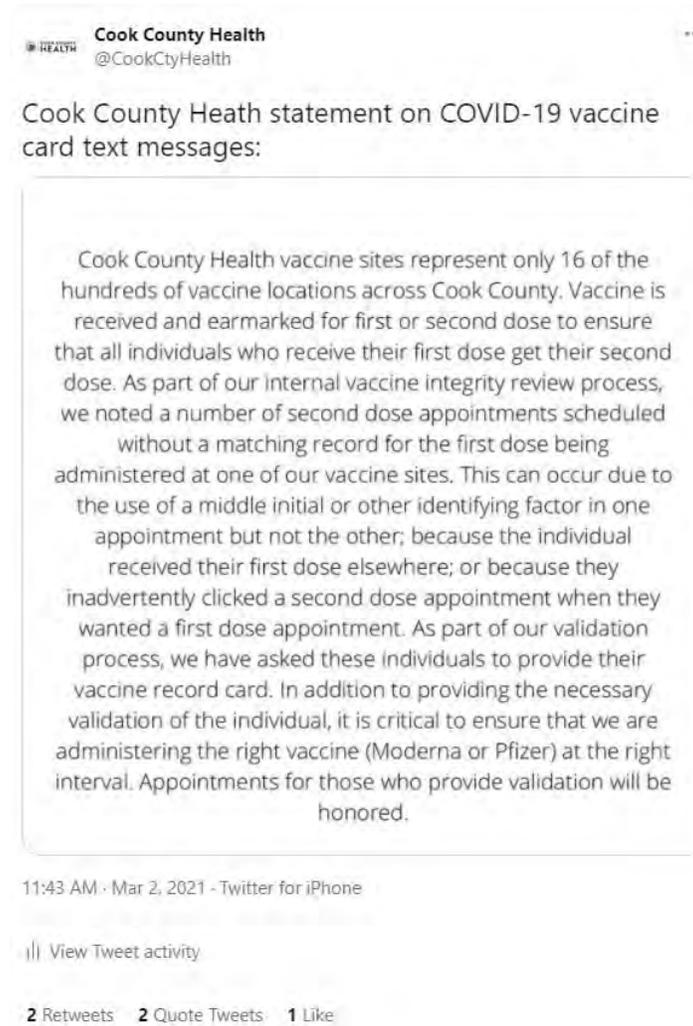
- Impressions: **893**
- Reach: **728**
- Profile visits from post: **4**



Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **2,521**
- Total engagements: **303**



Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **3,884**
- Total engagements: **190**

 **Cook County Health**
@CookCityHealth

On Saturday, Congresswoman [@janschakowsky](#), Congressman [@RepSchneider](#), Cook County Board President [@ToniPreckwinkle](#) and [@CmsrBritton](#) toured and visited with those receiving the COVID-19 vaccines at the Des Plaines site. More than 2,500 people were vaccinated on Saturday.



5:42 PM · Mar 13, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

 View Tweet activity

6 Retweets 17 Likes

Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **4,632**
- Clicks: **648**
- Reactions: **118**



Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **3,066**
- Clicks: **190**
- Reactions: **86**

