



COOK COUNTY HEALTH

ISRAEL ROCHA, JR.
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Addendum to slide deck)
April 30, 2021

Recognition

Quarterly Daisy Award

The DAISY Foundation was established in 1999 by members of the family of Patrick Barnes. He was 33 years old and died of complications of the auto-immune disease ITP. Like many families we see every day who go through this kind of horrific loss, the Barnes family wanted to do something positive to honor the very special man Patrick was. So...right after Pat's death, they came up with DAISY – an acronym for Diseases Attacking the Immune System. As they brainstormed what The DAISY Foundation would actually do, they kept coming back to the one positive thing they held on to during Pat's 8-week illness: the extraordinary care he and they received from Pat's nurses. The family was very impressed by the clinical care Pat's nurses provided, but what really overwhelmed them was the compassion and kindness that his nurses brought to Pat's bedside day in and day out. The nurses' sensitivity made a great difference in the Barnes' experience, and they wanted to say Thank You to nurses for the extraordinary care they provide patients and families every day. So Pat's family created The DAISY Award® for Extraordinary Nurses. What started out as a thank you from their family to nurses has grown into a meaningful recognition program embraced by healthcare organizations around the world. We are very proud to partner with DAISY as we have extraordinary nurses here at Cook County Health.

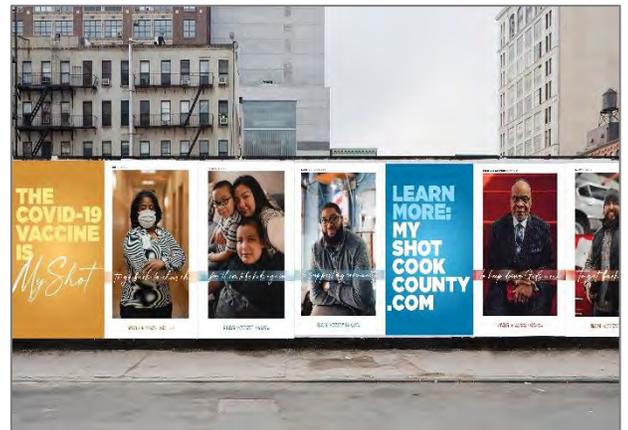
This quarter's Daisy Award winner is **Anu Thomas**, CN1 on 6 South. The patient's nomination is below:
"Let's see where do I start....Ms. Thomas is professional, always had a smile and would always be on time with anything I asked for. She always did what she said she would do and did it right away not an hour later. I thought about leaving a couple of times, but I didn't because of her. CCH should be very proud and honored that they have a nurse like Nurse Anu. Nurse Anu made my long stay at CCH relaxing and somewhat enjoyable... Nurse Anu and her professionalism and personality made me think about how I want to live my life - the rest of my life. Nurse Anu made me realize ...what kind of person I want to be....CCH is very lucky to have Nurse Anu. She is a great person and an extra extraordinary nurse. Nurse Anu deserves the DAISY award because she is a one in a million kind of nurse....Nurse Anu, I am sure you have touched many lives in your time as a nurse, I know you have touched mine... Thank you for your kind, courteous, professional self...Thank you!"

Activities and Announcements

COVID-19

- Cook County Health has administered more than 650,000 doses of COVID vaccine to date.
- In addition to the six 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 2 of its vaccine public education campaign this month. Phase 2 includes hyper-focused messaging to encourage 18-34 year-olds who are among the most hesitant to obtain a vaccine as soon as they are able. Phase 2

includes popular social media platforms such as TikTik and Snapchat as well as organic social media working with community-based organizations and impact art installations at various locations throughout the county. Phase 2 will continue through August.



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 April 15, CCH’s Fresh Truck partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD) resulted in 323 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 38,208 individuals, representing 126,575 household members, totaling more than 835,500 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 May include the following ACHN Health Centers.

May 6 – **Prieto Health Center** – 2424 S. Pulaski Road, Chicago, IL 60623

May 11 – **Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center** – 500 W. 51st Street, Chicago, IL 60615

May 20 – **Arlington Heights** – 3520 N. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60004

May 21 – **CORE Center** - 2020 W. Harrison Street, Chicago, IL 60612

May 25 – **Logan Square Health Center** - 2840 W. Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, IL 60647

May 27 – **Blue Island Health Center** – 12757 S. Western Ave., Blue Island, IL 60406

- CCH began hosting Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital in December 2020 – these will continue through the first half of 2021, while we monitor participation. Additional CCH pickup sites may be added, depending on interest from staff and community members. Top Box pickups at Provident Hospital are scheduled for the following Fridays from 3pm-4pm: 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 have 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.

Upcoming CAC meeting dates:

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

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

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

Englewood: Thursday at 1:00 PM - June 17, September 16, December 16

Provident Hospital/Sengstacke Health Center: Wednesday at 10:00 AM: July 14, October 13

Cottage Grove: Tuesday at 1:00 PM: July 27, October 26

IMPACT 2023 Focus Area 5

Media, social media reports and other documents attached.

Legislative Update

Local

- On April 13 the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee held their monthly 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 next meeting of the Cook County Health & Hospitals Committee is scheduled for May 11. CCH will provide a *COVID-19 Vaccine and Contact Tracing Update* to the committee every month through the end of calendar year 2021.
- The terms of CCH Board Directors Driscoll, Hammock and Reiter expire in June 2020. Pursuant to Cook County Ordinance, President Preckwinkle sent a letter to the Nominating Committee for the Cook County Health & Hospitals System Board of Directors requesting they convene for the purpose of identifying candidates for the expiring terms. On April 21 the Nominating Committee met and voted on nine individuals to submit to the President for consideration.

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/SB1840 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.

Over the past several months, meetings have taken place with numerous stakeholders, including the Illinois Attorney General's Office and the Illinois Health and Hospital Association (IHA), as well as with the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Health & Medicine Policy Research Group, Legal Council for Health Justice, and labor partners including National Nurses Organizing Committee, SEIU, Doctors Council, and Teamsters. These discussions and negotiation sessions have resulted in an agreed amendment that keeps the original goals of the legislation intact.

[SB1840, as amended](#), passed unanimously out of the Senate on April 21. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

- The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Insurance [finalized and published](#) a "health coverage affordability feasibility study". Public Act 101-0649 (SB1864) directed these agencies to create this report, which explores policy options to make health insurance more affordable for low- and middle-income residents.

Policy options outlined in the report including a Basic Health Program, state premium and cost-sharing subsidies, a Marketplace public option, Medicaid buy-in, transitioning to a state-based Marketplace (from the current federal-state partnership), and state supported marketing and outreach. The report reviews efforts from other states and models costs for each option.

The report does not offer recommendations. Instead, HFS intends to host feedback sessions to get additional stakeholder input following their review of the report and its findings.

- Earlier this month, Illinois became the first state in the nation to receive federal approval for 12-month expanded Medicaid postpartum coverage. An 1115 Medicaid waiver authorized this expanded coverage.

The 1115 waiver applies to individuals with income up to 213% of the Federal Poverty Level who are US citizens or qualified immigrants. Even if they meet income guidelines, undocumented individuals and immigrants with less than five years of US residence are not covered by this waiver. HFS continues to work with federal CMS on alternatives to extended postpartum coverage for all who meet income standards, regardless of immigration status.

During the federal Public Health Emergency, HFS is not taking any negative action on Medicaid cases, unless requested by the individuals, so very few should lose coverage postpartum, regardless of immigration status or income.

The American Rescue Plan Act includes a provision that permits states to submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to extend Medicaid postpartum coverage to 12 months, but this is not available until April 1, 2022. As a result, Illinois' 1115 waiver serves as a "bridge" to this SPA, which HFS has indicated they intend to file. Similar to the waiver, the SPA does not allow undocumented and non-qualified immigrants to remain covered even if they meet income standards.

- Twenty-four applications were submitted to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services for healthcare transformation applications due April 12. The applications [can be viewed online](#) and HFS is also accepting comments on the applications.

Legislation passed during the January 2021 session authorizes up to \$150M in annual funds for healthcare transformation with the goals of improving health outcomes, reducing disparities, and realigning resources by improving access to primary and specialty care and addressing social determinants of health in high-need communities throughout Illinois.

HFS indicated that the next deadline for applications will be September 2021.

- [HB158](#), the health and human services omnibus legislation championed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus was approved by both chambers and was signed by the Governor on April 27.

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 doulas, perinatal home visiting, and community health workers. CCH supports HB158.

Federal

- Congress returned from its Spring recess the week of April 12. President Biden's FY 2022 discretionary budget was released and the Appropriations Committees began hearings with Cabinet secretaries testifying on the requests and priorities for their departments and agencies.
- Biden "American Jobs Plan"— President Biden released an over \$2 trillion jobs and infrastructure plan on March 31. The plan would invest in traditional infrastructure like roads, bridges, transit and airports. It would also

make investments to the tune of \$400 billion in home and community-based services for the elderly and disabled. Some proposals of interest to CCH include:

- Expand access to Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and extend the Money Follows the Person program, while ensuring home health care workers' ability to join unions.
- Replacing 100 percent of the nation's lead pipes and service lines with \$45 billion for the Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and in Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN) grants.
- Investing \$30 billion over 4 years in medical countermeasures manufacturing; research and development; and related bio-preparedness and biosecurity.
- Targeting workforce investment toward underserved communities, including \$5 billion over eight years to support evidence-based community violence prevention programs.
- Building high-speed broadband infrastructure to reach 100 percent coverage.
- Upgrading VA hospitals and clinics with \$18 billion.

Bipartisan talks have begun with a group of Republican Senators offering a much smaller \$568 billion plan, focused only on "traditional" infrastructure on April 22. Democrats are debating the risks and benefits of negotiating a smaller bipartisan deal versus advancing a larger package by budget reconciliation with only Democratic support.

The President is expected to introduce the outline of a third major legislative initiative at his April 28 address to a joint session of Congress. Referred to as the American Families Plan, it is expected to focus on significant social services investments. Health care advocacy groups and some progressives are concerned about reports that the White House has decided to jettison provisions to expand health care coverage or benefits.

America's Essential Hospitals is advocating that the infrastructure package should include funding for safety net hospitals including hospital capital investments (e.g. a renewed Hill-Burton program as envisioned by House Energy and Commerce Democrats), digital infrastructure, emergency preparedness and workforce development.

- FY 2022 Budget and Appropriations – On April 9, President Biden submitted a FY 2022 budget request with his top-line discretionary funding proposals. Consisting of a 58-page letter to Congressional appropriators, the request lacks program level funding and the charts and tables usually backing up the President's budget. Further detail is expected in May.
- The Request includes \$131.7 billion for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), a \$25 billion or 23.5-percent increase over the 2021 enacted level.
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – \$8.7 billion for CDC, an increase of \$1.6 billion over the 2021 enacted level. This would be the largest increase for CDC in nearly 20 years
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – \$905 million for the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS)
 - Biomedical Research and Establishes the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) – \$51 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), a \$9 billion increase over the 2021 enacted level. This includes \$6.5 billion to establish ARPA-H, with an initial focus on cancer and other diseases such as diabetes and Alzheimer's
 - Opioid Crisis – \$10.7 billion, an increase of \$3.9 billion over the 2021 enacted level, including funding for States, Tribes, medication-assisted treatment, research, and expanding the behavioral health provider workforce
 - HIV/AIDS Epidemic – \$670 million, an increase of \$267 million over the 2021 enacted level, for CDC, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), the Indian Health Service (IHS), and NIH aim to reduce new HIV cases aggressively while increasing access to treatment, expanding use of pre-exposure prophylaxis (also known as PrEP), and ensuring equitable access to services and supports

- Mental Health – \$1.6 billion, more than double the 2021 enacted level, for the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant, supports the particular needs of those who are involved in the criminal justice system, provides funding for partnerships between mental health providers and law enforcement, and expands suicide prevention activities
- Health Equity and Addressing Racial Disparities – \$153 million for CDC’s Social Determinants of Health program, an increase of \$150 million over the 2021 enacted level
- Reduce the Maternal Mortality Rate and End Race-Based Disparities in Maternal Mortality – over \$200 million to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity rates nationwide, bolster Maternal Mortality Review Committees, help cities place early childhood development experts in pediatrician offices with a high percentage of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program patients, implement implicit bias training for healthcare providers, and create State pregnancy medical home programs
- Biden Administration Health Leadership – On April 22 the Senate Finance Committee voted on two Biden nominees to senior positions in HHS. Chiquita Brooks-LaSure’s nomination to be Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) received a tie vote and therefore was not reported favorably. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) has also placed a hold on her nomination pending a meeting with the White House over CMS recent decision to withdraw Texas’ 1115 waiver granted at the end of the Trump Administration. The hold is expected to slow, not to stop Brooks-LaSure’s eventual confirmation by the Senate. Andrea Palm’s nomination to be Deputy HHS Secretary of HHS was reported favorably.

Community Affairs

Covid Vaccination Site Tours & Educational Presentations & Initiatives

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, 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.

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 encourage a dialogue on vaccine facts and myths.

Recent Covid-19 Virtual Educational Presentations

- March 4 – **Sarah’s Inn** – North Riverside – English support group for women who are victims of domestic violence.
- March 4 – **Sarah’s Inn** – North Riverside - Spanish support group for women who are victims of domestic violence.
- April 7 - **Mujeres Latinas en Accion** – Chicago – Immigrant Rights Group Presentation
- April 26 – **PASO** – Melrose Park, IL 60160 - Immigrant Rights Group Presentation

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Cook County Health Media Clips Report

March 23 – April 23, 2021



Daily Herald
Big Picture . Local Focus

Media Dashboard: March 23 – April 23, 2021

Total Number of Media Hits: 263

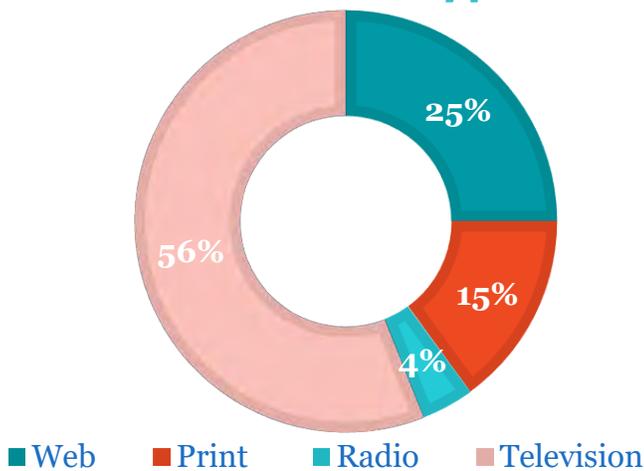
Top 5 Local Media Outlets

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

Top 5 National Media Outlets

1. *Yahoo! News*
2. *MSN*
3. *NBC News*
4. *Fox Business*
5. *Modern Healthcare*

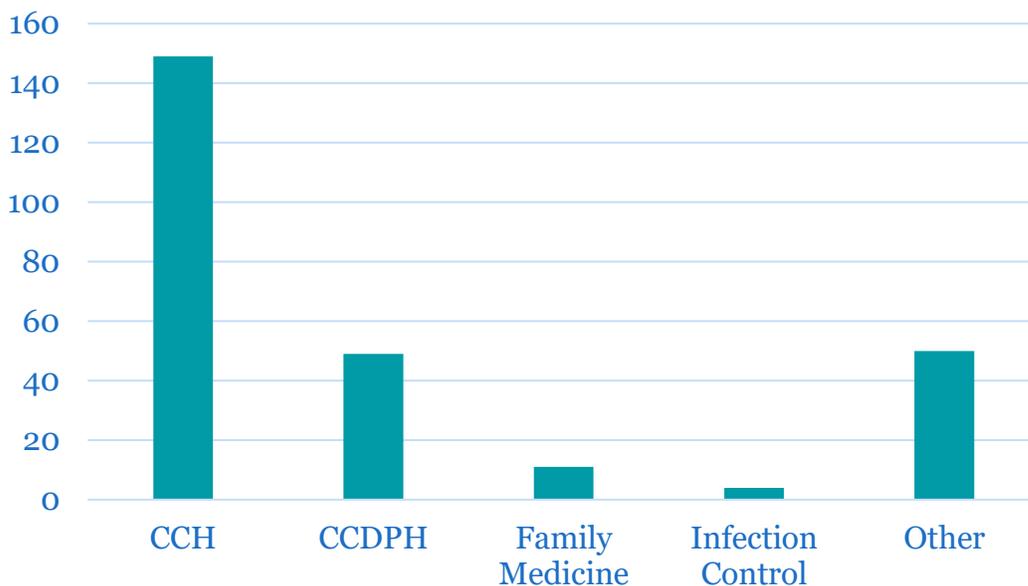
Media Outlet Type



Most Common Topics

1. New restrictions may be put in place because of COVID-19 case surge
2. Walk-in COVID-19 vaccine availability pilot at two Cook County locations
3. Cook County Health released 25,000 first-dose vaccine appointments at four suburban sites, filling up almost immediately
4. Suburban counties are pausing Johnson & Johnson vaccine
5. Cook County releases 30,000 new vaccine appointments

Media Mentions by Department





Cook County Vaccine: 16,000 New Appointments to Open at Triton College, 4 More Sites

March 23, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-vaccine-16000-new-appointments-to-open-at-triton-college-4-more-sites/2469479/>

Officials with Cook County health announced Tuesday that approximately 16,000 new first-dose appointments will be made available on Wednesday at five different coronavirus vaccination sites.

According to a press release, the new appointments will become available at noon Wednesday, and will be used to administer the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine to patients.

The vaccination doses will be available to individuals eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B-Plus, according to officials.

Doses will be administered at Triton College in suburban River Grove, South Suburban College in South Holland, and North Riverside Health Center in North Riverside.

The Des Plaines vaccination site on Oakton Street, and the new Forest Park site, located in the former HOBLO retail outlet, will also offer vaccine appointments.

All vaccinations will be available by appointment only, and can be booked by visiting [Cook County's coronavirus vaccination website](#) or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Cook County Health to release 16K first-dose vaccine appointments

March 23, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-health-to-release-16k-first-dose-vaccine-appointments>

Cook County Health will release 16,000 first-dose appointments to eligible individuals on Wednesday.

Those eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ can make appointments by calling 833-308-1988 or online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, Cook County Health officials said.

The appointments will be released at noon, officials said, at the following locations:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park

Daily Herald

Cook County takes appointments for 16,000 doses at 5 sites including Des Plaines

March 23, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210323/cook-county-takes-appointments-for-16000-doses-at-5-sites-including-des-plaines>

The Cook County health department will start taking appointments at noon Wednesday for about 16,000 first doses of the Pfizer vaccine at five locations, including in Des Plaines.

The site will be open to people eligible up to Phase 1B-plus, including residents who are 65 and older or front-line essential workers like teachers and police, and people under 65 with underlying medical conditions, such as cancer or kidney disease.

- Des Plaines, 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Triton College in River Grove
- Forest Park at a former HOB0 store at 7630 Roosevelt Road, now ready to open on Thursday.
- South Suburban College in South Holland
- North Riverside Health Center in North Riverside

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday.



Cook County Health to release 16,000 first-dose vaccine appointments Wednesday

March 23, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-to-release-16000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-wednesday/>

Cook County Health announced Tuesday that about 16,000 first-dose appointments for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ would be released on Wednesday.

The Pfizer first-dose appointments will be released at noon.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. The locations are as followed:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park (the facility to open on Thursday, March 25)

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Cook County Health releases 16K first-dose vaccine appointments

March 24, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/cook-county-vaccines-vaccine-appointments-triton-college-south-suburban/10443973/>

Cook County Health released approximately 16,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments on Wednesday at 12 p.m.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The appointments will be made available for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ in the following locations:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park*

All vaccinations are by appointment only.

The Forest Park facility, originally scheduled to open on Friday, will now open a day earlier on Thursday, March 25.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Mental health specialists at Cermak Health Services threaten strike

If the employees strike, they could leave about 2,200 patients without care.

Mary Chappell
March 23, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/3/23/22347355/mental-health-specialists-at-cermak-health-services-threaten-strike>

Mental health specialists at Cermak Health Services of Cook County, a county-operated hospital located at Cook County Jail, are threatening to strike next week and leave about 2,200 patients without care as a result of the hospital's plans to implement random patient assignment rotations beginning April 1.

If SEIU Local 73 — the union representing the employees — can't negotiate a solution in the next few days, about 64 mental health specialists say they'll strike on or after March 31.

The union has sent the legally required five-day notice — which states workers' intent to strike — to the Illinois Labor Relations Board and hospital management.

The mental health specialists weren't taken into account when the hospital's management made the decision to switch to the "musical chairs" rotation, according to SEIU Local 73 spokesman Eric Bailey.

The hospital's management has said its decision is based on numerous academic studies that show rotations improve patient safety and employee complacency, but Bailey said it's failed to provide this evidence.

"The patients they are serving ... are very sensitive to these type of changes because they really have come from backgrounds where there is a lack of trust," Bailey said. "These type of destructions in continuity of care can have a direct impact on the care that the mental health specialists are trying to provide for their patients."

Representatives from Cook County Health didn't respond to requests for comment from the Chicago Sun-Times. Cermak Health Services and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle's office couldn't be reached.



Forest Park Vaccine Site Opens Friday: What You Need to Know

March 23, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/latest-covid-vaccine-updates-in-illinois-chicago-vaccine-eligibility-how-to-sign-up/2468802/>

Cook County is launching its fifth mass COVID vaccination site in suburban Forest Park, open to all eligible Illinois residents.

The site opens to the public on Friday and is located at the former HOBLO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Illinois House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch and other county and state officials celebrated the site on Monday.

Pritzker said it will be able to administer up to 1,000 doses per day at launch and then more than 2,000 doses a day "soon after."

"With ample parking and close proximity to communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, this site will play a critical role in our continued efforts to vaccinate our most vulnerable residents, such as those with pre-existing conditions," Pritzker said.

"With this location in Forest Park, we have now strategically established three of our largest mass vaccination sites open to all eligible Illinoisans at Tinley Park in the southwest, this location in the western suburbs and Des Plaines in the northwest, meaning that our highest density Cook and collar county communities all have a convenient state-supported option for getting vaccinated," he added.

There are now five total mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County. The other 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 Cook County Department of Public Health released about 12,500 first-dose appointments for those sites on Friday, all of which were booked within a few hours.

Cook County moved to Phase 1B Plus - where much of the rest of Illinois is - of COVID vaccinations on Monday. That expands 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.

All vaccine providers in suburban Cook County have been asked to move to Phase 1B Plus beginning Monday, as have the mass vaccination sites.

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 the five mass vaccination sites in the county 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.

Future appointments can be made on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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 Opens 16K First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments for 5 Sites

March 24, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-covid-vaccine-appointments-to-open-for-5-mass-vaccination-sites/2469729/>

Cook County is releasing thousands of first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Wednesday for five suburban vaccination sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, Riverside and more.

Cook County Health officials said approximately 16,000 new first-dose Pfizer appointments will be made available at 12 p.m. on Wednesday. The appointments will be open to all Illinois residents eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B Plus.

Appointments can be made on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The appointments will be for four of the five total mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County. Those four sites are:

- 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
- Former HOBLO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

Appointments opening Wednesday will also be available at the county's vaccination clinic at North Riverside Health Center, located at 1800 S. Harlem Ave. in Riverside.



Cook County Opens 16,000 1st Dose Vaccine Appointments

Mugo Odigwe

March 24, 2021 at 11:19 am

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/24/cook-county-opens-16000-1st-dose-vaccine-appointments/>

If you live in Cook County, there's a new opportunity Wednesday morning to sign up for COVID vaccination appointments.

Wednesday, 16,000 first dose appointments are going to be available for anyone who's eligible.

North Riverside Health Center will have many appointments opening up at noon. You can sign up online if you are eligible under Cook County's rule.

There's been a lot of confusion because the county state and city have different rules about who's eligible.

So even with 16,000 first dose appointments opening up today, only those in 1A phase, essential workers, people 65 and older in phase 1B and those in phase 1B plus can sign up.

In addition to North Riverside Health Center, appointments will be available at Triton College, South Suburban College, Des Plaines and Forest park.

To sign up online, go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. You can also call 833-308-1988 to sign up.

Cook County initiative aims to boost COVID-19 vaccine rates in several south suburbs

Mike Nolan

March 24, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-covid-vaccinations-south-suburbs-st-0325-20210324-k4qo53uuwzhexph7hqgqerhr34-story.html>

South suburban communities of color hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic are getting special attention from Cook County public health officials as access to vaccines broadens.

Health officials have identified 32 suburbs, where vaccination rates are lagging, as part of an initiative that will include setting aside vaccination appointment times for residents who live in those communities, assisting residents in scheduling appointments and providing transportation to those unable to get to vaccination sites.

The county's public health department is also preparing to bring vaccines and administer them at sites such as senior housing centers, according to an official.

The program involves community-based organizations and private health providers that already work with populations eligible for the vaccine but who might not yet have registered for appointments, according to Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Southland communities that are part of the effort include Blue Island, Calumet Park, Chicago Heights, Dixmoor, Dolton, Markham, Posen, Riverdale and Robbins.

On average, 21% of residents of any particular Cook County suburb have gotten their initial dose of the vaccine, while just under 11% have received both doses, according to the health department.

In some south suburbs, the percentage getting the initial dose is in the single digits, and the county's aim is to get those numbers higher.

"We just started last week and it has been pretty successful so far," Rubin said Wednesday of the initiative, noting percentages of residents getting their first dose have risen.

In deciding which communities to concentrate vaccination efforts, the county used what it calls the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index which considers factors such as community demographics, preexisting health conditions of residents, access to transportation and health care.

Rubin said that numbers of COVID-19 cases and COVID-19 related deaths were also figured into the equation.

According to the county, about 70% of suburban Cook County residents age 65 and older have gotten at least their initial vaccine dose.

The county moved Monday to Phase 1b+, which expands eligibility to those residents 16 and older who have underlying medical conditions including cancer, kidney disease and diabetes.

Rubin said that community-based organizations and health care providers are in the best position to reach out to residents to who are eligible for vaccination but might not have yet registered or scheduled an appointment.

“The community organizations are in the best position to reach out to their own constituencies and walk someone through the process,” she said.

Getting to a vaccination site can be a challenge for some, Rubin said.

“We are working on arrangements to try to provide some transportation options for people who don’t have access to get to vaccine sites,” she said.

Vaccination rates vary among the south suburbs that are part of the county’s initiative.

In Robbins, 17% of residents, not far off the suburban Cook County average, have so far received their initial dose, and nearly 10% have received both shots, according to the county. That might be partly due to the fact the county health department has a clinic in the suburb.

In Dixmoor, however, fewer than 5% of residents had received the first shot and a little more than 2% had received both doses, according to the county.

In Harvey, a little more than 8% of residents in that city had gotten an initial dose and just under 4% had gotten both shots, according to the county. In South Holland, however, 19% of eligible residents had gotten their first shot and nearly 10% had completed both doses.

The county is also working to set up mobile vaccination sites at large work sites, homeless shelters, senior centers and other locations, Rubin said.

At the same time, health officials are combating a certain level of distrust in the vaccine in Black and brown communities.

“There is a well-deserved distrust in government and health care systems because of historically racist practices,” Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer and co-lead with the county’s health department, said in a news release announcing the initiative.

Rubin said she believes the tide is turning as far as skepticism in communities of color, and for the broader population, as to the effectiveness of the vaccine.

“As time has gone by, more and more people are wanting to have the vaccine in part because neighbors or friend have had it and they see it is safe and effective,” she said. “Eventually, confidence will grow.”

But as eligibility for the vaccine widens, supply is still constrained, and that is going to continue to result in frustration among those who want to get the shot but face obstacles in setting up an appointment, Rubin said.

“We keep hearing promises we are going to get more,” she said. “From week to week we don’t know what the ultimate supply will be. We really want people to just be patient.”

Daily Herald

Cook County takes appointments for 16,000 doses at 5 sites including Des Plaines

March 24, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210323/cook-county-takes-appointments-for-16000-doses-at-5-sites-including-des-plaines>

The Cook County health department will start taking appointments at noon Wednesday for about 16,000 first doses of the Pfizer vaccine at five locations, including in Des Plaines.

The site will be open to people eligible up to Phase 1B-plus, including residents who are 65 and older or front-line essential workers like teachers and police, and people under 65 with underlying medical conditions, such as cancer or kidney disease.

- Des Plaines, 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Triton College in River Grove
- Forest Park at a former HOB0 store at 7630 Roosevelt Road, now ready to open on Thursday.
- South Suburban College in South Holland
- North Riverside Health Center in North Riverside

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday.



Cook County Health to release 16,000 first-dose vaccine appointments Wednesday

March 23, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-to-release-16000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-wednesday/>

Cook County Health announced Tuesday that about 16,000 first-dose appointments for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ would be released on Wednesday.

The Pfizer first-dose appointments will be released at noon.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. The locations are as followed:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park (the facility to open on Thursday, March 25)

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.



Vaccines In Illinois Are Still Largely Going To White Residents

Becky Vevea, Kristen Schorsch
March 24, 2021

<https://www.wbez.org/stories/vaccines-in-illinois-are-still-largely-going-to-white-residents/f9c681b7-e16d-4506-9495-d704ec716a2d>

The vaccine rollout in Chicago and Illinois has only gotten more chaotic since it began three months ago.

Before millions more people become eligible for COVID-19 shots, WBEZ analyzed state and local data to determine how the vaccine rollout is going. In short, Illinois is still a long way from herd immunity, white people are still outpacing others in getting the shot, and the data has some hefty asterisks.

And as the state looks to expand eligibility, some fear that those who are in the most vulnerable communities — particularly Black and Latino neighborhoods — could continue to lag.

Nearly a quarter of Illinoisans have gotten one dose, but herd immunity is still far away

As of March 23, 23.8% of Illinoisans are at least partially vaccinated, and, of those, 14.1% are fully inoculated. (If you live in Chicago, you can find your own ZIP code's vaccination rates [here](#). ZIP code level data for the rest of Illinois has not been made public.)

Still, a WBEZ analysis shows 6.8 million adults have yet to get a shot to protect them against COVID-19. There are also more than 2 million children not authorized to get vaccinated yet.

The bottom line: Illinois still has a long way to go before reaching so-called herd immunity and declaring the pandemic officially over. Scientists estimate herd immunity against COVID-19 might require between 70% and 90% of people to be vaccinated.

"We really need to have a high level of vaccination coverage in all of our communities," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. "You can't have one community that has 80% vaccinated and another community that's two miles away that has a 40% vaccination rate."

Illinois is not yet out of the woods. This week, Chicago officials expressed concerns about a slight uptick in cases of COVID-19, especially among those aged 18 to 39. Gov. JB Pritzker, too, has said that even as the pace of vaccinations has picked up, officials want residents to continue to social distance and wear masks, with the worry that spikes of the virus could still hit before everyone is able to get vaccinated.

More Black, Latino Chicagoans get vaccines, but still lag behind white residents

After one month of vaccinations in Chicago, data showed that doses [disproportionally went to white residents](#), even though the pandemic has disproportionately hurt Black and Latino communities. Since Jan. 25, when the data was first disclosed, the numbers have shifted slightly. But as of March 19, 44% of vaccinated Chicagoans are white, 19% are Latino, 19% are Black and 7% are Asian.

Much of the improvement in vaccination rates among Black and Latino residents is due to a city-sponsored program known as Protect Chicago Plus, which creates pop-up vaccination sites in neighborhoods hit hardest by the pandemic. Shots are open to anybody 18 and older who lives in the community. The first weekend one of these sites opened in Belmont-Cragin, [nearly 2000 residents got their first dose](#) in just two days.

The city's public health department is also allowing residents of certain ZIP codes with high rates of COVID-19 to [book appointments](#) at the United Center mass vaccination site.

However, these efforts started two months after the first vaccines arrived and are only temporary. The vaccines distributed through Protect Chicago Plus only represent a fraction of all the shots shipped across the city. The distribution of vaccines by race still does not mirror Chicago's population, which is about one-third white, one-third Black, and one-third Latino.

"I'm a big fan of the Protect Chicago Plus program," said Dr. Paul Luning, Chief Medical Officer at PCC Community Wellness Center, a federally-qualified health center that serves the West Side of Chicago and western suburbs. "I think it infused a lot of vaccine into the neighborhoods hardest hit."

But Luning said planning just one of the pop-up clinics under Protect Chicago Plus was an enormous effort. And these efforts are only temporary.

"You cannot continue doing special programs forever," Luning said. "You have to build it into the make up of the entire health care system. It has to be part of the structure of health care to make sure those populations have access."

While Protect Chicago Plus will end by June, the city is looking to contract with health providers to target five regions with mobile vaccination sites for the rest of the year. The \$10 million request for proposals will award up to five providers \$2 million for each region: Northwest, Southwest, West, Near South and Far South. The contract would run from April 1 until Dec. 31, with a possible one year extension for 2022.

Chicago still vaccinating many from the suburbs

Chicago's vaccination progress has appeared to be lagging the rest of the state. It's true to some extent. About 11.5% of Chicago residents are fully vaccinated, while data for all Illinois residents shows 14% are fully vaccinated.

But these numbers are based on the address of the person who has been vaccinated, not the place in which they actually got a shot. When looking at how many vaccines have been administered from Chicago's shipment, a different picture emerges.

Chicago has administered more than one million doses to nearly 750,000 people. But more than a third of the vaccines administered in the city have gone into the arms of people who do not live in the city. Early on, [more than 40%](#) of the vaccines administered by Chicago providers were going to people who lived in the suburbs or downstate. The reverse is also happening, but not in as large of numbers. Data show about 20% of vaccinated Chicagoans got their shots outside of the city.

"There wasn't enough foresight to understand that Chicago has a lot of health care workers that work in the city, but live out in the suburbs," said Dr. Marina Del Rios, Associate Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine at University of Illinois-Chicago. "And there's also a lot of people that get their health care in the city, because their specialists are at Rush or at [University of Illinois at Chicago] or University of Chicago or Northwestern."

Del Rios said big hospitals and corporate pharmacies, like Walgreens and CVS, can and should do more to target vaccines to those who need it most. At the very least, most have the ability to target patients within their own record systems.

The lag in vaccinations among Chicago residents has triggered some major shifts in how people can get vaccinated in the city. After more than 60% of appointments at the United Center went to non-Chicagoans — and the majority of those residents were white or Asian — government leaders [allowed only Chicago residents](#) to book slots.

The Chicago Department of Public Health also has announced that all city-run vaccination sites, like those at city college campuses, would no longer vaccinate people who work in the city but live in the suburbs.

Cook County prioritizes 32 communities

Living in suburban Cook County can certainly be confusing when vaccine eligibility rules are different for your nearby Chicago neighbors who, in some cases, live across the street.

There are [32 priority communities](#) in suburban Cook County where any adult can get vaccinated at special county-run sites. For a while, residents of four municipalities — Oak Park, Evanston, Skokie and Stickney — only could use the Cook County mass vaccination sites if they worked in the county. But that guidance has now changed, said Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha. People who live or work throughout suburban Cook can access those locations.

Those newly eligible in suburban Cook County include suburban residents who are at least 16 and have certain underlying medical conditions.

And any Illinois resident eligible for a vaccine can get one at Cook County's mass vaccination sites. More of these large sites are popping up in the region. The latest in Cook County opens Friday in west suburban Forest Park, where eventually up to 5,000 people a day could be vaccinated.

Equity is an issue across Illinois, but data is limited

Weeks after Chicago released data showing most COVID-19 vaccine doses were going to white residents, the Illinois Department of Public Health released high-level data showing the same was true for the entire state.

And the numbers have remained about the same since they were released, with 68% of doses going into the arms of white Illinois residents, 8.3% going to Black residents, 9.5% going to Latino residents and 5.1% going to Asian residents. The state's [overall population](#) is about 60% white, 17.5% Latino, 14% Black and 5% Asian.

The state provides some race and ethnicity data [by county](#), but not in a way that makes it easy to compare. In many counties with the most fully vaccinated residents, like Adams County which hugs the Missouri border and downstate Peoria, the majority of those immunized are white. That mirrors their populations, or, in some cases is greater, than the percentage of their white population, according to a WBEZ analysis of state public health and U.S. Census data.

But many of rules limiting vaccine access to those most vulnerable will soon be dropped. Come April 12, [any Illinois resident will qualify](#) for a shot. That won't apply in Chicago, which has its own timetable for residents, with everyone allowed to start booking appointments for vaccines [starting May 1](#).

Opening up vaccinations to everyone is a big step, and some are worried about the impact it will have. Del Rios said officials need to make sure that communities of color and those hit the hardest by the pandemic are not left behind.

"This is very much like voting," Del Rios said. "Everyone, in theory, has the right to vote. And in theory, you have access to a ballot. But where you live is going to depend on how many polling places are available per population, is there the ability of voting early, voting outside of normal hours, and some communities do that better than others."

"Which is why I think that, as the state is moving towards rolling out [COVID-19 vaccines] to anyone over 16, that has to be paired with purposeful prioritization of communities that have been at high risk, and, yes, putting more resources in, you have to spend more money, you have to get more people to those sites to try to remove as many structural barriers as possible."

Luning, with PCC Community Wellness Center which serves both the city and the suburbs, said the expansion to all for most of Illinois, but not Chicago, will likely create confusion. But he hopes there's enough vaccine to go around and the focus will remain on equity.

“Having worked in community medicine for 25 years, I have to say that I have been heartened by the focus on making sure the communities that I serve are getting the vaccine and getting the attention,” Luning added. “Twenty five years ago, I’m not sure that would have happened.”



Cook County Releases 16,000 New COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments

The new appointments will be available at several locations around Cook County and are open to eligible residents, including Phase 1b plus.

Jeff Arnold
Mar 24, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/chicago/cook-county-releases-16-000-new-covid-19-vaccine-appointments>

Two days after more Illinois residents became eligible to receive coronavirus vaccines, Cook County health officials announced that 16,000 first dose appointments would be released on Wednesday.

County health officials said that only those who qualify under phase 1a, 1b and the newly released 1b plus are eligible for the appointments, which are available at the following sites around Cook County. The new appointments were made available starting Monday at noon.

In addition to the previous eligibility groups, Phase 1b plus includes residents ages 16 and up with pre-existing medical conditions, media members and other essential workers who were not covered under previous eligibility groups.

"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, the county's senior medical officer.

The 16,000 appointments will be available at:

- North Riverside Health Center
- Triton College, 2020 Fifth Ave, River Grove
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland
- Des Plaines – Mass vaccination center on Oakton Street
- Forest Park – the former HOBLO Retail Outlet

To sign up online, go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Residents can also make appointments 833-308-1988.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Cook County Vaccine Appointments, COVID Metrics Rising Again

March 24, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-united-center-eligibility-chicago-travel-order/2469785/>

Cook County released thousands of first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Wednesday for five suburban vaccination sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, Riverside and more.

And COVID metrics in both Chicago and Illinois are beginning to show "signs of concern" as case numbers and positivity rates start to increase.

Plus, Chicago's top doctor says city officials "continue having to swat down rumors" about eligibility for the United Center's mass vaccination site.

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

Lightfoot Won't Talk More About Reopening if Chicago COVID Numbers Keep Climbing

As coronavirus metrics continue to climb across Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said Wednesday that the city cannot continue to reopen if numbers further increase.

"We are definitely concerned," Lightfoot said. "We're not in a position, as a result of [increasing metrics], to really be talking about a more reopening issues, particularly when it comes to expanding capacity indoors. The last thing that any of us want to do is take any steps back."

The mayor added that additional guidance will be released in coming days, but currently the COVID-19 trends are "going in the wrong direction" and preventing Chicago from returning to normalcy.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said the increase in metrics prevented her from announcing new reopenings Tuesday.

"I was very much hoping today to be able to do some further reopening," Arwady said. "In the setting of what these numbers look like, we're just keeping a close eye. We've got to come back down to moderate risk in all of our indicators."

Those indicators include the number of cases, positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths, among others. Arwady said that while the current case level remains in a moderate risk category, the rate of increase actually puts the city under a higher risk.

Read more [here](#).

Chicago Employers Cannot Take Action Against Workers For Time-Off to Receive COVID Vaccine

Chicago's latest ordinance announced Wednesday says employers cannot take adverse action against an employee for taking time off to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, providing similar worker protection to last May's coronavirus legislation.

The city's vaccine anti-retaliation ordinance protects employees from being fired or retaliated against for taking time to receive a coronavirus vaccination, causing employers to potentially face fines between \$1,000 to \$5,000 for violations.

Business Affairs and Consumer Protection Commissioner Rosa Escareno added that should employees accumulate paid sick time, they are guaranteed the ability to use it to receive the vaccine.

The ordinance also states that an employer who requires that their workers be vaccinated, must compensate its employees for the time taken to receive the COVID vaccine during work hours, Escareno explained.

Should an employee be fired for taking time to receive the vaccine during working hours, Lightfoot said the workers may be able to be reinstated to the same position through civil action.

Read more [here](#).

Thinking of Traveling This Spring Break? Here's What You Should Know First

Thinking of traveling for spring break?

Chicago's top doctor urged residents to think twice, unless they are fully vaccinated.

Thinking of traveling for spring break?

Chicago's top doctor urged residents to think twice, unless they are fully vaccinated.

"My strongest piece of advice is, please do not travel until you are fully vaccinated - two weeks post your second vaccine," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said. "And that is doubly true if you're planning to travel internationally, because the US has done by far the most vaccines of any country in the world."

Even those who are vaccinated, Arwady said, should continue wearing masks and maintaining their distance.

Arwady's advice comes on the heels of guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [which on Monday again advised against travel](#).

Read more [here](#).

DuPage County Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Phase 1B Plus

[DuPage County moved to Phase 1B Plus of its COVID-19 vaccinations on Wednesday](#), expanding eligibility to residents age 16 or older with specific health conditions and disabilities, officials announced.

According to the DuPage County Health Department, over 174,000 residents will become eligible under Wednesday's new expansion to include more underlying health conditions.

"Although vaccine supply remains extremely limited, we are making significant progress in vaccinating some of the most vulnerable people in our communities," Karen Ayala, executive director of DuPage County Health Department, said. "Getting vaccines into the arms of our residents is our highest and most urgent priority."

Health officials reminded that residents eligible in Phase 1A and Phase 1B remain prioritized to get the COVID-19 vaccine and can make appointments as new times become available.

To sign up for the vaccine or receive more information, click [here](#).

What is Driving the Rise in COVID Cases in Chicago? Data Points to One Age Group

What's behind the latest rise in coronavirus cases in Chicago?

According to Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady, it appears one particular age group is seeing the largest increase in cases in recent days, a concerning trend reminiscent of last fall's surge.

"So the biggest thing driving this is increases in cases in our younger adults, and I want to highlight that," Arwady said during a press conference Tuesday. "Unfortunately, these sorts of increases are just what we were seeing in October as we were starting to see the beginnings of what became our huge surge. It was really the same case rates and younger adults that started this."

Read more [here](#).

Fans Allowed at Soldier Field for Chicago Fire Home Opener

The first fans to return to Soldier Field won't be there to root on the Bears. They'll be shouting "Dale!" instead.

The Fire and Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced Wednesday that [Chicago soccer fans can watch games in-person starting with the Fire's home opener](#) against the New England Revolution on April 17.

"Fans are what it's all about," said Fire Head Coach Raphael Wicky in a statement. "We train hard and play hard for you. What's beautiful about football is our fans are from all walks of life. This is a sport that brings people together and we can't wait for our supporters to be cheering us on at Soldier Field. We're going to need them too. They're the home field advantage that is so crucial in sports. I can promise our fans that every player on our team will give their all to make you proud."

The Fire will gradually reopen Soldier Field, starting with just the 100 and 200-level sections. According to health guidelines, the stadium will be allowed to fill at 25% capacity, or 15,375 fans. Ample space will be given for social distancing between seating pods.

Additional health protocols include staggered entry times, hand sanitizer stations and more rigorous cleaning processes. Further, fans will be required to wear masks at all times, unless eating or drinking at their seats.

What Chicago Health Officials Are Watching for to Determine if Another Surge is On the Way

Chicago's top doctor said rising COVID metrics have her "worried," but as for whether or not they signal the beginning of a third surge in the city, there's one thing she's watching for.

"I don't know fully what's going to happen here," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said. "I do know that we are pushing vaccine absolutely as quickly as we can, ramping up our monitoring for the variants we are seeing...and continuing to ask people to do what has gotten us this far. If we see a big increase in cases not accompanied by an increase in hospitalizations or deaths I don't worry about that as much. But if we start to see it impacting in serious ways, you know, and then the big question is what does this mean for reopening?"

Arwady said health officials tracked indicators in the lead-up to the previous two surges to find ways to predict another potential increase.

Read more [here](#).

Coronavirus in Illinois: 2,793 New COVID Cases, 20 Deaths, 107K Vaccinations

Health officials in Illinois on Wednesday reported 2,793 new coronavirus cases and 20 additional deaths, along with more than 107,000 vaccinations in the past 24 hours.

According to figures from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the 2,793 new confirmed and probable COVID cases reported in the last day brought the state's total to 1,227,708 cases since the pandemic began last year.

The 20 new deaths lifted the state's death toll to 21,136 fatalities related to the virus, according to health officials.

According to health officials, the seven-day positivity rate on all tests currently stands at 2.8% while the positivity rate for individuals tested stands at 3.1%.

A total of 107,219 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in the past 24 hours, IDPH said. The latest figures brought the rolling seven-day average for daily vaccinations to 97,680.

Read more [here](#).

'We Are Worried': Chicago and Illinois Officials Say COVID Metrics Rising Again

COVID metrics in both Chicago and Illinois are beginning to show "signs of concern" as case numbers and positivity rates start to increase.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said an increase in metrics prevented her from announcing new reopenings Tuesday.

"I was very much hoping today to be able to do some further reopening," Arwady said. "In the setting of what these numbers look like, we're just keeping a close eye. We've got to come back down to moderate risk in all of our indicators."

Those indicators include the number of cases, positivity rates, hospitalizations and deaths, among others. The city's positivity rate sat at 3.2% Tuesday, remaining in the low-risk category, but marking an increase from a recent low of 2.7%, Arwady said.

"Seeing that go up about a half a percentage point over the last, you know, week and a half to two weeks is not progress," she said during an earlier Facebook Live Tuesday.

Even more concerning, she said, is that case counts in the city are also starting to rise, with a current average of about 350 cases per day, compared to 285 one week earlier.

"Sometimes people ask, isn't it just that you're doing more testing? No, because if it were just testing, we would see testing up 23% and cases up 23%. This is a true increase," Arwady said.

Arwady said that while the current case level remains in a moderate risk category, the rate of increase actually puts the city under a higher risk.

Her comments were echoed in part by Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike, who said Tuesday that the state is "seeing some concerning plateaus and even increases in hospitalizations and cases."

Read more [here](#).

Pritzker Receives COVID Vaccine

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker received his dose of the COVID vaccine on Wednesday, getting the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Springfield. Pritzker received his vaccine days after more essential workers - including government employees - became eligible in Illinois on Monday.

Coronavirus in Illinois: 2,793 New COVID Cases, 20 Deaths, 107K Vaccinations

Health officials in Illinois on Wednesday reported 2,793 new coronavirus cases and 20 additional deaths, along with more than 107,000 vaccinations in the past 24 hours.

According to figures from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the 2,793 new confirmed and probable COVID cases reported in the last day brought the state's total to 1,227,708 cases since the pandemic began last year.

The 20 new deaths lifted the state's death toll to 21,136 fatalities related to the virus, according to health officials.

Innovative Express Care Blames 'Communication Breakdown' for 'Misallocated' COVID Vaccine Doses

Innovative Express Care on Wednesday blamed a "communication breakdown" with the city of Chicago after health officials said the clinic "knowingly misallocated" thousands of COVID vaccine doses intended for Chicago Public Schools employees.

The Chicago Department of Public Health on Tuesday announced that it had halted vaccine supply to Innovative Express Care, the health provider contracted to vaccinate CPS employees, after city officials said the provider "administered vaccine to non-CPS individuals without prior authorization."

"Based on CPDH's review of IEC's vaccine allocations and administration, we have determined that they knowingly misallocated more than 6,000 doses of vaccine—including using vaccine allocated for second doses for first dose appointments instead," the health department said in a statement. "This is completely unacceptable behavior."

CDPH said it had stopped distribution of vaccine doses to Innovative Express Care and that it would reclaim all vaccine stored with the provider - a decision Innovative Express Care on Tuesday said left them "bewildered, saddened, and frankly disappointed in our local government."

Innovative Express Care said Tuesday that CDPH "never made it clear" that they "should be storing vaccines in a refrigerator for people awaiting second doses."

"Rather, we have been following the nation's commitment to get as many vaccines in eligible patients' arms, as quickly as possible. Our mission involved vaccinating as many eligible patients as quickly as possible, and not at the whims of the city official's latest political crisis," the provider said.

But on Wednesday, Innovative Express Care said they "understand now" the city's expectations of storage for CPS employees' second doses but said a "communication breakdown occurred" and continued to blame the city.

Chicago Travel Order Update: 26 States Now on List Requiring Quarantine or Negative COVID Test

Chicago updated its emergency travel order on Tuesday, moving multiple states between the yellow and orange tiers that dictate guidelines for travelers to quarantine or test negative for COVID-19 prior to their arrival in the city.

The "orange tier," which requires a quarantine or pre-arrival negative test before coming to Chicago, now includes 26 states, while the lesser yellow tier now includes 23 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Which tier states are in depends on case rate adjusted for population.

Illinois Vaccinations

Note: For COVID-19, the herd-immunity threshold is estimated to be between [60 and 90 percent](#). Our analysis considers herd immunity reached at 75% of the population fully vaccinated based on [estimates](#) by Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Looking for a COVID Vaccine Appointment in Illinois? Here's a List of Places to Check

With both Illinois and Chicago opening vaccinations to millions of residents under varying guidelines, many are wondering where they can get vaccinated and how they schedule an appointment.

There are several ways eligible residents will be able to get vaccinated, but state officials have urged patience as doses continue to trail demand.

[Click here for a breakdown](#) of where you can get vaccinated and how to get an appointment, when available.

When Can You Get the COVID Vaccine in Illinois? Here's a Breakdown

When can you get the COVID vaccine in Illinois? The answer is: it depends. While Illinois is expanding its eligibility guidelines, Chicago is on its own plan.

Eligibility will expand to all residents over the age of 16 outside of Chicago in April, Gov. J.B. Pritzker has announced. But some people are already eligible or will become eligible before then.

Here's a [look at who is eligible](#) to get the vaccine now and who will become eligible in the coming weeks.

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 Opens 16K First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments for 5 Sites

March 24, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-covid-vaccine-appointments-to-open-for-5-mass-vaccination-sites/2469729/>

Cook County is releasing thousands of first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Wednesday for five suburban vaccination sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, Riverside and more.

Cook County Health officials said approximately 16,000 new first-dose Pfizer appointments will be made available at 12 p.m. on Wednesday. The appointments will be open to all Illinois residents eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B Plus.

Appointments can be made on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The appointments will be for four of the five total mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County. Those four sites are:

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

Former HOBLO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

Appointments opening Wednesday will also be available at the county's vaccination clinic at North Riverside Health Center, located at 1800 S. Harlem Ave. in Riverside.

Cook County moved to Phase 1B Plus - where much of the rest of Illinois is - of COVID vaccinations on Monday. That expands 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.

For a complete look at who is eligible to receive the COVID vaccine and when in Illinois, [click here](#).

All vaccine providers in suburban Cook County have been asked to move to Phase 1B Plus beginning Monday, as have the mass vaccination sites.

The mass vaccination sites were previously only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County, but the Cook County Department of Public Health said that beginning this week, they will receive additional vaccine supply to enable the sites to serve all eligible Illinois residents.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker [last week 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 to release 16K first-dose vaccine appointments

March 23, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-health-to-release-16k-first-dose-vaccine-appointments>

Cook County Health will release 16,000 first-dose appointments to eligible individuals on Wednesday.

Those eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ can make appointments by calling 833-308-1988 or online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, Cook County Health officials said.

The appointments will be released at noon, officials said, at the following locations:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park



Cook County Health releases 16K first-dose vaccine appointments

March 24, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/cook-county-vaccines-vaccine-appointments-triton-college-south-suburban/10443973/>

Cook County Health released approximately 16,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments on Wednesday at 12 p.m.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The appointments will be made available for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ in the following locations:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- North Riverside Health Center
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park

All vaccinations are by appointment only.

The Forest Park facility, originally scheduled to open on Friday, will now open a day earlier on Thursday, March 25.



Cook County to release 16K first-dose vaccine appointments

March 24, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-release-16k-first-173537650.html>

Cook County Health released approximately 16,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments Wednesday.

Video Transcript: All new at 10:00 tonight, tomorrow, Cook County Health is releasing 16,000 first dose appointments. Anyone eligible in phases 1A, 1B, and 1B+ can sign up starting at noon. The shots will be given at these five locations. We've got more details on our website.



Cook County COVID Vaccine, Aurora Event: Latest Vaccine Updates in Illinois

Here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state

March 24, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-il-covid-vaccine-latest-covid-vaccine-updates-in-illinois/2469887/>

Thousands of vaccination appointments will become available in Cook County Wednesday as other vaccine events take shape across Illinois.

Whether you're looking for a vaccine, waiting for your turn, hoping to help loved ones or just trying to make sense of it all, here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state.

Cook County to Open 16K First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments for 5 Sites

Cook County is releasing thousands of first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Wednesday for five suburban vaccination sites in Des Plaines and Forest Park, as well as South Suburban College, Triton College and the North Riverside Health Center.

Health officials said approximately 16,000 new first-dose Pfizer appointments will be made available at 12 p.m. on Wednesday to all Illinois residents eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B Plus. For more information click [here](#).

Aurora Set to Hold Another Mass Vaccination Clinic Wednesday

Aurora is set to open up another mass vaccination clinic in the Chicago suburb this week.

The city's sixth mass vaccination clinic is slated to take place on March 24 at Cathedral of St. John AME Church. Appointments opened Friday at www.aurora-il.gov/massvaxaurora

Gov. Pritzker to Get First Vaccine Dose Wednesday

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker will give an update on the state's COVID-19 response and receive his first dose of the vaccine on Wednesday. Pritzker is slated to give the update and get the vaccine during the same event at 11:30 a.m. at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. Watch live [here](#).

Forest Park Mass Vaccination Site Opening to Public Friday

Cook County is launching its fifth mass COVID vaccination site in suburban Forest Park, open to all eligible Illinois residents. The site opens to the public on Friday and is located at the former HOB0 at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park, officials said while launching the site Monday.

[Read more here.](#)

Other Vaccination Sites Set to Open in Illinois This Week

EDWARDS COUNTY: On March 24, Edwards County residents can begin receiving COVID vaccinations at 230 N. 5th St. in Albion. Appointments can be made through the Wabash County Health Department at (618) 263-3873.

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN LAWRENCEVILLE: For Lawrence County residents, coronavirus vaccination shots open at 303 Buchanan Dr. in Lawrenceville on March 25. To book an appointment, call (812) 213-0199.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY: Though a specific location has not been determined yet, state health officials said residents of Cumberland County can begin receiving vaccinations on March 26. To book an appointment, call (217) 849-3211.

EDGAR COUNTY: Beginning March 27, residents in Edgar County can receive the coronavirus vaccine at an unknown location. To make an appointment, visit ecphd.org or call (217) 294-2729.

United Center Opens Drive-Thru Vaccination Site

A drive-thru vaccination opened at Chicago's United Center mass vaccination clinic. Currently, the facility has been used only for walk-up appointments, but Tuesday will mark the start of a drive-up service. [Here's what you need to know.](#)

Vaccine Eligibility for United Center Expands to 17 Chicago ZIP Codes

Residents of now 17 ZIP codes in Chicago can register for a COVID vaccine appointment at the United Center mass vaccination site. The list now includes: 60608, 60609, 60619, 60620, 60621, 60623, 60624, 60628, 60629, 60632, 60636, 60639, 60644, 60649, 60651, 60652, 60653.

To register online, visit Zocdoc.com/vaccine. To register by phone, call (312) 746-4835.

Cook County Now in Phase 1B Plus of COVID Vaccinations

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.

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. [More information here.](#)

More Essential Workers Now Eligible for COVID Vaccine in Illinois

Some essential workers not eligible under Illinois' Phase 1B Plus will qualify for the COVID vaccine under new eligibility guidelines beginning Monday. According to the [updated guidance](#), Illinois expanded eligibility 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. For a full eligibility timeline click [here](#).

Will County Opens New COVID Vaccination Site, Another Expected to Open Next Week

Two new coronavirus vaccination sites are set to open in Will County this month, health officials announced. Beginning Monday, Will County residents can begin receiving vaccine doses in Wilmington at St. Rose Church. Another site is set to open the week of March 29 in Monee at the former Second Place Church. For more information, click [here](#).

Chicago's Phase 1C Will Begin on March 29. Here's What That Means

Chicago will enter [Phase 1C](#), expanding coronavirus vaccine eligibility to include those with underlying health conditions and essential workers, on March 29, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot officially announced Wednesday. Find out if you're eligible [here](#).

New Illinois Mobile Vaccination Sites Open

Over the weekend and on Monday, the National Guard brought vaccines to rural communities to set up events that will delivering upwards of 1,000 doses of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine per day, the governor announced Monday. Only residents from the specified county will be able to receive vaccinations at the site.



Mental health specialists who work with jail detainees threaten strike

Mike Krauser

March 24, 2021

<https://www.audacy.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-mental-health-specialists-threaten-strike>

Mental health professionals who work with Cook County Jail detainees are threatening to strike next week.

The 64 mental health specialists at Cermak Health Services of Cook County, a county-operated hospital located at Cook County Jail, are pushing back over a plan that they call a “musical chairs” rotation, including Lauren Cartwright.

"We are being forced to rotate," Cartwright said, "when fears, anxieties, stressors, anger, tensions appear insurmountable for our clients. "

Their union, SEIU Local 73, said Cermak Health Services management told them the decision is based on academic studies that show rotations improve patient safety and employee complacency; but SEIU Local 73 spokesman Eric Bailey said management has failed to provide this evidence.

Without a solution, the mental health specialists plan to strike as soon as March 31. If the employees strike, they could leave about 2,200 patients without care.

The union has sent the legally required five-day notice — which states workers’ intent to strike — to the Illinois Labor Relations Board and hospital management.

Daily Herald

Murphy: Vaccine appointments in Des Plaines now open to residents in 1B+

*Office of State Senator Laura Murphy
March 25, 2021*

<https://www.dailyherald.com/submitted/20210324/murphy-vaccine-appointments-in-des-plaines-now-open-to-residents-in-1b>

The Cook County Health Department has 16,000 available appointments for residents looking to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and State Senator Laura Murphy (D-Des Plaines) is reminding those eligible they can book their dose at the community vaccination site located in the repurposed Kmart in Des Plaines.

"The vaccine is our best defense against COVID-19, and it's the fastest way we can return to normal," Murphy said. "For yourself, for your family and for your community, I urge you to make an appointment as soon as you are eligible to receive the vaccine."

Starting Wednesday, March 24 at noon, the Cook County Health Department is opening county-run sites to people eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+ - that includes residents age 65 and older, front-line essential workers like teachers and police, and people under 65 with underlying medical conditions, such as cancer or kidney disease.

For residents of the Northwest Suburbs, the closest county-run vaccination site is located in the former Kmart at 1155 E. Oakton St. in Des Plaines. The site opened in early March with support from the Illinois National Guard.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday.



Cook County Jail Monitoring Sewers For COVID-19, Cases Fall To 8

More than 1,600 inmates and more than 2,500 sheriff's office staff have been vaccinated so far, according to the sheriff's office.

Jonah Meadows

March 25, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/chicago/cook-county-jail-monitoring-sewers-covid-19-cases-fall-8>

Rates of coronavirus infection in the Cook County Jail remain far lower than the wider community, but with rising numbers of new cases in Chicago and suburban Cook County, Sheriff Tom Dart warned the public of coronavirus complacency.

Eight out of the more than 5,600 people in custody at Cook County Jail were currently positive for COVID-19 as of Wednesday evening, according to the sheriff's office. All of them tested positive during the intake process, which means they had contracted the coronavirus before arriving at the jail.

The sheriff's office conducts more than 1,500 tests a week, with more than 1,200 detainees tested every week since February, according to its website.

"The [Cook County] Jail successfully fought off the surge everyone experienced in the Fall and Winter, but we are one County, and each person's actions affect us all," Dart said in a statement Thursday. "Masks and social distancing are shown to work, and we continue to offer vaccines to every detainee and staff member."

Dart's office pointed to a study by researchers at Stanford and Yale universities published last month in the British Medical Journal. It determined jail officials' strategy of widespread testing of asymptomatic people and reducing the jail's population drastically reduced the number of cases in the jail studied.

"Compared with what could have happened with only the implemented CDC-recommended interventions of phase 1, the model predicts a reduction of approximately 3100 symptomatic cases, 435 hospitalizations and 30 deaths over 83 days," [the study](#) found. "This suggests that the combination of interventions (depopulation, increased single celling and large-scale asymptomatic testing of incarcerated individuals) in addition to standard CDC COVID-19 mitigation strategies led to an 83% reduction in predicted symptomatic cases, hospitalizations and deaths."

During the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic in Illinois, the jail's population fell by nearly 30 percent, down to a record low of 4,000.

But recently, it has returned to pre-pandemic levels, limiting the ability of jail officials to keep inmates in single cells to maintain social distance.

"When we work together and follow the recommendations of public health experts, we make great progress in defeating this pandemic," Dart said. "We have done it before and we can do it again, but not without a renewed commitment to testing, following precautions and vaccinations."

Cermak Health Services, the jail's health provider and a division of Cook County Health, has worked to educate detainees and sheriff's office staff on the importance of being vaccinated and administered doses on site, according to the sheriff's office.

More than 2,500 of the sheriff's office's approximately 5,550 employees have been vaccinated, and all have had an opportunity to receive a dose since those who live and work at correctional institutions were made eligible with the opening of Phase 1b of the state's vaccine distribution plan.

A total of 1,611 inmates have been jabbed at the jail as of Wednesday, according to the sheriff's office.

In addition to enforcing social distancing, mask use, increased cleaning and widespread testing, jail officials last month began twice-weekly COVID-19 surveillance testing of wastewater.

Bits of coronavirus RNA can be detected from wastewater about a week before a person will develop symptoms.

"So if they're testing the wastewater and they start to see COVID but nobody in that area is symptomatic, we know we've got something going on and we need to target test in that building," explained sheriff's office spokesperson Matt Walberg.

Testing the water collected from the sewer lines at several spots around the jail's sprawling Little Village campus will also soon show which coronavirus variants are in circulation at the jail.

"It's really valuable. Wastewater surveillance on its own is helpful, but it's limited. Testing on its own is extraordinary helpful, but it's also limited," Walberg said. "But when you put those two things together, it helps you allocate resources for testing in a very targeted way."

Chicago Tribune

Tallying up indoor dining ban fines: Chicago dinged restaurant and bar owners; suburban counties issued warnings

DAVID HEINZMANN, STACY ST. CLAIR, HAL DARDICK, ROBERT MCCOPPIN, DAN PETRELLA and JOE MAHR
MARCH 26, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-chicago-suburban-county-covid-enforcement-indoor-dining-ban-20210326-rjyr2yy5cvdzjdvos5lsufkazu-story.html>

While Chicago levied hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines on bars, restaurants and other businesses for violating COVID-19 restrictions during the pandemic's first year, suburban county governments largely let scofflaws off the hook, a Tribune review of public records found.

Hundreds of city businesses faced fines between \$200 and \$12,000 for a variety of violations, including remaining open during mandatory shutdowns, having too many people eating and drinking indoors, and a lack of masking on staff and patrons.

There were hundreds of complaints of similar conduct in the collar counties, but records showed only a dozen cases so far where financial penalties resulted for violating rules intended to limit the spread of the deadly coronavirus. Several suburban officials said they relied on an "educational" approach, paying visits or calling to remind business owners of restrictions.

Lax suburban enforcement may have created an uneven playing field, as some bar and restaurant owners suffered greater financial harm if they strictly followed public health guidelines while competitors took a speak-easy approach and remained furtively open in violation of the rules.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker's indoor dining ban was in effect from mid-March 2020 through the end of May, and again from late October through [late January 2021](#). It covered 23 weeks, or nearly half a year.

The ban also was widely ignored, and the governor routinely admonished local officials who refused to enforce the rules. Illinois State Police issued four citations to downstate businesses after receiving about 224 complaints, the agency said. Health officials did 194 visits, sometimes accompanied by state troopers, with most potential violations resolved through conversation with the business.

Restaurant owners said their businesses were hurt by the first round of closures and would have had a hard time [surviving a second](#). Still, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention earlier this month [reiterated its stance](#) that wearing masks is essential to controlling the spread of COVID-19, and stated that allowing indoor dining during the pandemic [has been associated with](#) growth of daily new infection rates, though the surges may not appear for more than a month after restrictions are eased.

Chicago fines

Mayor Lori Lightfoot took a more hard-line approach, with business fines totaling at least \$450,000. City Hall issued 111 citations for \$500 and another 43 for \$2,000. In three cases, fines adjudicated by administrative law judges went as high as \$5,000. And in 23 cases, default judgments of at least \$10,000 were issued to businesses that did not respond to the disciplinary action, according to city officials.

The largest fines were issued to “the very egregious ones, where we showed up and people were shoulder to shoulder,” said Isaac Reichman, spokesman for the city’s Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection.

In other cases, numerous large fines were issued to people hosting parties for money or operating unlicensed alcohol-related businesses, Reichman said.

The bar and restaurant operators facing the largest fines were located all over the city, from Lakeview to Morgan Park. They either did not respond to requests for comment or could not be reached.

The Irie Jerk Bar and Grill, a Jamaican-themed restaurant at the busy corner of Clark Street and Sheffield Avenue in Lakeview, was cited on Oct. 18 for allowing people to be in the restaurant without masks, and for being over capacity, according to city records. Inspectors found 195 patrons crowded into the bar, without masks, when indoor capacity was supposed to be limited to 40%, which would have been 50 people, city records showed. A \$5,000 fine was issued in December, according to city records. The bar’s owner could not be reached for comment.

The restaurant is in Ald. Tom Tunney’s 44th Ward. Tunney himself [had to pay a \\$2,000 fine](#) for violating COVID-19 rules at his Ann Sather restaurant on Belmont Avenue. The alderman has called it an “error in judgment.”

In Bronzeville, Uncle J’s B.B.Q. was cited last fall for employees not wearing masks, records show. The business operator didn’t engage with the city’s disciplinary process, city officials said, leading them to seek the maximum penalty. The business ended up with a \$10,500 fine. Workers who answered the phone at the takeout restaurant said no one was on site who could comment.

The Black Cat Lounge, at 115th Street and Marshfield Avenue in Morgan Park, was hit with a \$5,000 fine after inspectors reported finding 23 people in the bar Nov. 8, when establishments were not allowed to be open for inside dining or drinking. The Tribune was unable to reach the bar’s owner.

Open in DuPage

In the suburbs, business owners faced much less concern about financial consequences of violating the rules. If they chose to ignore the risks to public health, their establishments could remain open with impunity.

People had plenty of choices. A list being shared on Facebook included hundreds of open restaurants in suburban Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Will and McHenry counties — complete with mini-reviews of the food and service. Some places took reservations on the Open Table app.

A walk along York Street, the main drag in Elmhurst, revealed at least seven restaurants open for indoor business on a seasonably warm winter night in mid-January, days before Pritzker’s order was partly lifted. A Tribune reporter observed people being served at tables and bars.

Elmhurst officials said they responded to citizen complaints in an attempt to seek compliance, but had no authority to cite businesses that violated the governor’s rules — a power they maintained was in the hands of the DuPage County Health Department.

Police worked to “continue to educate the public and business owners on the risks, restrictions and preventive safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus,” according to a city statement.

Calls to several Elmhurst restaurant owners and operators from the Tribune for comment went unanswered, but John Quigley, president of the Elmhurst Chamber of Commerce, provided some insight into the mindset at work.

The chamber took the official position that restaurant owners should adhere to the executive order, but also recognized the existential struggle many restaurants faced.

“If you decide you cannot afford to adhere, you do what you need to do,” Quigley said owners were told, adding they also were warned they could lose their liquor licenses.

From April through September, nearly two dozen complaints were made against Elmhurst restaurants with the DuPage health department, and records indicated about half a dozen were “verified.” But no citations were issued, and there’s no record of anyone’s liquor license being revoked.

They were among nearly 550 COVID-19-mitigation complaints lodged with the department against businesses throughout the county during the first shutdown, nearly all of them restaurants. But DuPage authorities indicated no one was cited.

DuPage records lodged after Pritzker again shut down restaurants indicate more than 370 additional complaints of restaurants violating mitigation measures, but the internal county lists provided to the Tribune don’t indicate the outcomes of those cases. However, county officials indicate no citations were issued.

Mixed response in other counties

Will County employed a similarly soft touch when dealing with businesses. The county logged more than 600 complaints between March 2020 and Feb. 24, records show. No one was fined for violating restrictions, said Thomas Casey, environmental health director for the Will County Health Department.

“Most of the county’s action was education. We had a good handful of complaints,” he said. “The majority were handled with one-time visits.”

He said county officials were satisfied with the response from businesses they contacted and saw no reason for more punitive action. In mid-January, a Tribune reporter observed at least seven restaurants in southwest suburban Homer Glen, five in Mokena and four in Frankfort serving indoor diners on a weekday evening despite Pritzker’s ban still being effect.

Kane County issued notices of noncompliance with state rules to eight businesses and followed up with orders to disperse to three of them, according to county records. County officials confirmed fines weren’t issued.

A public records request for documents from McHenry County showed complaints were made against 271 food establishments, which resulted in 61 noncompliance notices sent out and legal action against 23 of the establishments. With several cases still pending, at least three of the 23 paid fines as high as \$179. In most of the complaints, officials found no violation or tried to educate the owner, according to records.

The Cook County Department of Public Health issued 160 violation notices between November and early January. In addition to inside diners, inspectors said they also saw employees working without masks and a lack of social distancing as patrons crowded around bars.

Records show many of the inspections stemmed from tips from across suburban Cook, including complaints from local police and village officials.

“We conducted quick, incognito and unannounced inspections in response to complaints. If a violation was observed, we mailed the order letter notifying the facility along with the order,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, the department’s co-lead and senior public health medical officer, in an email. “Reoccurring complaints or larger scale complaints/violations were inspected and discussed with the facility in-person, if a violation was observed, giving direction to management on-site, if possible.”

Though violators received warning letters and instructions on how to comply with mitigation efforts, county officials would not say whether any restaurants or bars were fined for flouting the rules. A database released through an open records request in January before the governor lifted the indoor dining ban indicates that the county verified the compliance of just two of the 160 businesses cited.

One of those businesses was a Mexican restaurant in Hanover Park, where a maskless employee immediately complied when asked to put on a face covering, according to county records. The other was a fish restaurant in Wheeling, where village officials returned twice to ensure it had ceased indoor dining.

Records show that county inspectors reported dining at three tables inside a pancake restaurant in Palatine on Dec. 2. A Tribune reporter who visited the place in January found employees wearing masks and diners separated by empty tables.

Wayne Pyke, 60, of Mount Prospect, was one of the diners.

"I've been going to restaurants since they opened in summertime," he said. As long as they follow distancing, masking and hand washing guidelines, he considered it safe.

In Lake County, the health department relied upon citizen complaints to determine which restaurants were complying with the governor's orders. Establishments were given two chances to stop indoor dining before county officials issued a citation, according to Larry Mackey, the county's director of environmental health.

The county received 137 complaints during the periods in which the governor had banned indoor dining. Officials called each business, and they were given a chance to say whether they were complying with the ban. If the establishment stated that it had no plans to stop indoor dining, a site visit was done and warnings were given for places not in compliance. If the business was still flouting the order on the second visit, a citation was given, Mackey said.

The 137 complaints resulted in 57 initial site inspections, 27 follow-up inspections and 10 citations. Seven business were fined \$350, with one case still pending. Health officials, however, said they did not have the power to shutter restaurants and bars.

"There was no authority to do so unless we could document that the spread of disease was likely, (such as) positive cases among workers in the facilities," Mackey said.

Records show local restaurants often pushed back on county inspectors, refusing to comply with the governor's mitigation orders and scoffing at the warnings. One Fox Lake restaurant owner, for example, told an inspector over the phone in November that he intended to allow indoor dining despite the ban and would not adhere to the county's request to suspend the practice, according to records.

When an inspector visited the Fox Lake Family Restaurant on Nov. 24, he found the business owner was true to his word. The inspector reported finding 15 people dining inside around lunchtime, including seniors who are at greater risk from COVID-19.

"He stated that he will continue offering indoor dining," the inspector wrote, noting the business had been given a warning.

Six days later, the inspector returned, and people still were dining inside, records show. A sign outside the door requested patrons wear masks — in keeping with Pritzker's order.

When the inspector asked if the restaurant would stop allowing indoor dining, the owner stated, "he will need to check with his attorney," the inspector wrote in a report.

The restaurant owner, who could not be reached for comment, was found liable and ordered to pay \$350, plus a \$50 court fee.

Regardless of where they operated, bar and restaurant owners faced an existential dilemma as the pandemic sent the economy into a tailspin.

One Forest Park bar and grill owner said he started out following the rules and served only takeout meals for curbside pickup. However, once he realized most of his competitors were staying open, he joined them and opened a side door for his regular bar customers to sneak in while the front door was locked and taped off. He said he might not have made it through without the steady trickle of bar tabs.

And many establishments did not make it.

At the start of 2020, more than 594,000 were working in the restaurant food service industry in Illinois, according to the Illinois Restaurant Association. Between March and December, the industry lost 124,000 jobs.

Some businesses are starting to hire back, said Sam Toia, president of the association. Nationally, industry groups believe the economy could lose 20% of all restaurants, he said. Illinois may lose 5,000 of its 25,000 restaurants in the crisis, he said.



Cook County Vaccine Sign-up Got 500K Hits Per Second During Appointment Drop, Crashing Website for Some

Shelby Bremer
March 25, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-vaccine-sign-up-got-500k-hits-per-second-during-appointment-drop-crashing-website-for-some/2470250/>

The Cook County COVID vaccine registration website saw roughly half a million hits per second during the latest appointment drop on Wednesday, causing the site to crash for some users as demand for the vaccine continues to dwarf available supply.

Cook County released about 16,000 first-dose COVID vaccine appointments at 12 p.m. on Wednesday for five suburban vaccination sites in Des Plaines, Forest Park, River Grove, South Holland and Riverside.

Cook County Health's Chief Communications Officer Caryn Stancik said Thursday that the website saw 500,000 requests per second for those appointments during the drop. That spike caused technical problems for many users, some of whom complained on social media that the registration had crashed entirely. All of the appointments were booked in about two hours, Stancik said.

Earlier this week, Cook County made two major expansions of its vaccine rollout: moving into Phase 1B Plus, opening eligibility to residents with certain underlying health conditions, and opening its mass vaccination sites - previously limited only to residents of the county - to all Illinoisans.

Those two changes sparked a surge in demand for appointments through Cook County. Last week, the county's site had between 700,000 and 800,000 people registered on the list of people seeking appointments, Stancik said. By Wednesday morning, that number grew to 1.3 million people.

Stancik said that the county's scheduling platform, a third-party vendor used in the health care field, made some adjustments to the site in anticipation of the heightened demand - but the website performance still slowed under the massive spike in traffic.

"In preparation for yesterday's COVID appointment release, Cook County Health's partner in COVID vaccine scheduling -- Luma Health -- made architecture changes that resulted in degraded performance while booking appointments," Stancik said. "During the release, Luma Health serviced significantly higher volumes than in previous releases, reaching over 500,000 requests per second which triggered rate limiters in Luma Health's underlying platforms. We apologize for the inconvenience and expect this issue to be corrected."

"We understand the inconvenience this has caused," Luma Health's Chief Technology Officer Aditya Bansod said in a statement to Cook County Health. "We have under anticipated the load of the expansion to the larger patient populations and we apologize for the difficulty and challenge this created while trying to schedule a vaccine appointment."

Complaints flooded social media after users were unable to access the appointments, some saying they struggled for more than an hour as the website repeatedly crashed, others calling the sign-up process "atrocious," "needlessly complicated" and "a complete waste of time," among other complaints.

"The issue with the 16,000 doses is it sounds like a lot, but the problem is Cook County opened to the entire state last week," said Caryn Davidson, who volunteers her time to help people in need of vaccinations book appointments.

"It's so much harder now than it was a couple weeks ago," added another volunteer Sarah Summers.

The county's website is far from the only registration portal that has been plagued by technical issues frustrating users. Walgreens has [apologized on multiple occasions for glitches](#) that caused what they called "delays or failures," in their online registration process, as well as an issue last week in which users were able to book only second-dose appointments without first doses.

Chicago officials also said this week that they "[continue having to swat down rumors](#)" about the United Center's mass vaccination site, the launch of which was marked by confusion after officials narrowed eligibility criteria less than an hour before opening appointments.

Currently, the United Center, the city of Chicago and much of the rest of the state of Illinois are all operating under different eligibility guidelines. After following its own timeline for nearly a month, Cook County moved into the same Phase 1B Plus as the rest of the state this week. But the criteria differing by jurisdiction at different times has presented an added challenge to some wondering if they qualify to receive their shots, even before they begin to search for appointments.

On Wednesday, the official Twitter account for the Cook County government responded to some of those complaining about its site by saying in part, "Apologies for the website woes."

Cook County operates five total mass vaccination sites in the suburbs. They 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
- Former HOB0 at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

The county has yet to announce the time and date of its next drop, but any appointments at those mass vaccination sites can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker [last week 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 like restaurant workers, higher education staff and more would become eligible](#) ahead of that expansion.



DuPage County Eligibility Changes, Forest Park Site: Latest Vaccine Updates in Illinois

Here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state

March 25, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/dupage-county-eligibility-changes-forest-park-site-latest-vaccine-updates-in-illinois/2470975/>

DuPage County is changing its vaccine eligibility as more mass vaccination sites prepare to open across the state.

Whether you're looking for a vaccine, waiting for your turn, hoping to help loved ones or just trying to make sense of it all, here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state.

(Note: If you can't find a place near you in the updates below, click [here](#) for a complete guide of where you can sign up for the COVID vaccine in Illinois)

DuPage County Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Phase 1B Plus

DuPage County moved to Phase 1B Plus of its COVID-19 vaccinations on Wednesday, expanding eligibility to residents age 16 or older with specific health conditions and disabilities, officials announced. [Here's what that means for you.](#)

Forest Park Mass Vaccination Site Opening to Public Friday

Cook County is launching its fifth mass COVID vaccination site in suburban Forest Park, open to all eligible Illinois residents. The site opens to the public on Friday and is located at the former HOB0 at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park, officials said while launching the site Monday.

[Read more here.](#)

Will County Opens New COVID Vaccination Site, Another Expected to Open Next Week

Two new coronavirus vaccination sites are set to open in Will County this month, health officials announced. Beginning Monday, Will County residents can begin receiving vaccine doses in Wilmington at St. Rose Church. Another site is set to open the week of March 29 in Monee at the former Second Place Church. For more information, click [here](#).

Other Vaccination Sites Set to Open in Illinois This Week

EDWARDS COUNTY: On March 24, Edwards County residents can begin receiving COVID vaccinations at 230 N. 5th St. in Albion. Appointments can be made through the Wabash County Health Department at (618) 263-3873.

CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN LAWRENCEVILLE: For Lawrence County residents, coronavirus vaccination shots open at 303 Buchanan Dr. in Lawrenceville on March 25. To book an appointment, call (812) 213-0199.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY: Though a specific location has not been determined yet, state health officials said residents of Cumberland County can begin receiving vaccinations on March 26. To book an appointment, call (217) 849-3211.

EDGAR COUNTY: Beginning March 27, residents in Edgar County can receive the coronavirus vaccine at an unknown location. To make an appointment, visit ecphd.org or call (217) 294-2729.

Chicago's Phase 1C Will Begin on March 29. Here's What That Means

Chicago will enter [Phase 1C](#), expanding coronavirus vaccine eligibility to include those with underlying health conditions and essential workers, on March 29, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot officially announced Wednesday. Find out if you're eligible [here](#).

Chicago Employers Cannot Take Action Against Workers For Time-Off to Receive COVID Vaccine

Chicago's newest ordinance says employers cannot take adverse action against an employee for taking time off to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, providing similar worker protection to last May's coronavirus legislation. Read more [here](#).

Fake CDC Vaccine ID Cards Being Sold Online In Illinois

Scammers are cashing in on fake CDC vaccination identification cards as the demand for proof of vaccination is expected to build. The blank cards are being sold on sites like Craigslist, eBay, and OfferUp, and NBC 5 has found multiple postings in the Chicago area. Read more [here](#).

United Center Opens Drive-Thru Vaccination Site

A drive-thru vaccination opened at Chicago's United Center mass vaccination clinic. Currently, the facility has been used only for walk-up appointments, but Tuesday marked the start of a drive-up service. [Here's what you need to know](#).

Vaccine Eligibility for United Center Expands to 17 Chicago ZIP Codes

Residents of now 17 ZIP codes in Chicago can register for a COVID vaccine appointment at the United Center mass vaccination site. The list includes: 60608, 60609, 60619, 60620, 60621, 60623, 60624, 60628, 60629, 60632, 60636, 60639, 60644, 60649, 60651, 60652, 60653.

To register online, visit Zocdoc.com/vaccine. To register by phone, call (312) 746-4835.

Cook County Now in Phase 1B Plus of COVID Vaccinations

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.

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. [More information here](#).

More Essential Workers Now Eligible for COVID Vaccine in Illinois

Some essential workers not eligible under Illinois' Phase 1B Plus will qualify for the COVID vaccine under new eligibility guidelines beginning Monday. According to the [updated guidance](#), Illinois expanded eligibility 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. For a full eligibility timeline click [here](#).

New Illinois Mobile Vaccination Sites Open

Over the weekend and on Monday, the National Guard brought vaccines to rural communities to set up events that will delivering upwards of 1,000 doses of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine per day, the governor announced Monday. Only residents from the specified county will be able to receive vaccinations at the site.



Cook County health officials announce easing of COVID-19 mitigation measures in suburban Cook County

March 26, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-officials-announce-easing-of-covid-19-mitigation-measures-in-suburban-cook-county/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced the easing of several mitigation measures for suburban Cook County Friday, including increased capacity for social events and spectator events.

Health officials issued Mitigation Order 2021-6, effective immediately, which increases outdoor dining to groups of 10 people, allows amusement parks to open at 25 percent capacity and allows outdoor social events to increase to 100 people or 50 percent capacity.

Additionally, seated spectator events at a venue with a capacity under 200 is limited to 50 percent and no more than 50 individuals, whereas venues with a capacity above 200 are limited to 25 percent capacity.

The order reinforces the need for all over two years of age to continue mask-wearing in public places.



Cook County Eases Outdoor Restrictions as COVID Cases Increase

Chicago upped outdoor capacity limits at a number of establishments Thursday

March 26, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-eases-outdoor-restrictions-as-covid-cases-increase/2472389/>

Following a similar path as Chicago, Cook County announced the gradual reduction of COVID-19 mitigation measures Friday, particularly as it relates to outdoor gatherings, as it experiences a worrisome rise in case numbers.

Suburban Cook County has recently seen its daily case rate increase by more than 40%, along with nine days of increasing hospital bed usage, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

According to a new mitigation order issued by the Cook County Department of Public Health Friday, the updated capacity limits include:

Outdoor Dining: Groups of 10 people

Amusement Parks: Can open at 25% capacity

Outdoor Fitness Classes, Meetings, Social Events and Recreation Activities: Can increase to 50% capacity or 100 people

Seated Spectator Events: Venues with a capacity less than 200 are limited to 50% and no more than 50 individuals. Larger venues with a capacity of more than 200 are limited to 25% capacity.

While most indoor restrictions remain the same, that's not the case for indoor fitness classes, which can increase to the lesser of 50% capacity or 50 people per room.

Face coverings must be worn at all times, and a minimum distance of six feet must be maintained between all participants, officials said.

Citing "worrying increases" in COVID health metrics, [Chicago increased outdoor capacity limits at a number of establishments Thursday](#), with the focus of preventing "a third surge of the virus" in the city.

Statewide, [Illinois' is reporting a "concerning possible trend" that could mark the start of another resurgence](#), according to IDPH.

Since March 8, Illinois has seen 10 days of increases in the seven-day rolling average for hospital admissions, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. At the same time, the COVID-19 test positivity has risen from 2.5% on March 10, to 3.3% on Friday.

So far, Illinois isn't meeting the [metrics required](#) to move into its "[Bridge Phase](#)," a transition phase that would increase capacity limitations ahead of a full reopening. In order to move forward, 70% of residents 65 and older statewide must have received their first dose of the vaccine, with no increase in COVID-19 metrics like hospital admissions and more.



Suburban Cook County Eases Restrictions Despite Uptick in COVID-19 Cases, Illnesses

Kristen Thometz

March 26, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/26/suburban-cook-county-eases-restrictions-despite-uptick-covid-19-cases-illnesses>

Cook County Department of Public Health officials announced Friday they are loosening restrictions on outdoor businesses and social gatherings despite an increase in COVID-19 cases and illnesses.

“We continue to make progress in some of the metrics, however, we have seen a recent increase in cases in suburban Cook County,” said Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer and co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The daily case rate in suburban Cook County has increased more than 40% since last week and the county has seen nine days of increasing hospital bed usage, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

“To be able to cautiously reopen businesses, we must continue to protect the safety and health of everyone around us by getting vaccinated when it’s your turn, wearing a mask, watching your social distance and washing your hands,” Joshi said.

The loosening of restrictions in suburban Cook County [mirrors those announced a day earlier by the city](#).

Under the new rules, which take effect Friday, up to 10 people can be seated outdoors at restaurants as long as tables are spaced 6 feet apart. Indoor dining remains capped at 50 people or 50% of capacity per room, whichever is less. Masks must be worn when customers are not eating or drinking.

Up to 100 people can now attend outdoor social events, including weddings, or 50% of the space’s normal capacity, according to the rules. Indoor gatherings remain capped at 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever is less.

Outdoor fitness classes can increase to 100 people maximum, while indoor classes can increase to 50 people per room or 50% a room’s capacity, whichever is less, as long as face coverings are worn at all times and participants are spaced at least 6 feet apart, according to the rules.

Outdoor venues with a normal capacity of 200 people or more can operate at 25% capacity, under the new rules, while smaller venues are limited to no more than 50% capacity or 50 people, according to the rules.

Zoos and outdoor amusement parks can open at 25% capacity, according to the new rules.

Daily Herald

3,002 new cases: Rising virus counts, including in suburban Cook, threaten 'Bridge Phase'

Marni Pyke

March 26, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210326/3002-new-cases-rising-virus-counts-including-in-suburban-cook-threaten-bridge-phase>

New cases of COVID-19 spiked up to 3,002 Friday -- the highest since early February -- as state officials warned of a possible virus resurgence.

The news comes with 126,710 more people getting COVID-19 shots Thursday and the federal government projecting to ship nearly 1 million doses next week to Illinois.

But even as the state approaches nearly one in six Illinoisans fully vaccinated, rising numbers of cases and hospitalizations are throwing a curve at hopes of easing existing restrictions on activities and moving to a "Bridge Phase" of reopening in mid-April.

Risk factors such as more new patients in hospital beds "is very concerning to us," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said at an event in Chicago.

"It makes us take a pause here to evaluate these numbers. What we want to do most of all is make sure -- is this a blip in the numbers? Is this a short surge that's taking place that will come back down? Or is this something that could have some sustaining features to it? In which case, we want to be extra careful."

Pritzker also noted he hopes to "see a significant increase" in the number of Johnson & Johnson's one-dose vaccines in coming days.

As the tally of shots in arms grows, so do cases of more infectious COVID-19 variants. The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 227 COVID-19 variant infections Thursday compared to 176 Tuesday. Of those, there were 188 cases of a COVID-19 mutation originating in the United Kingdom on Thursday, in contrast with 167 Tuesday.

The state also recorded for the first time cases of a COVID-19 variant originating in California -- 27 of them.

"Viruses want to mutate. That's their way of propagating," said Dr. Gregory Huhn, infectious disease physician and COVID-19 vaccine lead for Cook County Health.

But Johnson & Johnson's vaccine, plus Pfizer's and Moderna's two-dose vaccines, are effective against variants, he said.

"It's really a race to make sure that we get as many people vaccinated as possible and protected so that these variants and mutations will eventually, over time, die off," Huhn said.

IDPH leaders singled out areas with troubling health metrics, including suburban Cook County where infections have increased by nearly 40% since last week and hospitalizations have risen for nine days, and Chicago where virus infections have almost doubled.

However, the Cook County Department of Public Health announced Friday it would ease certain restrictions on activities.

Changes include increasing outdoor dining to groups of 10 people; opening amusement parks at 25% capacity; expanding capacity to 50% or 100 people for outdoor fitness classes, meetings, social events and recreational activities, while indoor fitness classes can have the lesser of 50% or 50 people per room; and allowing seated spectator events at small venues to operate at 50% capacity with no more than 50 people, plus allowing large venues seating over 200 to operate at 25%.

Health officials are watching northwest Region 1, which includes Rockford plus Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, Whiteside and Winnebago counties. That region has experienced eight days of rising hospitalizations and six days of increasing positivity rates for COVID-19 tests.

For that reason, IDPH is allowing Boone, Carroll, Lee, Ogle and Whiteside counties, which have low vaccination levels and unfilled appointments, to expand shot eligibility for people age 16 and older to ensure all doses are used up.

The state is dispatching vaccination teams to those areas.

For the rest of Illinois, the date to expand vaccinations to everyone age 16 and older remains at April 12.

Assuming shipments of vaccines hit 1 million soon, extra doses above baselines "will be allocated to high-demand areas where at-risk eligible residents face long waits for appointments," the IDPH said. That should include the suburbs where many are seeking shots.

The federal government has delivered 6,561,715 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 5,281,618 shots have been administered. Since Sunday, 804,920 vaccine doses have been delivered to the state.

The seven-day average for inoculations is 99,449.

So far, 1,963,630 people -- 15.4% of the state's population -- have been fully vaccinated. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses several weeks apart.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,302 COVID-19 patients Thursday night, the most hospitalizations since 1,353 on Feb. 26.

The state's seven-day case positivity rate is 2.9%.

Illinois has recorded 1,232,900 total cases and 21,203 deaths since the pandemic began, with 33 more deaths Friday. New cases have not topped 3,000 since Feb. 6, when 3,062 were recorded.

Labs processed 76,774 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



Cook County to Release 25K First-Dose COVID Vaccine Appointments for 4 Sites

March 27, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-to-release-25k-first-dose-covid-vaccine-appointments-for-4-sites/2472746/>

Cook County will release thousands of first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Sunday at four suburban vaccination sites, the health department announced.

Cook County Health officials said approximately 25,000 new first-dose Pfizer appointments will be made available at noon on Sunday. The appointments will be open to all Illinois residents eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B, 1B Plus and "certain individuals previously classified as 1C."

Residents who are classified as eligible in Phase 1C, but now qualify for the COVID vaccine under new guidelines will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule, officials said.

Appointments can be made on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988 on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. However, the call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate this release, officials noted.

The appointments will be for the following mass vaccination sites in suburban Cook County:

- 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
- Former HOBO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

Cook County moved to Phase 1B Plus of COVID vaccinations, which is where most of Illinois is, on Monday. That expands 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 mass vaccination sites were previously only administering vaccine allocated for Cook County, but the Cook County Department of Public Health said that beginning this week, they will receive additional vaccine supply to enable the sites to serve all eligible Illinois residents.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker [last week 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 to release 25,000 COVID vaccine appointments Sunday

March 27, 2021

<https://www.audacy.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-to-release-25-000-covid-vax-appointments-sunday>

Cook County health officials shared plans to release 25,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments for eligible individuals at noon Sunday at four locations around the county.

Eligible individuals will be under Phases 1A , 1B and 1B+, along with certain individuals previously classified as 1C.

The appointments will be at the following locations:

- Triton College
- South Suburban College
- Des Plaines
- Forest Park

This news came as the Illinois Department of Public Health reported on Saturday 2,678 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, including 25 additional virus-related deaths.

Of the deceased, five were from Cook County.

In addition to 1A, 1B and 1B+, individuals who were previously classified as 1C in the following sectors: higher education, government, media, restaurants, construction trades, and religious leaders, will be eligible to schedule an appointment.

Those in the county's database classified as 1C but who now meet the state's new guidelines will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988.

The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate this release.



Chicago COVID vaccine eligibility expands to Phase 1C

More essential workers, those with underlying medical conditions now eligible to book vaccine appointments

Craig Wall, Eric Horng and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 29, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/covid-vaccine-chicago-illinois-phase-1c-group/10456164/>

Chicago is opening up COVID vaccine eligibility to the Phase 1C group Monday.

The move means anyone 16 and older who has a qualifying medical condition can now book an appointment.

More types of essential workers are also now eligible, including workers in clergy and religious organizations, energy, finance, food and beverage service, higher education, information technology and communications, legal, media, other community or government-based operations and essential functions, personal care and hygiene, public health, public safety, retail, shelter and housing, transportation and logistics, water and wastewater.

In Chicago's collar counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will, vaccine eligibility has been expanded to anyone in Phase 1A, 1B and 1B+. Phase 1B+ now includes some essential workers, such as government employees, higher education staff, news media, restaurant staff, construction trade workers and religious leaders.

Also starting Monday, vaccination sites run by the city of Chicago will only schedule appointments for people who live in the city.

At a vaccination site in Chinatown, union workers who signed up last week lined up before 8 a.m. to get the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

"Well, I was in my car, I'm like, 'Oh my God like I seen all these people and I'm like, I'm gonna take like four hours,' but I asked the lady and she said that the line just looks really bad but it'll take like 30 minutes," said union member Vanessa Arroyo.

At the Chinatown clinic there were 1,200 available appointments for union members.

"Well the process, to be honest is really smooth," said Brandon Pendleton, who got vaccinated. "Had an 8:45 appointment, line moved pretty well. They got us right in, gave us the shot. And yeah, I'm happy to have it and happy that this whole thing is seemingly coming to an end."

"This vaccination site is the first in the country that is run specifically for union members," said Bob Reiter, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Another labor vaccination clinic will be held at the same Chinatown site next Monday, and other similar clinics are planned for the future.

With the expansion to 1C, the majority of Chicago's adult population is now eligible to get a vaccine. However, officials continuing to urge patience as eligibility does not guarantee an immediate appointment.

"It took me a while," said Michelle Gerol. "The process was a little frustrating, but once I got it, it was like finding the good ticket from the Willy Wonka movie."

This week the state is expected to receive one million doses of the three available vaccines. It comes at a time when Chicago is seeing a spike in cases among young people in and around Lincoln Park, which has raised concerns among health officials.

In other parts of the state where demand is low, health departments are now allowed to expand eligibility to anyone over 16.

"I think we're getting to the point, even in Chicago where in the next couple of weeks, we're going to see the demand for vaccine start to come down and the supplies going to continue to increase," said Dr. Robert Citronberg with Advocate Aurora Health.

The expansion comes at a time when cases are on the rise, and the positivity rate is above 4% with Chicago averaging more than 400 new cases a day, the benchmark that has triggered new reopening mitigations.

In the past 10 days, hospitalizations in Chicago are up 16%, and in suburban Cook County, up more than 20%. Will and Kankakee counties have seen a 27% rise.

"We're certainly seeing a rise in cases," said Dr. Jennifer Seo, CDPH Chief Medical Officer. "It's not to the point that we're seeing in November, but it's definitely something that we want to closely follow. We're very concerned about what the outcome might be over the next 40 days."

Driving the uptick are adults 18 to 39. In Chicago, Mayor Lightfoot said various gatherings, including bar crawls, have been the source of recent outbreaks. She urged caution and patience as people scramble to get appointments.

"Be patient," Lightfoot urged. "We are bringing about a million more people into eligibility. We don't have a million more doses coming to Chicago."

Cook County has yet to announce when it will open access to those in 1C, but did make 25,000 new appointments available at four of its mass vaccination sites Sunday afternoon. Anyone eligible under phases 1A, 1B, 1B+ and approved essential workers were able to sign up for the shot due to new state guidelines, however, those appointments were booked up in just under two hours.

"It was 50,000 people in the waiting room with only 25,000 vaccines," said vaccine hunter Maria Koikas.

Koikas started helping others enroll when she saw how difficult the process was for her own parents.

"It is a million people going for the same hot concert ticket that there is only 100 of them," she said.

In the last month, Koikas has enrolled nearly 300 people and counting. Her advice is to check often, be prepared for the appointment drop, and don't give up.

To date, two million Illinois residents, which is 16% of the state population, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The state has been vaccinating over 99,000 people a day on average.

Gov. JB Pritzker said he may be forced to rethink his approach to fully reopening the state fully, which it was on pace to start next week.

Right now, Illinois is in the green on vaccination rates for those 65+, with nearly 69% receiving one dose - close to the 70% required.

But it's in the red on health metrics, including for daily cases, hospitalizations, and new admissions. And until that changes, there will be no further reopening.



Cook County to release 25,000 1st dose appointments Sunday

March 27, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-release-25-000-042103428.html>

Cook County will release 25K 1st dose appointments for those in 1A, 1B, 1B+ and approved essential workers at noon.

Video Transcript

Cook County Health will release 25,000 vaccine appointments tomorrow for people getting their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Anyone in phases A, 1A, 1B, 1B+, and approved essential workers can sign up starting at noon. The shots will be given at these four locations. And we are posting the details on our website.



Cook County Schedules Appointments For 25,000 First-Dose Vaccinations, Uses ‘Virtual Waiting Room’ To Manage Traffic

[CBS 2 Chicago Staff](#)

March 28, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/28/cook-county-25000-vaccine-appointments-covid-19-coronavirus/>

Appointments for 25,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccinations were made available in Cook County on Sunday.

Cook County Health released the 25,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine for appointments at four suburban mass vaccination sites:

- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave, River Grove, IL
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland
- Des Plaines vaccine site at 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Forest Park vaccine site at 7630 Roosevelt Rd.

CBS 2's Marissa Parra reported the appointments were snatched up in under two hours.

Cook County's 25,000 vaccines were snatched up in under 2 hours

On whether the virtual waiting room was a helpful or not, the online jury's still out. We're hearing from both (and asking questions to CDPH) tonight on [@cbschicago](#) <https://t.co/VCZr0WG04v>

— Marissa Parra (@MarParNews) [March 28, 2021](#)

The county used a “virtual waiting room” to manage the influx of people seeking to make vaccination appointments.

“To improve the sign-up process and website performance, Cook County Health implemented a virtual waiting room. As part of the waiting room process, once the link is opened, a limited number of people were admitted to the booking page,” a spokeswoman explained in a statement. “Visitors were admitted to the booking page from the waiting room on a first-come, first serve basis if vaccine was available when it was their turn.”

People eligible under Phases 1A, 1B, 1B+, and some previously classified as 1C were allowed to register. That included healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, frontline essential workers, people age 65 and older, people with certain underlying health conditions, higher education workers, government employees, media, restaurant workers, construction trades workers, and religious leaders.

Anyone who has signed up for the county's database who were in Phase 1C but now meet the current state eligibility list for a vaccine got an email with instructions for scheduling an appointment.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. The call center was open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate this release.



Cook County to Release 25K COVID Vaccine Appointments Sunday

March 28, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/top-videos-home/cook-county-to-release-25k-covid-vaccine-appointments-sunday/2472888/>

Those looking for a vaccine appointment were dealt good news Saturday as Cook County health officials announced 25,000 appointments will soon be available. NBC 5's Vi Nguyen reports.



Cook County to open 25,000 first-dose appointments Sunday for four suburban mass vaccination sites

Judy Wang

March 28, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-to-open-25000-first-dose-appointments-as-phase-1c-vaccinations-begin-monday/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health is slated to open [25,000 first-dose vaccine appointments](#) Sunday amid rising case numbers statewide and across the country.

The appointments are for the Pfizer vaccine and can be scheduled at one of four Cook County mass vaccination sites, including the sites in Des Plaines, River Grove, Forest Park and South Holland. The appointments will be open to those classified as Phase 1A and Phase 1B.

The announcement comes as Governor Pritzker recently announced expanded vaccine eligibility in counties with decreasing vaccine demand and rising case, as public health officials look to curb a worrying spike in virus cases in recent weeks.

Eligibility is slated to open to all people in the state outside of Chicago ages 16 and up on April 12, ahead of the pace set by President Joe Biden administration's goal of May 1.



Cook County to release 25,000 vaccine appointments Sunday

FOX 32 Digital Staff
March 27, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-to-release-25000-vaccine-appointments-sunday>

Cook County Health will release approximately 25,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments at noon on Sunday, March 28.

The appointments will be released for the following locations:

Triton College

South Suburban College

Des Plaines

Forest Park

Individuals eligible for these appointments include those in Phases 1A, 1B and 1B+, along with certain individuals who were previously classified as 1C in the following sectors: higher education, government, media, restaurants, construction trades and religious leaders.

Those in the county's database classified as 1C, but who now meet the state's new guidelines will receive an email with instructions on how to schedule.

All vaccinations are by appointment only.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

The call center will also be open Sunday, March 28 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Daily Herald

More than 16% of Illinoisans fully vaccinated; COVID-19 hospitalizations on the rise

Katlyn Smith

March 28, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210328/more-than-16-of-illinoisans-fully-vaccinated-covid-19-hospitalizations-on-the-rise>

While Illinois public health officials announced Sunday more than 16% of the state's population is now fully vaccinated against COVID-19, hospitalizations from the virus continue to rise.

Statewide, vaccine providers administered 110,211 vaccine doses Saturday, slightly above the seven-day average of 103,081 doses.

So far, 2,063,530 people -- 16.2% of the state's population of 12.7 million -- have been fully vaccinated. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses several weeks apart.

DuPage County leads the metropolitan area with more than 17% of residents fully inoculated. In suburban Cook County, 16.49% of residents have received their second shot.

But the vaccination progress comes amid a concerning uptick in hospital patient counts and other metrics, health authorities say.

Across Illinois, hospitals were treating 1,337 patients for COVID-19 as of Saturday night, up from about 1,230 at the start of the month, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported.

Of those hospitalized, 269 patients were in the intensive care unit and 107 patients were on ventilators.

The state's case positivity rate increased yet again to 3.2% based on a seven-day average. That figure on Friday stood at 2.9%.

State officials also reported 2,250 new cases of COVID-19, along with 23 more deaths, bringing the state's death toll to 21,251 since the onset of the pandemic. Total cases statewide reached 1,237,828.

Labs processed 65,729 virus tests in the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the Cook County Health Department at noon Sunday began releasing appointments for about 25,000 more first doses of the Pfizer vaccine. The appointment slots were offered at four mass vaccination sites: the former Kmart store in Des Plaines, Triton College in River Grove, a former HOBLO store in Forest Park and South Suburban College in South Holland.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday. The call center will also be open until 5 p.m. Sunday.



Mixed Reaction To ‘Virtual Waiting Room’ For People Looking To Sign Up For COVID Vaccine Through Cook County

Marissa Parra
March 28, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/28/covid-vaccine-cook-county-virtual-waiting-room/>

Cook County released 25,000 first-dose [coronavirus vaccine appointments](#) Sunday for phases 1A to 1B+.

The Cook County Department of Public Health on Sunday also debuted a new “virtual waiting room,” and as CBS 2’s Marissa Parra reported, it was met with a combination of delight, frustration, and confusion.

Avi Rubin is a Vaccine Hunter, spending free time hunting for vaccine appointments for the elderly and high risk who may not be tech-savvy.

“I am booking the vaccine for a male in his 80s, and he has surgery in two weeks and needs his appointment as soon as possible,” Hunter said.

So when those 25,000 Cook County vaccine appointments became available on Sunday, Rubin logged right on.

Rubin has been navigating the county website for months. But for the first time Sunday, he was sent to a waiting room – along with at least 50,000 others.

“This was much better,” said Gayle Dieck, who scored a vaccine appointment.

But Rubin said, “I’m not sure how I feel about it.”

How one felt about the new Cook County Health virtual waiting room depended on their booking preferences.

“Last time, I would get on early and just continue to refresh the Cook County website,” Rubin said.

“I liked it, because I didn’t have to keep refreshing,” Dieck said.

Several online chimed in to praise Cook County, saying they thought the waiting room helped keep things more “civilized.”

For Dieck and roughly 25,000 others, they walked away from their laptops with a success story.

“I was about to give up after an hour and a half, but then it just opened up and they let me in,” Dieck said.

Some made it out of the waiting room – like she did – but only to find that was as far as they could go.

And thousands of others, like Rubin, waited the full two hours – only to get no vaccine appointment, but a lot more frustration.

“I think it really is a more civilized process, but for my purposes as a vaccine hunter, I think it’s more difficult,” Rubin said. “I’m trying to book appointments for people and I’m stuck in here trying to compete with thousands of others people.”

Cook County Health said at its peak, 70,000 people were in the waiting room – even though we clocked 50,000.

“To improve the sign-up process and website performance, Cook County Health implemented a virtual waiting room,” a spokeswoman said in a statement. “As part of the waiting room process, once the link is opened, a limited number of people were admitted to the booking page. Visitors were admitted to the booking page from the waiting room on a first-come, first serve basis if vaccine was available when it was their turn.”

They said the whole point of the waiting room was to control the flow of traffic so that the website wouldn’t crash, but getting from the waiting room to the vaccine booking page, as we saw, doesn’t guarantee an appointment.

Parra also asked about why some people who joined the waiting room later got appointments ahead of those who joined earlier. Cook County Health said that comes down to the cookies on people’s devices.

The people who did get appointments will go to one of four suburban mass vaccination sites:

Triton College, 2000 5th Ave, River Grove;

South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland;

Des Plaines vaccine site at 1155 E. Oakton St.;

Forest Park vaccine site at 7630 Roosevelt Rd.

People eligible under Phases 1A, 1B, 1B+, and some previously classified as 1C were allowed to register. That included healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, frontline essential workers, people age 65 and older, people with certain underlying health conditions, higher education workers, government employees, media, restaurant workers, construction trades workers, and religious leaders.

Daily Herald

Cook County taking appointments for 25,000 more doses at 4 sites including Des Plaines

March 28, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210328/cook-county-taking-appointments-for-25000-more-doses-at-4-sites-including-des-plaines>

Cook County Health will start releasing appointments at noon Sunday for about 25,000 more first doses of the Pfizer vaccine at four locations, including in Des Plaines.

The site will be open to any Illinoisan eligible up to Phase 1B-plus, including residents who are 65 and older or front-line essential workers like teachers and police, and people under 65 with underlying medical conditions, such as cancer or kidney disease.

In addition, anyone previously classified as 1C in higher, education, government, media, restaurants, construction trades, and religious leaders will be eligible to schedule an appointment, ABC 7 reported.

The sites where the appointments will be scheduled are:

- Des Plaines at a former Kmart at 1155 E. Oakton St.
- Triton College in River Grove
- Forest Park at a former HOB0 store at 7630 Roosevelt Road, now ready to open on Thursday.
- South Suburban College in South Holland

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday-Friday. The call center will also be open Sunday, March 28, until 5 p.m.



Residents Hopeful as More Vaccination Appointments Open in Cook County Sunday

Vi Nguyen
March 28, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/residents-hopeful-as-more-vaccination-appointments-open-in-cook-county-sunday/2472957/>

Sunday will be a big day for those still on the hunt for the COVID vaccine, as Cook County Health plans to release [approximately 25,000 appointments for the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine](#).

More than a million doses of the COVID vaccine have been administered in Cook County since the treatments were first approved in December, and starting Sunday another 25,000 people will get the opportunity to put themselves in that growing group of individuals.

"I think that's great," said Chicago resident John DeBlasio. "I really am looking forward to breaking out of the pandemic bunker and getting this over with. It's been great to be able to reconvene with family because you don't feel the anxiety of COVID when people are vaccinated."

Cook County Health said people eligible under phase 1A, 1B, and 1B+ can book their appointments through the county website to get the first shot at one of four locations: Triton College, South Suburban College, Des Plaines, and Forest Park.

"I think if you try to get online you try to get an appointment a lot of times that takes a little bit of luck and persistence," said DeBlasio.

The process to get an appointment has been frustrating for many people, but one Michigan resident said the process was pretty smooth in her home state. She and her 94-year-old father got vaccinated earlier this year.

"I feel like I'm safe," said Michigan resident Fay. "I know you still can get it."

Other residents who are not old enough to get the COVID vaccine said they are ready when the time comes. Sully Krein said she wants to get the shot when it's approved.

"Probably more opportunities to do things not having to wear a mask," she said.

The 14-year-old is visiting from Wisconsin. For now she and her friend are being extra careful while they wait for a vaccine for kids.

"Honestly just to stay safe," said Wisconsin resident Dyonna. "If you are going to go out make sure you're wearing a mask, social distancing just what we've been doing."

Currently, vaccines are only approved for individuals aged 16 and older. Clinical trials are underway to determine whether the vaccine is safe for children younger than 16, but no approvals have been given by the FDA at this time.

While residents in Cook County are hoping to book their appointments tomorrow, one Indiana residents told NBC 5 she has no plans to get the shot in her state.

“I don’t want to get vaccinated,” said Indiana resident Susan Graham. “They have it where I work at the clinic. I’ve seen a lot of people have a lot of negative results so I just want to take my chances I guess.”

Even though she has no plans to get vaccinated, Graham said that doesn’t mean she’s letting up on the safety precautions.

“It’s a responsible thing to do for everybody around you to put your mask on, hand sanitizer and all that,” she said. “Because you don’t know we could have it we don’t know so I wouldn’t want to infect somebody else unknowingly.”

Cook County Health said some people previously part of group 1C can also book their appointments online if they work in the fields of higher education, government, media, restaurant, construction trades, and religious leaders.



Cook County Health: All 25K COVID-19 vax appointments booked in less than 2 hours

March 28, 2021

<https://www.audacy.com/wbbm780/news/local/cook-county-health-all-25k-covid-19-vax-appointments-booked-in-less-than-2-hours>

Sunday was another day of scrambling on cell phones and laptops as Cook County residents tried to make appointments to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

At noon, Cook County Health released approximately 25,000 Pfizer first-dose appointments for those eligible under certain phases of the vaccine rollout.

Cook County officials told WBBM the appointments were gone in less than two hours. Appointments were booked at a rate of about 240 per minute.

Monday, the city of Chicago officially enters phase 1C of the vaccine rollout.

All essential workers and adults with underlying medical conditions will become eligible for COVID-19 vaccines.

Cook County officials told WBBM the appointments were gone in less than two hours.



25K New Vaccine Appointments Booked in Less Than 2 Hours, Cook County Officials Say

March 28, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/25k-new-vaccine-appointments-booked-in-less-than-2-hours-cook-county-officials-say/2473076/>

Cook County Health says that 25,000 coronavirus vaccination appointments released Sunday were snapped up in less than two hours.

According to officials, the appointments were released to the public at noon, with residents in Phase 1A, Phase 1B, Phase 1B-Plus, and certain other residents who were previously included in Phase 1C eligible.

Within a span of less than two hours, the first-dose appointments, which were set to be available at one of four suburban sites, were all gone, with officials confirming that information Sunday afternoon.

Cook County has moved into Phase 1B-Plus of coronavirus vaccinations, with that new group including individuals 16 or older with a preexisting medical condition or other comorbidity.

As of Sunday, nearly 1.1 million doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been administered in suburban Cook County. Approximately 16.49% of the population has been fully vaccinated against coronavirus, with more than 400,000 residents having received both shots.

The county is averaging 21,293 doses administered per day, and has an on-hand inventory of more than 140,000.

Chicago set to move into Phase 1C of its vaccination program on Monday, while all Illinois residents 16 and older are scheduled to be eligible to sign up for vaccinations beginning on April 12.



Chicago's Phase 1C, New Illinois Eligibility: Latest COVID Vaccine Updates in Illinois

March 29, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/1c-vaccine-group-new-eligibility-guidelines-latest-vaccine-updates-in-illinois/2473414/>

25K New Cook County Vaccine Appointments Booked in Less Than 2 Hours

Cook County Health said that 25,000 COVID-19 vaccine appointments released Sunday were snapped up in less than two hours.

Appointments for the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine were released to the public at 12 p.m. Sunday, officials said, open to all Illinois residents eligible under the state's vaccination plan in Phases 1A, 1B, 1B Plus and others "previously classified as 1C" that are eligible in the state beginning Monday. Read more [here](#).



Chicago expands COVID vaccine eligibility to 1C

March 29, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/chicago-expands-vaccine-eligibility-1c-114102630.html>

Hundreds of thousands of additional Chicagoans are now eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine

Video Transcript

ALEXIS MCADAMS: That's right. People logged on today at noon trying to get their vaccine appointment. They say they were stuck in the waiting room with thousands of others. They're still hoping tonight they'll get that appointment soon. This coming tonight as just over 16% of the state's population is now fully vaccinated.

Starting Monday, the City of Chicago officially enters phase 1c of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. That means anyone over the age of 16 with underlying conditions and all essential workers who did not previously qualify will be eligible for a vaccine.

MICHELLE GEROL: The process was a little frustrating.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: The 1c rollout comes as the city and state have seen a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases. Just in the past week alone, Chicago's daily case rate has gone up by 50%.

ZACHARY RUBIN: We are getting concerned that there may be another resurgence, especially because we have a mixture of new variants circulating around.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: Dr. Zachary Rubin has been watching those numbers closely, hoping the state continues to expand vaccine eligibility.

ZACHARY RUBIN: Things have been slow in certain areas of the state, which have been frustrating. However, as long as we can increase the eligibility and increase the supply, we'll be able to meet some of these challenges.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: Today, Cook County Health released 25,000 appointments for the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at four suburban sites. Those appointments filled up almost immediately.

MARIA KOLKAS: Literally at 12:00, 12:01, it was 50,000 people in the virtual waiting room with only 25,000 vaccines.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: Maria is a vaccine hunter. She started helping others enroll when she saw how difficult the process was for her own parents.

MARIA KOLKAS: It's a million people going for the same hot concert ticket that there's only 100 of.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: In the last month, Maria has enrolled nearly 300 people and counting. Her advice-- check often, be prepared for the appointment drops, and don't give up.

MARIA KOLKAS: It's not easy.

ALEXIS MCADAMS: Now, the City of Chicago says the vaccine rollout will continue for 1c over the next couple of weeks. They want to expand the eligibility to all Chicagoans as soon as possible, but they have to wait for larger quantities of the vaccine to become available first. Additionally, beginning tomorrow when this vaccine rollout-- the next phase,

rather-- begins, the city-run vaccination sites will only schedule appointments for Chicago residents. You have to bring your ID to prove that you are eligible.



State Launching New Mass Vaccination Sites in Multiple Suburbs for All Eligible Illinois Residents

March 29, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-launching-new-mass-vaccination-sites-for-all-eligible-residents-in-4-suburban-counties/2473711/>

Four suburban mass vaccination sites are expected to open to all eligible Illinois residents this week.

New locations are set to open in Kane, Lake and Will counties with another site in Grundy County expanding to all eligible state residents regardless of where they live.

“As we continue to get more and more vaccine from the federal government, I’m proud to launch four additional state-supported large mass vaccination sites open to all eligible Illinoisans to ensure residents can receive their vaccines as efficiently and equitably as possible,” Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a statement.

According to the governor's office, the new vaccination sites include:

April 1: Community based testing center located at 102 W. Water Street, Waukegan in Lake County. Details [here](#).

April 2: Former Carson Pirie Scott, located at 970 North Lake St., Aurora in Kane County. Details [here](#).

April 2: Former Toys R Us, located at 3128 Voyager Lane, Joliet in Will County. Details [here](#).

Each site will offer vaccines to any eligible Illinois resident, regardless of ZIP code, the governor's office said. The [Grundy County vaccination location](#) at Shabbona Middle School will also expand its eligibility.

In addition, a vaccination site is set to expand in McHenry County, with the assistance of the National Guard, but only those who live and work in the county will be eligible, the state noted.

The site is located inside a former K-Mart located at 1900 N. Richmond Ave. (Details [here](#))

Pritzker touted an influx of vaccine doses set to arrive in the state this week as [vaccine eligibility expanded](#) Monday to include additional essential workers.

Food and beverage workers, construction trade workers and religious leaders will be eligible, according to guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health. On March 22, the state expanded eligibility to include higher education staff, government workers and media.

“Over 3.6 million Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine. We’re projected to get nearly 1 million doses this week, and IDPH and our 97 local health departments working hard to administer these shots. However, this battle is far from over, and with new cases and hospitalizations on the rise, I encourage every resident to buckle down, wear your mask, and do your part so we can all power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Health officials said the state made the decision to launch the sites with expanded ZIP code eligibility to "reverse early signs of a [possible resurgence](#) of COVID-19 cases."

The Illinois Department of Public Health [on Friday authorized counties in the state seeing low COVID vaccine demand to begin vaccinating all residents 16 and older](#) at their immediate discretion in order to "address a concerning possible trend in increasing COVID hospitalizations and case rates."

IDPH said in a statement that it had seen vaccine demand slow in several counties "with early signs of unfilled appointments and increased vaccine inventory."

As such, the state is authorizing counties with open appointments and slowed demand to expand vaccine eligibility in order to use doses currently available. IDPH noted that residents should contact their local health department to learn whether they have expanded eligibility.

The state also announced Friday that it is sending "Rapid Response Vaccination Teams" to five counties where epidemiologists "have determined there is a need to administer doses quickly to blunt increasing trends," IDPH said. Those teams will administer single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccinations to residents on top of what the counties are already allocated.

Those counties are: Carroll, Ogle, Boone, Lee and Whiteside. Details on doses and how to make an appointment are as follows, per IDPH:

Date	County	Make an appointment	Daily doses
March 31	Carroll County	http://www.ccphd.org/	800
April 1	Ogle County	https://www.oglecounty.org/departments/health_department/new_page.php	1,200
April 2	Boone County	https://events.juvarie.com/IL-IDPH/eea35aa4-f83d-48ee-8660-520d401803aa/	1,000
April 3	Lee County	http://www.lchd.com/covid19-vaccinations/	600
April 5	Whiteside County	https://www.whitesidehealth.org/covid-19-information.html	600

"Recent increases in hospital admissions and test positivity are concerning new developments and we don't want to go down the same path we've seen before and experience a resurgence in the pandemic, which is why Governor Pritzker directed us to use all our resources to halt these upticks," IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said in a statement.

Illinois has seen 10 days of increases in the seven-day rolling average for hospital admissions since March 8, IDPH said, and the COVID-19 test positivity was 3.3% as of Friday - up from 2.5% on March 10.

"While these rates are certainly significantly lower than the peak, they represent a potential early warning sign about a possible resurgence," IDPH said.

IDPH on Friday noted that Chicago's daily case rate has increased by nearly 50% since last week, along with six days of increases in test positivity, while suburban Cook County has seen its daily case rate increase more than 40%, along with nine days of increasing hospital bed usage.

"We cannot move forward if our metrics are going backward," Ezike said . "The vaccine will help get us to the end of the pandemic, but we need to continue to reduce spread of the virus by wearing a mask, avoiding large crowds, keeping six feet of distance, getting tested after seeing others, and getting vaccinated as soon as possible."

Gov. J.B. Pritzker [announced last week that all Illinois residents over the age of 16 will be eligible to get vaccinated beginning on April 12.](#)

All vaccinations remain by appointment only, officials said, noting that "making an appointment to receive a shot may take time." Newly eligible workers can make appointments at "the more than 900 location in the state's provider network," Pritzker said.

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](#).

Here's a full list of mass vaccination locations in the state and how to sign up for appointments:

Date	Location	Address	Appointment	Daily Dose capability (when vaccines are available)
Now Open	Adams County: Oakley Lindsey Center	300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy IL	https://www.adamscountytogether.com/	2,100
Now Open	Cook County: Tinley Park Convention Center	18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	2,160
Now Open	Cook County: Triton College	2000 5 th Ave., River Grove, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	540
Now Open	Cook County: South Suburban College	15800 State St., South Holland IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	540
Now Open	Cook County: Former K-Mart	1155 E Oakton St, Des Plaines, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	1,890
Now Open	Cook County: Former HOBO	7600 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	2,160
Now Open	DuPage County: Fairgrounds, Building 1	2015 Manchester Rd, Wheaton, IL	https://www.dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine	1,000
Now Open	Grundy County: Shabbona Middle School	725 School St, Morris, IL	https://www.grundyco.org/health/	540
Now Open	Jackson County: Banterra Center	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
Now Open	Jackson County: Carbondale Civic Center	200 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
April 2	Kane County: Former Carson Pirie Scott	970 North Lake St., Aurora IL.	https://www.kanevax.org/	270

Now Open	Kane County: Former Sam's Club	501 N. Randall Rd., Batavia, IL	https://www.kanevax.org/	750
April 1	Lake County: Community Based Testing Center	102 W. Water Street Waukegan IL	https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/?language=en_US	400
Now Open	Madison County: Gateway Convention Center	1 Gateway Drive., Collinsville IL	https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/index.php	1350
Now Open	Sangamon County: Orr Building	Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield IL	http://www.SCDPH.org	1620
(217) 210- 8801				
Now Open	St. Clair County: Belle-Clair Fairgrounds	200 S. Belt E #2650, Belleville IL	https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/health-department	1080
April 2	Will County: Former Toys R Us	3128 Voyager Lane Joliet IL	https://bit.ly/3m1qqkw	800
Now Open	Winnebago County: Former K-Mart	1321 Sandy Hollow Rd., Rockford IL	https://www.wchd.org/	1350
Now Open	City of Chicago: United Center	1901 W. Madison Street, Chicago IL	https://www.zocdoc.com/vaccine/screener?state=IL	Chicago/ Cook County Only
Now Open	DeKalb County: NIU Convocation Center	1525 W. Lincoln Hwy., DeKalb, IL	https://health.dekalbcounty.org/about/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/	County residents only
Now Open	Lake County: Fairgrounds	1060 E. Peterson Rd., Grayslake, IL	https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/?language=en_US	Individuals who live and work in County
Mar 30	McHenry County: Former K-Mart	1900 N. Richmond Ave., Woodstock IL	https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/vaccine-locations	County residents only
Now Open	McLean County: Grossinger Motors Arena	101 S. Madison Street, Bloomington IL	https://health.mcleancountyil.gov/790/COVID-19-Vaccine	County residents only

Now Open	Rock Island County: Camden Centre	2701 1 st Street East, Milan IL	https://richd.org/	County residents Only
Now Open	Vermilion County: Danville Community College	2000 E. Main Street, Danville IL	https://vchd.org/	County residents only
Now Open	Vermilion County: Vermilion Regional Airport	22633 N. Bowman Avenue, Danville IL	https://vchd.org/	County residents only



Chicago COVID vaccine eligibility expands to Phase 1C

More essential workers, those with underlying medical conditions now eligible to book vaccine appointments

Craig Wall, Eric Horng and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team

March 29, 2021

Chicago is opening up COVID vaccine eligibility to the Phase 1C group Monday.

The move means anyone 16 and older who has a qualifying medical condition can now book an appointment.

More types of essential workers are also now eligible, including workers in clergy and religious organizations, energy, finance, food and beverage service, higher education, information technology and communications, legal, media, other community or government-based operations and essential functions, personal care and hygiene, public health, public safety, retail, shelter and housing, transportation and logistics, water and wastewater.

In Chicago's collar counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will, vaccine eligibility has been expanded to anyone in Phase 1A, 1B and 1B+. Phase 1B+ now includes some essential workers, such as government employees, higher education staff, news media, restaurant staff, construction trade workers and religious leaders.

Also starting Monday, vaccination sites run by the city of Chicago will only schedule appointments for people who live in the city.

At a vaccination site in Chinatown, union workers who signed up last week lined up before 8 a.m. to get the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

"Well, I was in my car, I'm like, 'Oh my God like I seen all these people and I'm like, I'm gonna take like four hours,' but I asked the lady and she said that the line just looks really bad but it'll take like 30 minutes," said union member Vanessa Arroyo.

Why are COVID-19 vaccine supplies still limited?

At the Chinatown clinic there were 1,200 available appointments for union members.

"Well the process, to be honest is really smooth," said Brandon Pendleton, who got vaccinated. "Had an 8:45 appointment, line moved pretty well. They got us right in, gave us the shot. And yeah, I'm happy to have it and happy that this whole thing is seemingly coming to an end."

"This vaccination site is the first in the country that is run specifically for union members," said Bob Reiter, president of the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Another labor vaccination clinic will be held at the same Chinatown site next Monday, and other similar clinics are planned for the future.

With the expansion to 1C, the majority of Chicago's adult population is now eligible to get a vaccine. However, officials continue to urge patience as eligibility does not guarantee an immediate appointment.

"It took me a while," said Michelle Gerol. "The process was a little frustrating, but once I got it, it was like finding the good ticket from the Willy Wonka movie."

This week the state is expected to receive one million doses of the three available vaccines. It comes at a time when Chicago is seeing a spike in cases among young people in and around Lincoln Park, which has raised concerns among health officials.

In other parts of the state where demand is low, health departments are now allowed to expand eligibility to anyone over 16.

"I think we're getting to the point, even in Chicago where in the next couple of weeks, we're going to see the demand for vaccine start to come down and the supplies going to continue to increase," said Dr. Robert Citronberg with Advocate Aurora Health.

The expansion comes at a time when cases are on the rise, and the positivity rate is above 4% with Chicago averaging more than 400 new cases a day, the benchmark that has triggered new reopening mitigations.

In the past 10 days, hospitalizations in Chicago are up 16%, and in suburban Cook County, up more than 20%. Will and Kankakee counties have seen a 27% rise.

"We're certainly seeing a rise in cases," said Dr. Jennifer Seo, CDPH Chief Medical Officer. "It's not to the point that we're seeing in November, but it's definitely something that we want to closely follow. We're very concerned about what the outcome might be over the next 40 days."

Driving the uptick are adults 18 to 39. In Chicago, Mayor Lightfoot said various gatherings, including bar crawls, have been the source of recent outbreaks. She urged caution and patience as people scramble to get appointments.

"Be patient," Lightfoot urged. "We are bringing about a million more people into eligibility. We don't have a million more doses coming to Chicago."

Cook County has yet to announce when it will open access to those in 1C, but did make 25,000 new appointments available at four of its mass vaccination sites Sunday afternoon. Anyone eligible under phases 1A, 1B, 1B+ and approved essential workers were able to sign up for the shot due to new state guidelines, however, those appointments were booked up in just under two hours.

"It was 50,000 people in the waiting room with only 25,000 vaccines," said vaccine hunter Maria Koikas.

Koikas started helping others enroll when she saw how difficult the process was for her own parents.

"It is a million people going for the same hot concert ticket that there is only 100 of them," she said.

In the last month, Koikas has enrolled nearly 300 people and counting. Her advice is to check often, be prepared for the appointment drop, and don't give up.

To date, two million Illinois residents, which is 16% of the state population, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The state has been vaccinating over 99,000 people a day on average.

Gov. JB Pritzker said he may be forced to rethink his approach to fully reopening the state fully, which it was on pace to start next week.

Right now, Illinois is in the green on vaccination rates for those 65+, with nearly 69% receiving one dose - close to the 70% required.

But it's in the red on health metrics, including for daily cases, hospitalizations, and new admissions. And until that changes, there will be no further reopening.



New Mass Vaccination Sites Opening in Illinois This Week. Here's a Full List

Three of the sites will open to all eligible residents in Illinois, regardless of where they live
March 29, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/4-new-mass-vaccination-sites-opening-in-illinois-this-week-heres-a-full-list/2473765/>

New mass vaccination sites are expected to open this week in several Chicago-area counties.

Three of the sites [will open to all eligible residents in Illinois](#), regardless of where they live.

According to the governor's office, the new vaccination sites include:

April 1: Community based testing center located at 102 W. Water Street, Waukegan in Lake County. Details [here](#).

April 2: Former Carson Pirie Scott, located at 970 North Lake St., Aurora in Kane County. Details [here](#).

April 2: Former Toys R Us, located at 3128 Voyager Lane, Joliet in Will County. Details [here](#).

Each site will offer vaccines to any eligible Illinois resident, regardless of ZIP code, the governor's office said.

A [Grundy County vaccination location](#) at Shabbona Middle School will also expand its eligibility to include any eligible state resident.

McHenry County's site will also open for six days a week with the assistance of the National Guard beginning Tuesday. The site is located inside a former K-Mart located at 1900 N. Richmond Ave. in Woodstock. (Details [here](#))

"As we continue to get more and more vaccine from the federal government, I'm proud to launch four additional state-supported large mass vaccination sites open to all eligible Illinoisans to ensure residents can receive their vaccines as efficiently and equitably as possible," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a statement.

Pritzker touted an influx of vaccine doses set to arrive in the state this week as [vaccine eligibility expanded](#) Monday to include additional essential workers.

Food and beverage workers, construction trade workers and religious leaders will be eligible, according to guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health. On March 22, the state expanded eligibility to include higher education staff, government workers and media.

"Over 3.6 million Illinoisans have already received their first dose of vaccine. We're projected to get nearly 1 million doses this week, and IDPH and our 97 local health departments working hard to administer these shots. However, this battle is far from over, and with new cases and hospitalizations on the rise, I encourage every resident to buckle down, wear your mask, and do your part so we can all power through to the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Health officials said the state made the decision to launch the sites with expanded ZIP code eligibility to "reverse early signs of a [possible resurgence](#) of COVID-19 cases."

The Illinois Department of Public Health [on Friday authorized counties in the state seeing low COVID vaccine demand to begin vaccinating all residents 16 and older](#) at their immediate discretion in order to "address a concerning possible trend in increasing COVID hospitalizations and case rates."

IDPH said in a statement that it had seen vaccine demand slow in several counties "with early signs of unfilled appointments and increased vaccine inventory."

As such, the state is authorizing counties with open appointments and slowed demand to expand vaccine eligibility in order to use doses currently available. IDPH noted that residents should contact their local health department to learn whether they have expanded eligibility.

The state also announced Friday that it is sending "Rapid Response Vaccination Teams" to five counties where epidemiologists "have determined there is a need to administer doses quickly to blunt increasing trends," IDPH said. Those teams will administer single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccinations to residents on top of what the counties are already allocated.

Those counties are: Carroll, Ogle, Boone, Lee and Whiteside. Details on doses and how to make an appointment are as follows, per IDPH:

Date	County	Make an appointment	Daily doses
March 31	Carroll County	http://www.ccphd.org/	800
April 1	Ogle County	https://www.oglecounty.org/departments/health_department/new_page.php	1,200
April 2	Boone County	https://events.juvar.com/IL-IDPH/eea35aa4-f83d-48ee-8660-520d401803aa/	1,000
April 3	Lee County	http://www.lchd.com/covid19-vaccinations/	600
April 5	Whiteside County	https://www.whitesidehealth.org/covid-19-information.html	600

Here's a full list of mass vaccination locations in the state and how to sign up for appointments:

Date	Location	Address	Appointment	Daily Dose capability (when vaccines are available)
Now Open	Adams County: Oakley Lindsey Center	300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy IL	https://www.adamscountytogether.com/	2,100
Now Open	Cook County: Tinley Park Convention Center	18451 Convention Center Drive, Tinley Park, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyl.gov	2,160
Now Open	Cook County: Triton College	2000 5 th Ave., River Grove, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyl.gov	540
Now Open	Cook County: South Suburban College	15800 State St., South Holland IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyl.gov	540

Now Open	Cook County: Former K-Mart	1155 E Oakton St, Des Plaines, IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	1,890
Now Open	Cook County: Former HOB0	7600 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park IL	https://vaccine.cookcountyil.gov	2,160
Now Open	DuPage County Fairgrounds, Building 1	2015 Manchester Rd, Wheaton, IL	https://www.dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine	1,000
Now Open	Grundy County: Shabbona Middle School	725 School St, Morris, IL	https://www.grundyco.org/health/	540
Now Open	Jackson County: Banterra Center	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
Now Open	Jackson County: Carbondale Civic Center	200 S. Illinois Ave., Carbondale IL	http://www.jchdonline.org/	540
April 2	Kane County: Former Carson Pirie Scott	970 North Lake St., Aurora IL.	https://www.kanevax.org/	270
Now Open	Kane County: Former Sam's Club	501 N. Randall Rd., Batavia, IL	https://www.kanevax.org/	750
April 1	Lake County: Community Based Testing Center	102 W. Water Street Waukegan IL	https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/?language=en_US	400
Now Open	Madison County: Gateway Convention Center	1 Gateway Drive., Collinsville IL	https://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/health/index.php	1350
Now Open	Sangamon County: Orr Building	Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield IL	http://www.SCDPH.org	1620
(217) 210- 8801				
Now Open	St. Clair County: Belle-Clair Fairgrounds	200 S. Belt E #2650, Belleville IL	https://www.co.st-clair.il.us/departments/health-department	1080
April 2	Will County: Former Toys R Us	3128 Voyager Lane Joliet IL	https://bit.ly/3m1qqkw	800

Now Open	Winnebago County: Former K-Mart	1321 Sandy Hollow Rd., Rockford IL	https://www.wchd.org/	1350
Now Open	City of Chicago: United Center	1901 W. Madison Street, Chicago IL	https://www.zocdoc.com/vaccine/screener?state=IL	Chicago/ Cook County Only
Now Open	DeKalb County: NIU Convocation Center	1525 W. Lincoln Hwy., DeKalb, IL	https://health.dekalbcounty.org/about/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination/	County residents only
Now Open	Lake County: Fairgrounds	1060 E. Peterson Rd., Grayslake, IL	https://allvax.lakecohealth.org/s/?language=en_US	Individuals who live and work in County
Mar 30	McHenry County: Former K-Mart	1900 N. Richmond Ave., Woodstock IL	https://www.mchenrycountyil.gov/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/vaccine-locations	County residents only
Now Open	McLean County: Grossinger Motors Arena	101 S. Madison Street, Bloomington IL	https://health.mcleancountyil.gov/790/COVID-19-Vaccine	County residents only
Now Open	Rock Island County: Camden Centre	2701 1 st Street East, Milan IL	https://richd.org/	County residents Only
Now Open	Vermilion County: Danville Community College	2000 E. Main Street, Danville IL	https://vchd.org/	County residents only
Now Open	Vermilion County: Vermilion Regional Airport	22633 N. Bowman Avenue, Danville IL	https://vchd.org/	County residents only



IL COVID vaccine efforts expand across state as other COVID-19 metrics rise

Illinois vaccine eligibility expands: More essential workers, those with underlying medical conditions now eligible to book appointments

Alexis McAdams
March 30, 2021

COVID-19 cases are rising across Illinois, as the state works to expand vaccine eligibility and opportunities.

The Illinois Department of Public Health officials reported [1,761 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and five deaths Monday.](#)

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from March 22-28 is 3.8%.

But vaccination sites like one off Randall Road in Batavia are hoping to turn the troubling trend around. It's crucial to Kane County because of its proximity to big cities like Aurora and Elgin, which can help address racial disparities in administering vaccines.

"We are serving over 2,000 people each day, and as vaccine supply increases, we are hoping to get even more people served," said Michael Isaacson with the Kane County Health Department. "We are at the Kane vax hub."

The site offers all three vaccine brands.

Kane County health officials said Tuesday that 75,000 people in the county are fully-vaccinated.

"We want to get vaccine to almost 400,000 people in the community, and the supply just is not there yet," Isaacson said. "So this is something where people will have to be patient."

U.S. Rep. Lauren Underwood, D-Naperville, visited the mass vaccination site Tuesday.

She said she's hopeful it will allow a faster rollout for people who have been trying to sign up for weeks.

"We have been getting a lot of calls from constituents, who said they could not get appointments in the 14th District. Now, sites like this are a real resource," Underwood said.

The positivity rate is above 4% in the city, with Chicago averaging more than 400 new cases a day, the benchmark that has triggered new reopening mitigations.

In the past 10 days, hospitalizations in Chicago are up 16%, and in suburban Cook County, up more than 20%. Will and Kankakee counties have seen a 27% rise.

Driving the uptick are adults 18 to 39. In Chicago, Mayor Lightfoot said various gatherings, including bar crawls, have been the source of recent outbreaks. She urged caution and patience as people scramble to get vaccine appointments.

"It's not to the point that we were seeing in November, but it's something that we want to closely follow. We are very concerned about what the outlook may be over the next four to eight weeks," said Dr. Jennifer Seo, the Chicago Department Of Public Health chief medical officer.

Chicago opened up COVID vaccine eligibility to the Phase 1C group Monday.

The move means anyone 16 and older who has a qualifying medical condition can now book an appointment.

More types of essential workers are also now eligible, including workers in clergy and religious organizations, energy, finance, food and beverage service, higher education, information technology and communications, legal, media, other community or government-based operations and essential functions, personal care and hygiene, public health, public safety, retail, shelter and housing, transportation and logistics, water and wastewater.

Despite the uptick statewide, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot still sounds hopeful.

"We can do things in a targeted way and not have to shut down the entire economy and our way of life to be able to address issues," she said.

In Chicago's collar counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and Will, vaccine eligibility has been expanded to anyone in Phase 1A, 1B and 1B+. Phase 1B+ now includes some essential workers, such as government employees, higher education staff, news media, restaurant staff, construction trade workers and religious leaders.

Also starting Monday, vaccination sites run by the city of Chicago will only schedule appointments for people who live in the city.

Why are COVID-19 vaccine supplies still limited?

With the expansion to 1C, the majority of Chicago's adult population is now eligible to get a vaccine.

This week the state is expected to receive one million doses of the three available vaccines.

In other parts of the state where demand is low, health departments are now allowed to expand eligibility to anyone over 16.

Cook County has yet to announce when it will open access to those in 1C, but did make 25,000 new appointments available at four of its mass vaccination sites Sunday afternoon. Anyone eligible under phases 1A, 1B, 1B+ and approved essential workers were able to sign up for the shot due to new state guidelines, however, those appointments were booked up in just under two hours.

To date, two million Illinois residents, which is 16% of the state population, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The state has been vaccinating over 99,000 people a day on average.

Gov. JB Pritzker said he may be forced to rethink his approach to fully reopening the state, which it was on pace to start next week.

Right now, Illinois is in the green on vaccination rates for those 65+, with nearly 69% receiving one dose - close to the 70% required.

But it's in the red on health metrics, including for daily cases, hospitalizations, and new admissions. And until that changes, there will be no further reopening.



Cook County Health to take part in COVID-19 antibody trial

March 30, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/916492>

Cook County Health is the first site in Illinois to take part in a new COVID-19 treatment trial. It has all to do with potential antibody therapies fighting the virus.





Cook County Health participating in COVID antibody trial

March 31, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/video/916765>

Dr. Audrey French, principal investigator at Cook County Health, elaborates on the COVID antibody trial they are taking part in.



Daily Herald

State's 'Bridge Phase' stalls, but vaccine hunters find second doses closer to home

March 30, 2021

Jake Griffin

While signs show that access to COVID-19 vaccines is getting easier in more parts of Illinois, state health officials Tuesday announced plans to indefinitely postpone the "Bridge Phase" that would allow even more capacity at businesses and social gatherings.

Illinois Department of Public Health officials announced the mid-April start of that phase was being pushed to May at the earliest because of rising COVID-19 hospitalizations.

"As long as new hospital admissions continue to increase, the state will not advance to [the 'Bridge Phase' and on to Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois Plan](#)," an IDPH news release stated Tuesday.

Requirements under the state's phased-in reopening plan included 28 straight days of stable or declining hospitalizations and deaths from the respiratory disease in order to move to the "Bridge Phase." There, the state would dial back capacity restrictions for restaurants, conventions, festivals and other social events.

According to IDPH figures, hospitals statewide are treating an average of 1,301 patients a day for COVID-19 over the past week, up more than 15% in 11 days.

Less than two weeks ago, hospitals were averaging treatment of 1,125 patients a day over the course of the week.

Patientloads in each of the four IDPH suburban regions are also all rising. Two weeks ago, hospitals in suburban Cook County alone were averaging 325 COVID-19 patients a day for the week, but they are now averaging 418 patients a day this week, IDPH records show.

On Tuesday, hospitals statewide reported treating 1,396 patients for COVID-19 infections. Of those hospitalized, 308 are in intensive care.

IDPH officials also reported 17 more Illinois residents have died from COVID-19, while another 2,404 new cases were diagnosed.

The state's death toll from the respiratory disease is now 21,273, and 1,241,993 people have been infected.

The state's seven-day case positivity rate is at 3.4%. The state's rate hasn't been that high for nearly two months, according to IDPH figures. Case positivity shows the percentage of tests that resulted in new cases of the disease. A seven-day average is used to smooth any anomalies in the daily reporting of new cases and tests.

Meanwhile, IDPH records also show vaccine providers throughout the state are averaging 105,040 shots a day over the past week after 86,812 more COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered throughout Illinois in the latest 24 hours recorded.

That brings the total number of vaccine inoculations performed statewide to 5,664,426, according to IDPH figures.

And there are signs that access to vaccine doses is getting easier as people who once traveled hundreds of miles for first doses are finding second doses much closer to home.

Kristi Robertts Murillo was able to shave about 80 minutes off the drive from her Lindenhurst home to get her second shot after having to travel to Rockford for her first dose.

"I didn't have a problem going back, but I'd rather not drive the hour and a half," Robertts Murillo said. "I was worried that I was going to screw up the process at the Walmart in Rockford where I got my first shot, but they were like, 'OK. Thanks for letting us know.'"

Several other suburban residents who once traveled multiple counties away to get inoculated are reporting better opportunities nearby for their second dose.

"I drove to a Walgreens in Bloomington for my first dose," Palatine resident Shawn Eklund Lenaghan reported. "Received my second dose at a Cook County (Public Health Department) facility in Arlington Heights."

Changing appointments for the second dose doesn't seem to be putting much of a strain on the system, either, health officials reported.

"This is not really an issue," said Don Bolger, a spokesman for the Cook County Public Health Department. "It doesn't matter where someone was vaccinated the first time. However, the vaccine brand does matter. Both doses should either be Pfizer or Moderna."

Vaccine providers at national pharmacy chains like CVS and Walgreens are sometimes finding themselves with unused doses at the end of the day because people missed an appointment or found a second dose elsewhere.

CVS officials noted their pharmacy teams work with patients to find the location that is most convenient for both doses, and patients can schedule a second dose at a different location during the initial signup.

That said, most people getting vaccinated are getting both doses at the same location, pharmacy chain representatives said.



McHenry County COVID Vaccine Site, Who is Eligible: Latest Illinois Vaccine Updates

Here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state

March 30, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/mchenry-county-covid-vaccine-site-who-is-eligible-latest-illinois-vaccine-updates/2474306/>

A number of new mass vaccination sites are opening in Chicago suburbs, with varying eligibility requirements.

Whether you're looking for a vaccine, waiting for your turn, hoping to help loved ones or just trying to make sense of it all, here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state.

Lake County Fairgrounds Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Phase 1B Plus

The Lake County Fairgrounds vaccination site expanded COVID-19 vaccine availability this week to those eligible in Phase 1B Plus, which includes additional underlying health conditions, the health department announced.

The Lake County Health Department opened vaccination appointments at the Fairgrounds to those eligible in Phase 1B Plus on Tuesday, after partners in the county moved into the expanded phase last week.

Anyone who lives or works in Lake County can register in the AllVax Portal located [here](#). Appointments can also be made by calling (847) 377-8130.

Laminate It? Carry It? What You Should Do With Your Vaccination Record Card

Once you get your coronavirus vaccine, you're often given a COVID-19 vaccination record card, with the CDC logo in the upper right corner.

"Those vaccine cards are really important. They provide proof that you were, indeed, vaccinated," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

The vaccination cards are so sought after, dupes of the cards are even being sold online. Security experts also warn people against posting photos of their card on social media.

Both Staples and Office Depot are offering to laminate vaccination cards for free, but some are asking if sealing the card in plastic is too permanent.

Dr. Joshi said he understand why people would want to preserve it, but the additional lines at the bottom of the card, marked "Other," are there for a reason.

Read more [here](#).



Cook County Department of Public Health on how non-ambulatory people can get a vaccine

JOHN WILLIAMS

March 30, 2021

[HTTPS://WGNRADIO.COM/JOHN-WILLIAMS/COOK-COUNTY-DEPARTMENT-OF-PUBLIC-HEALTH-ON-HOW-AMBULATORY-PEOPLE-CAN-GET-A-VACCINE/](https://wgnradio.com/john-williams/cook-county-department-of-public-health-on-how-ambulatory-people-can-get-a-vaccine/)

Cook County Department of Public Health Senior Medical Director and co-lead Dr. Kiran Joshi joins John Williams to discuss vaccination options for those who are homebound.

Chicago Tribune

Walgreens cancels some appointments for second doses of COVID-19 vaccine, leaving people scrambling

LISA SCHENCKER

MARCH 30, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-coronavirus-vaccine-walgreens-second-dose-problem-20210330-zpxhnuqmtfc5ffm6k7qvt7cju-story.html>

Ashley J. Dearborn had been looking forward to her second dose of the Pfizer vaccine, which was scheduled weeks ago and supposed to take place Tuesday afternoon at a Gold Coast Walgreens.

But she awoke to an unpleasant surprise Tuesday morning: an email from Walgreens canceling her appointment. She called the store and learned it only had the Moderna vaccine, not Pfizer, which she needed to match her first dose, she said.

"I freaked out because I thought, 'How can you cancel? It's less than 24 hours,'" said Dearborn, 58, of the Near West Side. "I have to go through this whole merry-go-round, Hunger Games scenario again" to make an appointment.



Ashley Dearborn gets her second COVID-19 vaccination shot at Stroger Hospital on March 31, 2021, after her originally scheduled second dose at a local Walgreens pharmacy was cancelled. (Abel Uribe / Chicago Tribune)

A number of others who made appointments at Walgreens are finding themselves in similar predicaments, scrambling to find the same brand of vaccine for their second dose as their first. People should get the same type of vaccine for both doses except in "exceptional situations," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The issue appears to be affecting people who made their first and second appointments at different Walgreens stores, even though they booked the appointments at the same time. Often, those individuals weren't given the option of booking both vaccines at the same store. Walgreens doesn't typically tell people which vaccine they're getting when they make their appointments online.

Walgreens identified the scheduling issue that was causing the problem earlier this month, and has since resolved it, spokeswoman Kris Lathan said Tuesday. Walgreens is now only booking people for first and second dose vaccination appointments at the same store, and the pharmacy chain has been "proactively engaging" with affected patients, she said.

“We apologize for the inconvenience to patients and are committed to honoring all appointments and providing second doses,” Lathan said in an email.

But some people who made appointments before the scheduling problem was fixed say they have been left to search largely on their own for second doses of the vaccine. Second doses are supposed to be given within six weeks of first doses, a time frame recommended by the CDC.

The issue comes after reports that some Chicago Walgreens stores [were turning away people with health conditions](#).

Deerfield-based Walgreens has the largest coronavirus vaccination program of any pharmacy in Illinois, with more than 500 stores giving the shots. The company said Wednesday during a call with analysts to discuss its quarterly earnings that it has administered about 8 million coronavirus vaccines in the United States.

In some cases, people aren’t finding out that their second doses are the wrong type of vaccine until they arrive at the stores for their appointments.

Pete Rangel, 47 of Brookfield, drove to a Hainesville Walgreens for his second dose appointment Sunday only to learn that the store was giving Pfizer vaccines, not the Moderna shot he needed.

A stressful afternoon ensued.

An employee at the Hainesville pharmacy called other stores to see if any of them could give Rangel the Moderna shot that day. Rangel was put on a waitlist at a McHenry store, and provided a list of nearby stores to try.

Rangel spent most of the afternoon driving to different stores and calling them from his car, while his wife called Walgreens’ main customer service number. The person who spoke to his wife, on the main Walgreens number, offered no help, he said.

Finally, Rangel called a Beach Park Walgreens store that said it had a Moderna dose he could have that day. He drove another 40 minutes to that store and received the vaccine.

“It was very frustrating for me,” Rangel said. “I was just running around like a crazy person for half the day stressed out about trying to get the second shot.”

He was eager to get the shot so he could fly in his parents, whom he hasn’t seen since Christmas 2019, for a visit.

“It’s kind of infuriating that this is a known problem and it seems like something that could be easily fixed,” Rangel said.

Naperville resident Charles Damianides realized he was going to have a problem getting his second Pfizer shot when he took his son to a Bolingbrook Walgreens for the vaccine. It was the same store where Damianides, 58, was scheduled to get his second dose. He noticed the store gave his son a Moderna vaccine.

He later called the Bolingbrook store to make sure his second shot would be Pfizer, and the store said it would not. He called the main Walgreens customer service number but said he wasn’t given any help.

“I was freaking out,” Damianides said. “I was sort of stuck.”

He spent much of Friday on his computer searching for another appointment. He also called the Aurora Walgreens where he received his first dose and was put on a waiting list for extra Pfizer vaccines. The pharmacist there told him it was a long list but worth trying.

Ultimately, the Aurora Walgreens called him and he received his second shot of the Pfizer vaccine there Friday.

“It turned out great, but only through me doing all this phone calling and checking online,” Damianides said. “If I hadn’t taken my son to that same pharmacy where I was supposed to get my second dose I would have just showed up to that one and wouldn’t have known what to do.”



Ashley Dearborn shows off a button given to her after receiving her second COVID-19 vaccination shot at Stroger Hospital, March 31, 2021. (Abel Uribe / Chicago Tribune)

Dearborn, the Chicago woman whose appointment was canceled Tuesday, found an appointment for a second dose — but not at Walgreens.

She called the Cook County Health vaccine hotline and has an appointment for Wednesday.

She is grateful to have found a second shot, which will allow her to more safely help care for her 99-year-old godmother.

“I think that the logistics of the vaccinations, it just hasn’t been well thought out,” she said.



Chicago area woman says she got COVID vaccine appointment text despite not signing up

Samantha Chatman
March 31, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/covid-vaccine-appointment-text-scam-cook-county/10462331/>

A south suburban woman said she received a confirmation text message about a COVID vaccine shot, but said she has not yet signed up for one.

The text appears to be a part of a scheme that the federal government has been warning the public about as criminals are using the vaccine to try to tap into people's devices to steal their personal information.

Mary Therese says she has a few more weeks before she can sign up for her COVID shot.

"Because I tested positive for COVID on January 19 and my physicians expressed to me that I have to wait 90 days," she said.

But last week, she received a text message confirming her first dose appointment, followed by a link.

"I looked at it and it said your test is for this Friday at 1:30 p.m.," Therese said. "I didn't sign up for the COVID vaccine. I was very disturbed. There was a phone number. I checked the number, I Googled it. Usually if it's a reputable business. It will show up, well it didn't.

She got another text message hours before speaking with ABC7.

"Now I get this text, not only once but twice, confirming a test that I never requested," Therese said. "I felt bad because people are desperate to get these vaccines and now I'm getting text like this.

A spokesperson with the Cook County Department of Health looked into it and confirmed that it is not one of their text messages.

The county had its IT department look into it further and discovered the domain name associated with the link is registered to an organization in Kentucky.

"I have no one in Kentucky," Therese said.

She said she didn't click any of the links or respond to the text messages, but wants to warn others who may be inclined to do so.

"Luckily, you weren't able to scam me, but there are people you will be able to scam and you should feel ashamed of yourself for that," Therese said.

The Federal Trade Commission says that people who did sign up for a COVID vaccine might receive a legitimate text message, but with so much fraud occurring, it's important that you read the text message thoroughly.

If you never signed up, don't respond or click any links just delete it.



Suburban Cook County Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility to Phase 1C

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/suburban-cook-county-expands-covid-vaccine-eligibility-to-phase-1c/2475548/>

Suburban Cook County expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility Wednesday to the remaining essential workers in Phase 1C of vaccinations, which could impact approximately 100,000 residents.

The Cook County Department of Public Health announced essential workers over the age of 16 in Phase 1C are able to sign up for a coronavirus vaccination within the county.

“Today, we move forward in Cook County’s COVID-19 vaccination program and are pleased to expand eligibility to Phase 1C, which includes additional categories of essential workers,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said. “This will expand on our equitable distribution of vaccine and build on the progress we’ve made in earlier phases of our program.”

According to the health department, essential workers in Cook County include those in transportation and logistics, food service, housing, construction, finance, information technology, communications, energy, law, media, public safety and public health.

Available appointments at Cook County sites moving forward will be open to all Illinois residents who are qualified to get vaccinated in Phase 1C, as well as in Phase 1A, Phase 1B and Phase 1B Plus. The suburban county's state-run 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

As of Wednesday, about 1 million suburban Cook County residents are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. After the state expands eligibility to all residents over the age of 16 on April 12, approximately 1.4 million residents will be able to register for a shot.

“While we are confident that vaccine supply will be increasing, we continue to ask for patience as demand remains very high,” Israel Rocha, CEO of Cook County Health, said.

County joins national effort to recognize frontline workers at Southland vaccination sites

BILL JONES

MAR 31, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-national-guard-preckwinkle-recognition-st-0401-20210331-73k33exwp5h7bhortgr3imh7vq-story.html>

Frontline workers including Illinois National Guard members helping to distribute COVID-19 vaccines in the Southland received a token of thanks this week during a Morning of Gratitude effort.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other community leaders dropped off “pick-me-up” bags the morning of Wednesday, March 31, for workers distributing vaccines at South Suburban College in South Holland.

“We’re deeply indebted to the good people who are distributing our vaccinations,” Preckwinkle said.

The bags included a variety of nourishing items, including treats from Mars Wrigley, KIND snack bars, RISE nitro cold-brew coffee, Simple Mills and oatmeal cups from Purely Elizabeth. All of the items were donated through the Frontline Impact Project, a national effort to get companies to support workers on the front line of the COVID-19 pandemic as a thank you for their work. Since April 2020, the project has offered support to more than 1.3 million front line workers, including 35,000 in Illinois, according to a news release from the county.

Pfc. Landon Luangsomkham was among those present March 31 for the praise and gifts. Luangsomkham has been doing 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. shifts at the site over the past month.

“It’s really nice,” he said of the support. “It’s amazing.”

Luangsomkham said the National Guard members take pride in running a site smoothly and efficiently. People have been compliant with the procedures and are contributing to the good feeling inside of the campus Physical Fitness and Athletic Center, where vaccinations are taking place, Luangsomkham said.

“It’s actually been really nice, a really positive atmosphere in there,” he said. “I’m just happy to be part of this.”

Preckwinkle said the volume of vaccinations Cook County is coordinating would not be possible without the help.

“We couldn’t do it, something of this magnitude, without the National Guard,” Preckwinkle said. “South Suburban College stepped up early on to offer the site. We’re extremely grateful.”

Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller said there has been a huge uptick in vaccinations in the area. And the reviews for the National Guard’s work have been incredible.

“We’ve heard nothing but positives,” she said. “This really helps the community.”

“We can see the light at the end of the tunnel,” said South Holland Mayor Don De Graff.

The distribution of the bags was done in partnership with the Illinois USO. Following the South Holland visit, the group planned to drop gift bags at vaccination sites in Lansing, Blue Island, Ford Heights, Tinley Park and Robbins. Nearly 28,000 items were given to workers across Cook County’s suburban vaccination sites, and more donations are planned for April and May.

The day before her South Suburban College visit, Miller joined U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly for a vaccine pop-up clinic in Chicago Heights that saw about 1,200 residents receive a COVID-19 vaccine shot. The event was organized by Chicago Heights Mayor David Gonzalez's office and Jewel-Osco. It was held in the former St. Kieran School gymnasium, and second doses of the vaccine are to be administered there April 20. The city and Bloom Township recruited residents in eligible phases to fill the available spots for the pop-up clinic.

Miller said efforts like these across the Southland are helping to mitigate COVID-19 concerns and keep residents healthy. But she cautioned that people must continue wearing masks and social distancing throughout the process.

"It's definitely turning a corner, but we still need to remain vigilant," she said.



Can You Drink After Getting the COVID Vaccine? Illinois Doctor Weighs In

The answer, according to an Illinois doctor with Cook County Health, is yes, but there's a catch

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/can-you-drink-after-getting-the-covid-vaccine-illinois-doctor-weighs-in/2475801/>

Can you drink alcohol after getting the coronavirus vaccine?

It's a question some have been asking as eligibility in Illinois continues to expand and more people prepare for their first or second dose.

The answer, according to an Illinois doctor with Cook County Health, is yes, but there's a catch.

"It's a great question. The simple, short answer is yes," Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health, told NBC Chicago. "There's no prohibition against drinking alcohol. It wasn't specifically studied and there's an assumption that some, you know, an average number of people in the study did use alcohol during the study, but it wasn't specifically measured."

"Excessive" alcohol consumption, however, can lead to a weakened immune system, Loafman said.

"We know in general that people who have used alcohol, excessive doses of alcohol, have a weakened immune system and that makes them more susceptible to infection and may weaken their response to a vaccine," he said.

So what is considered excessive? According to Loafman, it's more than two drinks a day for men and more than one drink a day for women with "consistent use over time."

"The caveat is that amount or more of alcohol use is known to be harmful for the immune system," he said. "It doesn't mean the vaccine wouldn't work, but it may weaken the immune system. So routine drinking that people do and in social situations or what we consider moderate alcohol consumption, there's no reason to alter that behavior simply because of the vaccine."

Daily Herald

Cook County expands vaccine eligibility to 1C, opens more appointments today

March 31, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210331/cook-county-expands-vaccine-eligibility-to-1c-opens-more-appointments-today>

Cook County health officials announced today individuals eligible for COVID-19 vaccines under the state's Phase 1C category are now able to make appointments for shots.

That means all essential workers -- now including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail, and transportation and logistics -- are eligible to receive vaccine doses in Cook County.

County health department officials also released more than 8,000 first-dose appointments for all eligible groups that can be made after 6 p.m. today at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations. Over 25% of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80% of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and colead of the county's health department. "We are building an impressive countywide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand."

So far, Illinois Department of Public Health officials report 425,710 suburban Cook County residents have been fully vaccinated, roughly 17% of the population of suburban Cook County.



Needle Phobia Responsible For Some Vaccine Hesitancy, Doctors Say

Trypanophobia is estimated to affect 10% of the U.S. population.

Chris Hush

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/needle-phobia-responsible-for-some-vaccine-hesitancy-doctors-say/2475803/>

The fear of needles is preventing some from getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Trypanophobia affects 10% of the U.S. population; approximately 32.8 million Americans.

At Cook County Health, Dr. Whitney Lyn says it affects 30% of her patients, who are predominantly Black and brown populations that already face high rates of vaccine hesitancy.

“It’s more of what they witnessed, and that they’ve seen more trauma,” said Dr. Lyn. “A lot of people, when they see that needle, it brings back a traumatic event and it makes them more fearful of it.”

Cognitive therapy, anti-depressants and simulated exercises are used to treat severe cases.

But in some cases, providing comfort may be enough.

“If they’re fearful, I will actually go downstairs to the vaccine site with them, hold their hand, talk to them, distract them,” said Dr. Lyn.

Needle phobia can lead to health risks as some delay or forgo getting important tests requiring blood work and surgeries.

That's the case for Chicagoan Junaid Patel, who told NBC 5 he “stays away” from the doctor because needles cause panic attacks.

“We have a history of diabetes in my family. I have no idea if I have it because I’m too scared to go get it checked out,” said Patel.

Patel fainted at a vaccination site right before he received his dose.

Just the thought of the needle can produce cold sweats and anxiety for those with needle phobia.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine eased some of this anxiety because it requires only one shot.

However, few people can choose which vaccine to take.

In Patel’s case, he will have to relive his experience in a few weeks for a second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

“When I take a seat in that chair, the whole world just changes,” said Patel.

Anti-depressants, cognitive therapy and simulated practices have been used by doctors to treat severe cases of needle phobia.



Suburban Cook County Expands COVID Vaccine Eligibility To All Essential Workers; Will Open 8,000 More Appointments Wednesday

March 31, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/03/31/suburban-cook-county-vaccinations-phase-1c-vaccines-all-essential-workers/>

Cook County officials on Wednesday opened coronavirus vaccine availability to all essential workers who did not already qualify for a shot, while also announcing 8,000 new appointments for first-dose vaccinations would be available Wednesday evening.

The Cook County Department of Public Health said it was beginning Phase 1C of the vaccination plan on Wednesday, making shots available to more essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, legal workers, hotel workers, construction trade workers, hairdressers, retail staff, higher education workers, media, transportation and logistics workers, utility workers, manufacturers, residential and shelter facilities, financial services, and defense-related activities.

That adds up to about 100,000 people in the Cook County suburbs.

“This will expand on our equitable distribution of vaccine and build on the progress we’ve made in earlier phases of our program,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said in a statement.

Before beginning Phase 1C, those eligible for vaccines included healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, frontline essential workers (such as first responders, grocery store workers, K-12 teachers, and more), seniors age 65 and older, and people age 16 and older who have certain medical conditions that make them more vulnerable to the coronavirus.

Phase 1C is the penultimate step in the vaccination program, before shots are made available to anyone age 16 and older. Gov. JB Pritzker has authorized every county public health department to begin giving shots to anyone 16 and older at their discretion, but suburban Cook County and city of Chicago officials have yet to say when they will move to that final phase of vaccinations. President Joe Biden has said he wants every state to do so by May 1.

An estimated 1 million residents in the Cook County suburbs currently qualify for shots, and the county has administered approximately 350,000 total doses of vaccine so far.

“We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer and Co-Lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. “We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand.”

Meantime, beginning at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Cook County officials will release more than 8,000 new appointments for vaccines, citing a delay in vaccine shipments.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, or by calling 833-308-1988. The call center will remain open until 10 p.m. on Wednesday to accommodate for the latest release of appointments.



Cook County Health to release 8,000 vaccine appointments

March 31, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-health-to-release-8000-vaccine-appointments>

Cook County Health will release more than 8,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination appointments at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

The appointments will be available as soon as Thursday, April 1, for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

"Cook County Health remains committed to releasing appointments based on vaccine supply and expects to be able to release additional appointments as early as tomorrow," Cook County Health said in a statement

All vaccinations are by appointment only.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988, Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

The call center will remain open until 10 p.m. Wednesday to accommodate this release.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Department of Public Health on Wednesday said another 2,592 people tested positive for the coronavirus and another 28 people died from the virus.

Since the start of the pandemic, 1,244,585 people have tested positive for COVID-19 and 21,301 have died, health officials said.



Cook County Vaccine: 8K Appointments to Be Released Wednesday

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-vaccine-8k-appointments-to-be-released-wednesday/2475520/>

Cook County Health will release 8,000 first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Wednesday evening for individuals in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. Wednesday and can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988. The call center will remain open until 10 p.m. Wednesday to accommodate the release, officials said.

Cook County's vaccination appointments are open to all eligible Illinois residents. The appointments released Wednesday will be for four of the county's five mass vaccination sites:

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

Former HOBO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

Officials said the county expects to release additional appointments based on vaccine supply as early as Thursday.

The new appointments came as Cook County announced that the suburban portions of the county - operating on a different framework than the city of Chicago - has moved into Phase 1C of its vaccination rollout.

"All essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail and transportation and logistics – are now eligible to receive vaccine," the county said, noting that Phase 1C includes the last eligible groups before all residents age 16 and older will be able to get vaccinated in the coming weeks.

The county was previously in Phase 1B Plus. A complete list of Phase 1C eligible groups [can be found on the CCDPH website](#). Anyone eligible in prior phases remains eligible for vaccinations moving forward.

The county's last appointment drop was on Sunday, when 25,000 first-dose appointments were booked in less than two hours.



All Essential Workers in Cook County Now Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine: Officials

Heather Cherone

March 31, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/03/31/all-essential-workers-cook-county-now-eligible-covid-19-vaccine-officials>

All essential workers and those with underlying health conditions are now eligible in suburban Cook County for the COVID-19 vaccine, officials announced Wednesday.

However, supplies of the three vaccines approved by federal officials are still limited, and officials have said there will not immediately be enough doses for everyone who wants the COVID-19 vaccine. Residents of suburban Cook County who are older than 65 and health care workers remain eligible for the vaccine.

Chicago moved into the next phase of the vaccination effort on Monday, making 84% of all residents eligible for the coveted vaccine.

Approximately 100,000 workers in transportation, logistics, food service, housing, construction, finance, information technology, communications, energy, law, media, public safety and public health are now eligible for the vaccine, according to county officials.

New appointments for those newly eligible will open at 6 p.m. Wednesday [online](#).

When all adults 16 and older are eligible, another approximately 1.4 million suburban Cook County residents will be able to register for appointments, officials said.

More than 25% of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80% of those older than 65 have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, said Dr. Rachel Rubin, the senior medical officer of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

“We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand,” Rubin said in a statement.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has announced that all Illinois residents age 16 and older will become eligible for the vaccine under state rules on April 12. In addition, all Illinois residents are now eligible for the vaccine in counties where demand for the vaccine is dropping amid a surge in cases, state health officials announced Friday.

The increase in cases in suburban Cook County is among the highest in the state, and the jump in case positivity and hospitalizations could trigger new restrictions under the state’s reopening metrics, according to data from the Illinois Department of Health.

Chicago Tribune

All essential workers in suburban Cook County eligible for vaccine as 'limited number' of doses to open up

ALICE YIN

MARCH 31, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-phase-1c-suburban-cook-county-essential-workers-coronavirus-vaccine-20210331-fbhiqwvgyjdsflgmz3itgmu7uq-story.html>

Suburban Cook County will allow remaining essential workers who have not yet been eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine to qualify for the shot starting Wednesday.

Some of those jobs include employees working in the fields of clergy, restaurants, energy, legal, retail, transportation and construction, according to a news release from the county's public health department. The next step will be opening up vaccines to all people 16 and older, which should come in the next few weeks, the release said.

"This will expand on our equitable distribution of vaccine and build on the progress we've made in earlier phases of our program," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle wrote in a statement.

The latest move opens up vaccine eligibility to about 100,000 residents of suburban Cook County. In total, about 1 million residents are estimated to be eligible with the new addition, leaving 400,000 still waiting.

A full list of eligible essential worker definitions is on the public health department [website](#).

Also on Wednesday, the county announced a "limited number" of first-dose appointments would go up at 6 p.m. on the Cook County Health website. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988.

Those appointments total more than 8,000 slots throughout Thursday, with more future openings scheduled to be released that day.



Cook County to release 22K 1st dose COVID vaccine appointments Thursday

April 1, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-to-release-22k-1st-dose-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-/10468815/>

Cook County Health will release 22,000 COVID vaccine appointments at 4 p.m. on Thursday.

Anyone eligible under phases Phases 1A, 1B and 1C can sign up for the appointments, which will be for April 2, April 3 and April 5,

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The appointments being made available on Thursday are at the Forest Park, Des Plaines, South Suburban College and Triton College sites. The county is also operating a site at the Tinley Park Convention Center.



Cook County Health releasing more than 8k first-dose appointments Wednesday evening

Mar 31, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-more-than-8k-first-dose-appointments-wednesday-evening/>

Due to delays with shipments, Cook County Health will release more than 8,000 first-dose appointments on Wednesday evening.

The appointments will be available at 6 p.m. and are all for Thursday.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. The call center will remain open until 10 p.m. this evening to accommodate this release.

On Wednesday, suburban Cook County announced they have expanded to the final groups of essential workers included in Phase 1C. All essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail and transportation and logistics – are now eligible to receive vaccine.

The county confirmed its 10,000th death due to COVID-19 on Wednesday. The state [reported](#) 2,592 new and probable cases of coronavirus.



New COVID Vaccination Appointments in Cook County Booked Within Minutes Wednesday

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/new-covid-vaccination-appointments-in-cook-county-booked-within-minutes-wednesday/2476031/>

A block of coronavirus vaccination appointments in suburban Cook County were snapped up in a matter of minutes on Wednesday evening.

The 8,000 appointments, released by Cook County Health at 6 p.m. Wednesday, were all booked within 25 minutes, an official with the organization told NBC 5.

The appointments, all first-dose COVID vaccine appointments, were earmarked for individuals in Phases 1A, 1B, and 1C, and were booked up quickly. Another block of 25,000 appointments had been opened on Sunday, and those were gone within hours, according to officials.

Cook County Health moved suburban portions of the county to Phase 1C of the vaccination rollout plan this week.

"All essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail and transportation and logistics – are now eligible to receive vaccine," the county said, noting that Phase 1C includes the last eligible groups before all residents age 16 and older will be able to get vaccinated in the coming weeks.

The county was previously in Phase 1B Plus. A complete list of Phase 1C eligible groups [can be found on the CCDPH website](#). Anyone eligible in prior phases remains eligible for vaccinations moving forward.

There is some good news for residents who weren't able to get appointments, however. More appointments could become available as soon as Thursday as the county continues to receive more shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine.

More information on those developments can be found on the county's COVID website.



Getting Your Second Dose of the COVID Vaccine? Here's What You Should Know

What are the side effects and when are you likely going to experience them? How long do you have to wait until you are fully vaccinated?

March 31, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/getting-your-second-dose-of-the-covid-vaccine-heres-what-you-should-know/2475606/>

If you're awaiting your second shot of the coronavirus vaccine, chances are you've got some questions.

What are the side effects and when are you likely going to experience them? How long do you have to wait until you are fully vaccinated?

Here's a look at what you should know:

How long must you wait after receiving your second shot before you are considered "fully vaccinated?"

Complete vaccination is said to be two weeks after a person receives their second dose of the two-shot Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

How effective is the vaccine after the second shot?

A new CDC study reported that a single dose of Pfizer's or Moderna's COVID vaccine was 80% effective in preventing infections. That number jumped to 90% two weeks after the second dose, the study on vaccinated health care workers showed.

When do you receive your second shot after getting your first one?

The second Pfizer-BioNTech dose should be given 21 days after your first dose

The second [Moderna](#) vaccine dose should be given 28 days later

According to the CDC, second shots should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible, but can be given up to 42 days after the first dose, if necessary.

Though the CDC says second doses should not be administered earlier than the recommended interval, those given "within a grace period of 4 days earlier than the recommended date for the second dose are still considered valid."

Are you more likely to experience side effects after the second dose?

According to the CDC, side effects after your second shot "may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot."

"These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days," the CDC states.

What are the side effects?

According to Pfizer, about 3.8% of their clinical trial participants experienced fatigue as a side effect and 2% got a headache.

Moderna says 9.7% of their participants felt fatigued and 4.5% got a headache.

The CDC reports common side effects on the arm where the shot was administered include:

Pain

Redness

Swelling

Common side effects in the body include:

Tiredness

Headache

Muscle pain

Chills

Fever

Nausea

"The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots in order to get the most protection," the CDC states. "You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it."

"When people receive that second dose, they are receiving the second booster to try and reach the maximum efficacy," said Dr. Edward Cachay, infectious disease specialist at UCSD.

Why do you experience side effects? Is it bad if you don't?

According to Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health, the body's immune response creates the symptoms, but there's no real way to tell if you will experience side effects.

"That's simply a reflection of the immune response just the way we have when we get ill," he said. "From our immune response to a cold virus or a flu virus or the coronavirus, you know, it's our body's immune response that creates the illness. The virus itself is not the direct cause, it's directly causing the illness, and it's our inflammatory response making the immune system respond. And that's our body's way of destroying the virus is having inflammation and immunity to fight back. So that's the variation that's there and it's hard to know how you're gonna respond until you get it."

The good news is, if you do experience side effects, it's a sign your body is responding.

"The good news on our part is that a brisk response equals an effective response," Loafman said. "It tells us that the vaccine is working. Our body's forming a robust immune response and we feel that that's a positive thing. So we tend to see the vaccines that have a higher efficacy rate also have more of the so-called side effects or the symptoms because they work so well."

But if you don't, that's OK too.

"It's just that your body didn't react with as much of an inflammatory response," Loafman said. "You're still making antibodies. So it's not so much that sicker is better, but it just means that it's a vaccine that causes a reaction. Everybody - 95% of people who get it, almost 100% of people will get some reaction. Many of them that's an asymptomatic reaction, but others is more symptomatic."

According to Loafman, every person's response is unique.

"It's really just kind of a reflection of how unique each of our systems are, what other immunities we have," he said. "You know, a lot of the antibodies cross react and we have cross reactivity so it's really a mosaic. Each of our immune systems is a mosaic composite of all that we've been through and all that we have and all we've recently been dealing with. Our individual response varies. Everybody gets gets the appropriate immune response. The symptoms, you know, vary just like they do with with pretty much every infection you could think, from all the way from asymptomatic to potentially severe. That's all a sign of our individual immune systems responding to that to that exposure."

Are side effects an indication of whether or not you have already had COVID?

According to Loafman, there's some truth to the idea, but again, it depends.

"If you had COVID a while ago or you've already got some immunity, it's more like a booster," he said. "And boosters for some people are completely asymptomatic, boosters for other people trigger their immune response against it so they have some inflammation with it."

What can you do if you experience side effects?

The CDC recommends people talk to their doctors about taking over-the-counter medicines like ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin, or antihistamines, for any pain and discomfort after getting vaccinated.

"You can take these medications to relieve post-vaccination side effects if you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally," the CDC states. "It is [not recommended](#) you take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects."

The CDC recommends you seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:

If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot gets worse after 24 hours

If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911.

If you get COVID between your first and second dose should you reschedule your second dose appointment?

According to Loafman, it is recommended that you reschedule.

"First of all, you know, you're already developing some natural immunity from the virus itself. So, the need for the vaccine is now delayed so there's no urgent need to do it because you already have immunity - natural immunity," he said. "And in addition, there is some concern that some patients will have worse side effects then, because they're still kind of recovering, they're still developing the initial immunity from the virus. So there's pain without the game, potentially."

According to Loafman, there's a window of time to reschedule.

"You have some time, a window, and it's thought to be a minimum two to three months of good, healthy immunity from the virus itself," he said. "So take that opportunity to convalesce and recover, and then get or finish the COVID vaccination when it will start to become helpful again."

But when will you know when you should reschedule?

Chicago's top doctor said the quarantine measures required for anyone who gets COVID still apply, regardless of vaccination.

"If you get COVID between your first and second vaccine dose, you need to isolate just like you would if you got COVID not related to your vaccine does," Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said. "So if you get COVID you need to stay home for the full minimum of 10 days and until your symptoms have resolved, assuming

that you had symptoms. Once your symptoms have resolved, once you're totally feeling better and you're no longer infectious, you can go ahead and get that second dose."

What can you do after you've received your second dose?

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recently updated their guidelines for vaccinated individuals.

The recommendations from federal health officials say fully-vaccinated Americans can gather with other vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask or social distancing.

[Here's a complete guide to what you can and cannot do once you are fully vaccinated.](#)



What to Do If You Get COVID Between Your 2 Vaccine Doses

What should you do? Do you postpone your second dose?

April 1, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/what-to-do-if-you-get-covid-between-your-first-second-vaccine-doses/2476632/>

While the two-shot coronavirus vaccines do provide protection after a single dose, there is still a chance you could get the virus between doses.

So what should you do? Do you postpone your second dose?

Here's a look at what you should know:

According to Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health in Illinois, it is recommended that you reschedule your second dose if you contract covid in between doses.

"First of all, you know, you're already developing some natural immunity from the virus itself. So, the need for the vaccine is now delayed so there's no urgent need to do it because you already have immunity - natural immunity," he said. "And in addition, there is some concern that some patients will have worse side effects then, because they're still kind of recovering, they're still developing the initial immunity from the virus. So there's pain without the game, potentially."

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While the vaccine itself cannot give you the virus, it is also not 100% effective at preventing the virus entirely, though those who receive the vaccine are far less likely to be hospitalized or die from it, data shows.

A new CDC study reported that a single dose of Pfizer's or Moderna's COVID vaccine was 80% effective in preventing infections. That number jumped to 90% two weeks after the second dose, the study on vaccinated health care workers showed.

Even after the second dose, there's still a possibility you could get coronavirus, but, according to Arwady, "it's rare."

"We have had cases here in Chicago of people who have been fully vaccinated," Arwady said during a Facebook Live Tuesday, noting that it's a "small number."

"I don't want to give the impression this is a common thing," Arwady added. "You know 100 cases out of the hundreds of thousands here in Chicago is not a lot."



Lemont Vaccine Eligibility Expanded To Phase 1c

All essential workers are now eligible to be vaccinated in suburban Cook County, public health officials announced.

Andrea Earnest

April 1, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/lemont/lemont-vaccine-eligibility-expanded-phase-1c>

Public health officials in suburban Cook County Wednesday expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to all essential workers in Phase 1c, the final vaccine priority group before appointments open up for anyone 16 or older next month.

Lemont residents who work in retail, food service, transportation, construction, manufacturing and more can now make appointments to receive vaccines, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health. Those who live in Chicago or other counties but work in the suburbs are also eligible.

Public health officials estimate there are an additional 100,000 essential workers who live in suburban Cook County who will become eligible as part of the expansion, bringing the total number of eligible residents in the Cook County suburbs in Phases 1b, 1b+ and 1c to about 1 million.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and lead of the suburban health department, said in a statement announcing the expansion.

"We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand," Rubin added.

Chicago entered Phase 1c on Monday. Depending on local supply and demand for vaccines, health departments outside of Chicago are permitted to expand eligibility to anyone aged 16 and up. Several downstate counties have already begun doing so.

Another 1.2 million suburban Cook County residents are expected to become eligible in less than two weeks.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has directed all health departments outside of Chicago to move to Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout starting April 12, making all residents aged 16 or older eligible for the vaccine. It remains to be seen if it will be a binding mandate.

Public health officials in Chicago, which receives its supply separately from the state health department, have until the federal deadline of May 1 to expand eligibility.

"Cook County Health has administered more than 350,000 vaccinations to date; well on our way to our goal [of 1] million," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. "We're proud to contribute so significantly to the vaccination of over 620,000 suburban Cook County residents so far."

On Wednesday, the state's seven-day rolling average number of vaccine doses administered per day hit an all-time high of more than 109,000 jabs.

About 431,000 suburban Cook County residents have been fully vaccinated, according to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The county's inoculation rate is .16 percentage point above the state.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead of the county health department, said in a statement announcing the expansion.

"We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand," she added.

Public health officials recommend all residents of Lemont pre-register for vaccine appointment information from the county. About 1.2 million people have already done so, according to a spokesperson.

For the first time Wednesday, state public health officials began also reporting the number of wasted or otherwise unusable doses.

According to data reported to the state, there have been 1,645 doses of vaccine wasted statewide out of the first 5.8 million doses administered.

Also Wednesday, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office announced the county's 10,000th death due to COVID-19. It has been barely a year since the state recorded its first death from coronavirus — 61-year-old retired nurse Patricia Frieson, of Chicago, died March 16, 2020.

Of those that have died since, more than 80 percent were people over the age of 60, and 57 percent of fatalities were men.

According to county data, in Lemont, there were 25 deaths in Cook County, and 4 deaths in DuPage County.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said she mourned with the 10,000 families who have suffered the loss of a member during the past year.

"While there is light at the end of the tunnel," Preckwinkle said, "this is a sobering reminder that the virus is still with us and that we must continue to remain vigilant until we've achieved herd immunity."



Northbrook Vaccine Eligibility Expanded To Phase 1c

All essential workers are now eligible to be vaccinated in suburban Cook County, public health officials announced.

*Eric DeGrechie
March 31, 2021*

<https://patch.com/illinois/northbrook/northbrook-vaccine-eligibility-expanded-phase-1c>

Public health officials in suburban Cook County Wednesday expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to all essential workers in Phase 1c, the final vaccine priority group before appointments open up for anyone 16 or older next month.

Northbrook residents who work in retail, food service, transportation, construction, manufacturing and more can now make appointments to receive vaccines, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health. Those who live in Chicago or other counties but work in the suburbs are also eligible.

Public health officials estimate there are an additional 100,000 essential workers who live in suburban Cook County who will become eligible as part of the expansion, bringing the total number of eligible residents in the Cook County suburbs in Phases 1b, 1b+ and 1c to about 1 million.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and lead of the suburban health department, said in a statement announcing the expansion.

"We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand," Rubin added.

Chicago entered Phase 1c on Monday. Depending on local supply and demand for vaccines, health departments outside of Chicago are permitted to expand eligibility to anyone aged 16 and up. Several downstate counties have already begun doing so.

Another 1.2 million suburban Cook County residents are expected to become eligible in less than two weeks.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has directed all health departments outside of Chicago to move to Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout starting April 12, making all residents aged 16 or older eligible for the vaccine. It remains to be seen if it will be a binding mandate.

Public health officials in Chicago, which receives its supply separately from the state health department, have until the federal deadline of May 1 to expand eligibility.

"Cook County Health has administered more than 350,000 vaccinations to date; well on our way to our goal [of 1] million," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. "We're proud to contribute so significantly to the vaccination of over 620,000 suburban Cook County residents so far."

On Tuesday, the state's seven-day rolling average number of vaccine doses administered per day hit an all-time high of more than 109,000 jabs.

About 426,000 suburban Cook County residents have been fully vaccinated, according to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The county's inoculation rate is about a fifth of a percentage point above the state.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead of the county health department, said in a statement announcing the expansion.

"We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand," she added.

Public health officials recommend all residents of Northbrook pre-register for vaccine appointment information from the county. About 1.2 million people have already done so, according to a spokesperson.

For the first time Wednesday, state public health officials began also reporting the number of wasted or otherwise unusable doses.

According to data reported to the state, there have been 1,645 doses of vaccine wasted statewide out of the first 5.8 million doses administered.

Also Wednesday, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office announced the county's 10,000th death due to COVID-19. It has been barely a year since the state recorded its first death from coronavirus — 61-year-old retired nurse Patricia Frieson, of Chicago, died March 16, 2020.

Of those that have died since, more than 80 percent were people over the age of 60, and 57 percent of fatalities were men. They include 114 Northbrook residents.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said she mourned with the 10,000 families who have suffered the loss of a member during the past year.

"While there is light at the end of the tunnel," Preckwinkle said, "this is a sobering reminder that the virus is still with us and that we must continue to remain vigilant until we've achieved herd immunity."

For more information on how to get a coronavirus vaccine in Illinois, [visit Patch's information page.](#)



Winnetka, Glencoe Vaccine Eligibility Expands To Phase 1c

All essential workers who live and work in suburban Cook County are now eligible to be vaccinated, public health officials announced.

Jonah Meadows

March 31, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/winnetka/winnetka-glencoe-vaccine-eligibility-expands-phase-1c>

Public health officials in suburban Cook County Wednesday expanded COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to all essential workers in Phase 1c, the final vaccine priority group before appointments open up for anyone 16 or older next month.

Winnetka and Glencoe residents who work in retail, food service, transportation, construction, manufacturing and more can now make appointments to receive vaccines, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health. Those who live in Chicago, or outside the county but work in the suburbs are also eligible.

Public health officials estimate there are an additional 100,000 essential workers who live in suburban Cook County who will become eligible as part of the expansion, bringing the total number of eligible residents in the Cook County suburbs in Phases 1b, 1b+ and 1c to about 1 million.

"Cook County Health has administered more than 350,000 vaccinations to date; well on our way to our goal [of 1] million," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. "We're proud to contribute so significantly to the vaccination of over 620,000 suburban Cook County residents so far."

Chicago entered Phase 1c on Monday. Depending on local supply and demand for vaccines, health departments outside of Chicago are permitted to expand eligibility to anyone aged 16 and up. Several downstate counties have already begun doing so.

Another 1.2 million suburban Cook County residents are expected to become eligible in less than two weeks.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has directed all health departments outside of Chicago to move to Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout starting April 12, making all residents aged 16 or older eligible for the vaccine. It remains to be seen if it will be a binding mandate.

Public health officials in Chicago — since it receives its supply separately from the state health department and is not bound by the governor's vaccine pronouncements — have until a federal deadline of May 1 to expand eligibility.

A list of jobs that qualify as part of the [Phase 1c group](#) is available from the Cook County Department of Public Health.

On Tuesday, the state's seven-day rolling average number of vaccine doses administered per day hit an all-time high of more than 109,000 jobs.

About 426,000 suburban Cook County residents have been fully vaccinated, according to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The county's inoculation rate is about a fifth of a percentage point above the state as a whole.

Public health officials recommend all Winnetka and Glencoe [pre-register](#) for vaccine appointment information from the county. About 1.2 million people have already done so, according to a spokesperson.

Data from the Cook County Department of Public Health shows 58 percent of doses have gone to women — and residents of the northern Cook County suburbs, not counting Skokie or Evanston, made up more than half of all people jabbed.

"We are making great progress in our vaccinations: over 25 percent of all residents in suburban Cook County and more than 80 percent of those age 65 and older have received at least one dose," Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead of the county health department, said in a statement announcing the expansion.

"We are building an impressive county-wide system to administer vaccines to as many of our 2.5 million residents who want one and will be able to equitably and efficiently administer them if the vaccine supply can match the demand," she added.

In Winnetka, the number of new confirmed coronavirus cases rose by about 43 percent over the past two weeks, and the per capita infection rate in the village has exceeded the county's as a whole since the last week of January, according to [data](#) from the county public health department.

In Glencoe, the rate was up by over 54 percent, but remained below the county average.

For the first time Wednesday, state public health officials began also reporting the number of wasted or otherwise unusable doses.

According to data reported to the state, there have been 1,645 doses of vaccine wasted statewide out of the first 5.8 million doses administered.

Also Wednesday, the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office announced the county's 10,000th death due to COVID-19. It has been barely a year since the state recorded its first death from coronavirus — 61-year-old retired nurse Patricia Frieson, of Chicago, died March 16, 2020.

Of those that have died since, more than 80 percent were people over the age of 60, and 57 percent of fatalities were men.

They include the deaths of four Winnetka residents and four Glencoe residents. Winnetka's most recent death was reported on March 12 and Glencoe's in late November, according to the medical examiner's office. The sixth Northfield fatality from COVID-19 was reported Sunday.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said she mourned with the 10,000 families who have suffered the loss of a member during the past year.

"While there is light at the end of the tunnel," Preckwinkle said, "this is a sobering reminder that the virus is still with us and that we must continue to remain vigilant until we've achieved herd immunity."



Cook County to release 22K 1st dose COVID vaccine appointments Thursday

April 1, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-to-release-22k-1st-dose-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-/10468815/>

Cook County Health will release 22,000 COVID vaccine appointments at 4 p.m. on Thursday.

Anyone eligible under phases Phases 1A, 1B and 1C can sign up for the appointments, which will be for April 2, April 3 and April 5,

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The appointments being made available on Thursday are at the Forest Park, Des Plaines, South Suburban College and Triton College sites. The county is also operating a site at the Tinley Park Convention Center.



Why You May Be More Likely to Get the Moderna Vaccine in Chicago

Chicago's top doctor said Moderna has been the most widely distributed vaccine in Chicago due to its simpler storage requirements

April 1, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/why-you-may-be-more-likely-to-get-the-moderna-vaccine-in-chicago/2476648/>

As three different COVID-19 vaccines become available across the country, Moderna remains the front runner for distribution in Chicago and across Illinois, according to Chicago's top doctor.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said the Moderna vaccine is being used more because it's less complicated to handle and store unlike the Pfizer vaccine.

"Pfizer remains a little bit complicated in terms of it's got this ultra-cold vaccination storage and you only have five days to use it from when you pull it out," Arwady said during a Facebook Live Q&A on Thursday.

"There's a lot more related to mixing that vaccine, you have to use saline, it's generally done by pharmacists or people with more training, it's not an ideal setting for an outpatient setting."

Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccines [have been circulating across the U.S.](#), both requiring two shots for full protection and according to an analysis by U.S. regulators, Johnson & Johnson's single-dose vaccine also offers strong protection against severe COVID-19.

But as more Johnson & Johnson vaccines become available in Illinois, Moderna remains the easiest to distribute, particularly to outpatient providers.

"Moderna has really been the one vaccine that's been useful for all of these outpatient settings which, from my standpoint is really where the money is in terms of getting vaccine to go into neighborhoods to smaller providers and Johnson and Johnson now coming in only has to be refrigerated," Arwady said.

On Thursday Cook County Health will release 22,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments Thursday afternoon for all Illinois residents eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The appointments will be released at 4 p.m. Thursday and can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988.

Cook County's vaccination sites are open to all Illinois residents who qualify and remain by appointment only.



Cook County Opening Up 22,000 New Appointments For COVID-19 Vaccines At 4 Suburban Mass Vaccination Sites

April 1, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/01/suburban-cook-county-covid-19-coronavirus-vaccination-appointments/>

Cook County officials will release about 22,000 first-dose appointments for COVID-19 vaccines on Thursday afternoon, covering shots being given out at four suburban mass vaccination sites.

Cook County Health said it will open up the new appointments at 4 p.m. Thursday for vaccinations at:

Forest Park Community Vaccination Center at 7630 Roosevelt Rd.,

South Suburban College at 15800 State St. in South Holland,

Triton College at 2000 5th Ave in River Grove,

Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center at 1155 E. Oakton St.

The appointments will cover shots being given out on Friday, Saturday, and Monday only.

You can register for an appointment at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov, or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Appointments will be available to anyone in Cook County currently eligible for a vaccine, including healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and staff, all essential workers, people age 65 and older, and people age 16 and up with certain underlying health conditions.

Chicago Tribune

Cook County releasing 22,000 first-dose appointments across four suburban sites

ALICE YIN

APR 01, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-cook-county-coronavirus-vaccine-22000-first-dose-appointments-20210401-hwzansckfjaibhie6vc57w76ue-story.html>

Cook County Health announced it will open up about 22,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination slots at 4 p.m. Thursday across four suburban sites, according to a news release.

The locations are Triton College, South Suburban College, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center and Forest Park Community Vaccination Center.

Anyone who is in Phase 1a, 1b or 1c can sign up at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The release of appointments covers Friday, Saturday and Monday, according to a news release. All vaccinations are by appointment only.



Cook County releasing 22,000 first-dose appointments across four suburban sites

*Alice Yin, Chicago Tribune
April 1, 2021*

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-releasing-22-000-193500995.html>

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The release of appointments covers Friday, Saturday and Monday, according to a news release. All vaccinations are by appointment only.



COVID Vaccine Side Effects: Why Do Some Get Them and What Does it Mean?

What causes someone to experience side effects and what does it mean if you get them when others don't?

April 1, 2021

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/coronavirus/covid-vaccine-side-effects-symptoms-why-do-some-get-them-and-what-does-it-mean/2595158/>

UPDATE: *The U.S. is recommending a “pause” in administration of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.*

In a joint statement Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration said they were investigating unusual clots in six women that occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. All six cases were in women between the ages of 18 and 48. More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the U.S., the vast majority with no or mild side effects. Read more [here](#).

Side effects are possible after receiving either one or two doses of any of the three coronavirus vaccines currently being administered in the U.S., but not everyone experiences them.

Coronavirus Pandemic

Full coverage of the COVID-19 outbreak and how it impacts you

So what causes the side effects and what does it mean if you get them when others don't?

Here's what you should know:

Are side effects more common after the first or second dose?

According to the CDC, side effects after your second shot "may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot."

"These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days," the CDC states.

In trials of both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, more people experienced side effects after the second dose.

What are the possible side effects?

According to Pfizer, about 3.8% of their clinical trial participants experienced fatigue as a side effect and 2% got a headache.

Moderna says 9.7% of their participants felt fatigued and 4.5% got a headache.

Like Pfizer and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines, [the main side effects of the J&J shot](#) are pain at the injection site and flu-like fever, fatigue and headache.

The CDC reports the most common side effects for all three authorized vaccines is at the injection site. They include:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling
- Common side effects in the body include:
 - Tiredness
 - Headache
 - Muscle pain
 - Chills
 - Fever
 - Nausea

"The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots in order to get the most protection," the CDC states. "You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it."

"When people receive that second dose, they are receiving the second booster to try and reach the maximum efficacy," said Dr. Edward Cachay, infectious disease specialist at UCSD.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises people to stick around for 15 minutes after vaccination, and those with a history of other allergies for 30 minutes, so they can be monitored and treated immediately if they have a reaction.

Why do you experience side effects? Is it bad if you don't?

According to Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health in Illinois, the body's immune response creates the symptoms, but there's no real way to tell if you will experience side effects.

"That's simply a reflection of the immune response, just the way we have when we get ill," he said. "From our immune response to a cold virus or a flu virus or the coronavirus, you know, it's our body's immune response that creates the illness. The virus itself is not the direct cause, it's directly causing the illness, and it's our inflammatory response making the immune system respond. And that's our body's way of destroying the virus is having inflammation and immunity to fight back. So that's the variation that's there and it's hard to know how you're gonna respond until you get it."

The good news is, if you do experience side effects, it's a sign your body is responding.

"The good news on our part is that a brisk response equals an effective response," Loafman said. "It tells us that the vaccine is working. Our body's forming a robust immune response and we feel that that's a positive thing. So we tend to see the vaccines that have a higher efficacy rate also have more of the so-called side effects or the symptoms because they work so well."

But if you don't, that's OK too.

"It's just that your body didn't react with as much of an inflammatory response," Loafman said. "You're still making antibodies. So it's not so much that sicker is better, but it just means that it's a vaccine that causes a reaction. Everybody - 95% of people who get it, almost 100% of people will get some reaction. Many of them that's an asymptomatic reaction, but others is more symptomatic."

According to Loafman, every person's response is unique.

"It's really just kind of a reflection of how unique each of our systems are, what other immunities we have," he said. "You know, a lot of the antibodies cross react and we have cross reactivity so it's really a mosaic. Each of our immune

systems is a mosaic composite of all that we've been through and all that we have and all we've recently been dealing with. Our individual response varies. Everybody gets the appropriate immune response. The symptoms vary just like they do with pretty much every infection you could think, from all the way from asymptomatic to potentially severe. That's all a sign of our individual immune systems responding to that to that exposure."

Are side effects an indication of whether or not you already had COVID?

There's some truth to the idea, but again, it depends, Loafman says.

"If you had COVID a while ago or you've already got some immunity, it's more like a booster," he said. "And boosters for some people are completely asymptomatic, boosters for other people trigger their immune response against it so they have some inflammation with it."

What can you do if you experience side effects?

The CDC recommends people talk to their doctors about taking over-the-counter medicines like ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin, or antihistamines, for any pain and discomfort after getting vaccinated.

"You can take these medications to relieve post-vaccination side effects if you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications normally," the CDC states. "It is [not recommended](#) you take these medicines before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects."

The CDC recommends you seek medical attention if you experience any of the following:

If the redness or tenderness where you got the shot gets worse after 24 hours

If your side effects are worrying you or do not seem to be going away after a few days

If you get a COVID-19 vaccine and you think you might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, seek immediate medical care by calling 911.



Cook County to release 22,000 first-dose Covid vaccine appointments Thursday afternoon

April 1, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-to-release-22000-first-dose-covid-vaccine-appointments-thursday-afternoon/>

Health officials in Cook County announced Thursday they will release more first-dose vaccine appointments for several of its COVID-19 vaccination sites.

Approximately 22,000 first-dose appointments will be available at 4 p.m. Thursday.

People eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C will be allowed to sign up for the following sites:

- Forest Park Community Vaccination Center
- Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center
- South Suburban College
- Triton College

This release is for appointments Friday, Saturday and Monday only.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.



Cook County Vaccine: 22K Appointments Released Thursday

April 1, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-vaccine-22k-appointments-to-be-released-thursday/2476499/>

Cook County Health released 22,000 first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Thursday afternoon for all Illinois residents eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The appointments were released at 4 p.m. Thursday. All appointments through the county can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988.

Cook County's vaccination sites are open to all Illinois residents who qualify and remain by appointment only.

County officials said the appointments released Thursday will be for Friday, Saturday and Monday at four of the county's five mass vaccination sites:

- 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
- Former HOB0 at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

The new appointments come one day after Cook County released 8,000 appointments that were all booked within 25 minutes. A previous block of 25,000 appointments that were opened on Sunday were taken within hours, officials said.

Cook County also announced this week that the suburban portions of the county - operating on a different framework than the city of Chicago - has moved into Phase 1C of its vaccination rollout.

"All essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail and transportation and logistics – are now eligible to receive vaccine," the county said Wednesday, noting that Phase 1C includes the last eligible groups before all residents age 16 and older will be able to get vaccinated in the coming weeks.

The county was previously in Phase 1B Plus. A complete list of Phase 1C eligible groups [can be found on the CCDPH website](#). Anyone eligible in prior phases remains eligible for vaccinations moving forward.

Daily Herald

Cook County opens 22,000 more vaccination appointments

Marni Pyke
April 2, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210401/cook-county-opens-22000-more-vaccination-appointments>

Cook County Health opened about 22,000 first-dose appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations Thursday afternoon for time slots on Friday, Saturday and Monday.

Locations will be at the Forest Park and Des Plaines community vaccination centers plus sites at South Suburban College in South Holland and Triton College in River Grove.

Appointments are open to all Illinoisans eligible in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C, which includes health care workers, front line workers, people age 65 and up, and essential workers including: higher education staff, government employees, media, food and beverage workers, construction trade employees and religious leaders.

To make an appointment, go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. If you have problems scheduling online, call (833) 308-1988.



22K Cook Co. Vaccine Appointments Gone In 70 Minutes

Cook County Health released the 22,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccine appointments Thursday afternoon.

Amie Schaezner

April 2, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/desplains/22k-cook-co-vaccine-appointments-gone-70-minutes>

COOK COUNTY, IL — The 22,000 first-dose appointments made available Thursday afternoon in Cook County were gone in just over an hour, local public health officials said Friday morning.

Cook County Health announced the appointments would go live at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov at about 4 p.m. Thursday. Just 70 minutes later, thousands of residents eager to get their coronavirus shot had scheduled their first appointments, Elizabeth Pederson, communications manager for Cook County Health, told Patch Friday morning.

The appointments were for Friday through Monday only at Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, the Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College. The vaccines will go to those eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

Cook County Health releases appointments based on vaccine supply, according to a news release from Cook County Health.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 on Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Daily Herald

State tops 6 million COVID-19 vaccinations; 3,235 new cases, 24 deaths

Marni Pyke
April 2, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210402/state-tops-6-million-covid-19-vaccinations-3235-new-cases-24-deaths>

Illinois surpassed 6 million COVID-19 vaccines administered Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported.

On Thursday, 124,870 more people received COVID-19 shots compared to the seven-day average of 108,811.

The federal government has delivered 7,748,925 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 6,043,292 shots have been given, the Illinois Department of Public Health said. That means 1,056,130 doses shipped since Sunday; the Biden administration had promised to provide 1 million vaccines a week in April.

There's still a long way to go before a majority of Illinois' 12.7 million residents are fully protected against the virus, however.

So far, 2,262,076 people -- 17.8% of the state -- have been fully vaccinated. Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer Inc. and Moderna Inc. require two doses several weeks apart. A third version made by Johnson & Johnson requires one shot.

Meanwhile, cases of more infectious COVID-19 mutations in Illinois increased to 351, compared with 227 a week ago on March 25. Most of those cases, 276, were a variant originating in the United Kingdom.

The variant has approximately 50% increased transmissibility and can result in more severe illness, based on hospitalization and fatality rates in Britain, said Dr. Gregory Huhn, an infectious disease specialist with Cook County Health.

But the good news is data shows "those that would be protected by vaccination would be likely protected against acquiring this U.K. variant."

Huhn noted one reason for the growth in variant cases is labs now have more experience sequencing and detecting COVID-19 mutations,

The state reported 3,235 new virus cases Friday, reflecting an upward trend, with 24 deaths from the respiratory disease.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,445 COVID-19 patients Thursday night. Hospitalizations reached 1,386 a day between Thursday and March 26 based on a seven-day average or a 13% increase compared to 1,225 patients daily between March 25 and March 19.

Officials also provided a new metric about wasted vaccines. A total of 1,645 doses have been wasted so far from a variety of causes, including dropped syringes, vials expiring while stored, or not kept at the correct temperature.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 3.5% based on a seven-day average.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,251,346, and 21,349 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 90,575 virus tests in the last 24 hours.

Chicago Tribune

COVID-19 restrictions, including indoor dining ban, 'may very well' return soon in suburban Cook County, public health official says

ALICE YIN

APR 03, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-cook-county-suburbs-coronavirus-restrictions-third-surge-20210403-ddcqtbxzvg65bczjuiwqeqlzu-story.html>

Cook County's public health leader on Saturday said the suburbs could soon return to previous COVID-19 restrictions as the region grapples with what appears to be the start of a third coronavirus wave.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health that guides COVID-19 response in most of the suburbs, sounded the alarm in a call with reporters following a rising caseload that began in March. As a result, suburban Cook County might again see an indoor dining ban or the gathering limit curtailed from the current cap at 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever is fewer, Rubin said.

"We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days," Rubin said. "I'm not promising that one way or the other."

The warning comes as suburban Cook County recorded a seven-day average of daily cases at 498, a spike mostly driven by the 20s, 30s, 50s and 40s age groups, in that order, according to this week's figures. The positivity rate was 5% as of last week, creeping toward the 8% benchmark that last fall shut down indoor dining, among other things. But the higher rates reported among young adults — 6% for those under 20 — is "extremely worrisome," Rubin said.

The numbers mirror Chicago's, where the positivity rate was 4.9% as of this week's data and daily average cases were at 570 — a 44% increase from last week.

With the Easter holiday weekend upon us, Rubin urged residents to gather outdoors instead of indoors, and to heed masking and 6-foot social distancing guidelines. Like Chicago, the county previously loosened outdoor gathering limits in order to encourage socializing in a safer setting than indoors.

"We are in the beginnings of another surge," Rubin said. "Maybe this is as high as we'll go. ... We can't say. It's very, very hard to predict."

Rubin said contact tracing and other data remains inconclusive at this point about where the recent COVID-19 outbreaks stem from, but historically indoor activities have sparked coronavirus waves. That includes private parties, weddings and other large celebrations.

With more than 80% of residents 65 or older having gotten at least the first dose of the vaccine, Rubin said there is some relief that those people are seeing less worrisome COVID-19 rates for now. During the fall surge, trends pointed to younger adults getting sick first and transmitting the virus to older people, she said.

Still, Rubin said everyone needs to remain vigilant despite the “real phenomena” of “COVID fatigue,” which is people becoming weary and less cautious of social distancing after a year of restrictions. That means there is now a race between a potential third surge and vaccination efforts, she said.

“People are thinking, ‘Oh, OK now I can finally go out, and I can do what I want, and I can take my mask (off).’” Rubin said. “COVID fatigue is a real problem. ... The bottom line is people have to wear masks, but we also have to try to provide safe places and safe ways for people to feel connected to others without putting each other at risk. And the big way of doing that frankly is with vaccination.”

COVID-19 restrictions, including indoor dining ban, ‘may very well’ return soon in suburban Cook County, public health official says

ALICE YIN Chicago Tribune
Apr 3, 2021

https://thesouthern.com/news/state-and-regional/covid-19-restrictions-including-indoor-dining-ban-may-very-well-return-soon-in-suburban-cook/article_2a431363-273d-52b4-844f-99dbee0f2098.html

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CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

2,839 new COVID-19 cases in Illinois as Cook County faces ‘the beginning of another surge’

The state is vaccinating more and more people each day, but coronavirus cases have trended sharply upward over the past month, especially among young people.

Mitchell Armentrout

Apr 3, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/3/22365605/illinois-coronavirus-chicago-cook-county-vaccine-cases-deaths-covid-19-april-3>

A troubling rise in COVID-19 cases across the Chicago area and the rest of Illinois means another coronavirus “clamp-down” could soon be in store for businesses in suburban Cook County, officials warned Saturday.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 2,839 new cases of the deadly respiratory disease were diagnosed across the state, raising Illinois’ average testing positivity rate to 3.8%. That figure has almost doubled in just three weeks.

Hospitals statewide have seen a 32% increase in COVID-19 patients over that period, with 1,426 beds occupied Friday night.

And with about 600 people testing positive in Cook County each day — most of them young adults — suburban cases have more than doubled over the past month, according to Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead and senior medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

“We are in the beginnings of another surge now,” Rubin said during a virtual news conference. “Maybe this is as high as we’ll go, and maybe it’ll level out and go down. We can’t say. It’s very very hard to predict. But that’s one of the reasons we’re pushing out vaccine as quickly as we get it.”

The state reported its second-most productive vaccination day yet with 145,315 doses administered Friday. At a rolling average of 110,057 shots given per day, Illinois is vaccinating more people than ever — but still, only 18.2% of the population have been fully immunized.

If cases keep ticking upward, county officials will consider scaling back recently expanded indoor business capacity limits from 50% down to 40% or 30%. Those and other possible COVID-19 “mitigations” will be on the table, Rubin said.

“We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days,” she said. “I’m not promising that one way or the other. We need to evaluate exactly what kinds of activities and movements do we think are really pushing this surge.”

It’s not clear exactly what’s driving the statewide surge, Rubin said, but “COVID fatigue” certainly isn’t helping.

“Historically, it’s been indoor activities like indoor dining or indoor congregating: parties, weddings, large celebrations. That’s where we have been seeing spread among large numbers of people, and these are the kinds of things that we’ve been trying to clamp down on all along,” she said.

That’s why Rubin urged families to keep Easter celebrations virtual or outdoors this weekend — with masks and plenty of social distance.

“People have to be safe and have to be following the appropriate guidance,” she said.

The state also reported 13 more COVID-19 deaths, including that of a Cook County woman in her 40s.

Illinois' pandemic death toll is up to 21,361, among almost 1.3 million who have tested positive over the past year.



Cook County Entering New Coronavirus Surge: Health Officials

Lexi Sutter
April 3, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-entering-new-coronavirus-surge-health-officials/2477872/>

Cook County could reinstate a number of COVID-19 restrictions aimed at reducing rising cases as the county begins to see a third surge of the coronavirus, health officials said Saturday.

Both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, according to Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior medical officer and co-lead at the Cook County Department of Public Health.

A couple weeks ago, Rubin said, approximately 250 cases were reported each day. On Saturday, [Illinois saw 2,839 new cases and 13 deaths](#) as the positivity rate increased from 4.1 to 4.3%.

A total of 145,315 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered in a recent 24-hour span, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health. In all, a total of 6,188,607 doses have been administered across the state.

Health officials in the city of Chicago [have expressed worries about a “quantum leap” in coronavirus cases](#), saying that a failure to curtail those gains could cause some restrictions to be re-imposed after they were loosened earlier this year.

According to data from the IDPH, the city of Chicago has seen its seven-day positivity rate rise from 3.2% on March 19 to 4.5% as of March 28, a rapid increase that is alarming some public health experts.

While no decisions have been made about reinstating restrictions in Cook County, officials say change could come in the next week, and the biggest focus may be on indoor activities.

"The data has shown it is not necessarily outdoor activities, but indoor, so these are the kind of things we have to evaluate and look at the data," Rubin said.

As is the case in Chicago, Rubin said cases are spiking in Cook County's younger population, particularly people in their 20s and 30s, as that age group isn't largely vaccinated.

Even with availability of the coronavirus vaccine becoming more widespread, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot and Dr. Allison Arwady, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, are urging residents, especially younger ones, to continue to adhere to social distancing protocols and to wear their masks in public, saying that the end of the pandemic could be in sight if residents continue to stay vigilant.

"The actions that you take now will impact what we can all do in the future," Lightfoot said earlier in the week. "We don't want to be forced to take any steps back, or worse, close those things down because we haven't done what is necessary now to remain diligent. COVID-19 is still here, it is still killing people in our city every single day. So we have got to remain diligent."



Cook County officials warn of tightened restrictions amid COVID-19 case spike

Mike Lowe
April 4, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-officials-warn-of-tightened-restrictions-amid-covid-19-case-spike/>

Cook County Public Health officials are warning residents that additional coronavirus restrictions could return in a matter of days as case numbers and other key measures continue to rise.

The threat could mean restaurants in the city and the suburbs would once again be dealing with reduced capacities and limitations. A decision about new restrictions is expected in the coming days.

Business owner Pat Fowler told WGN it was business as usual Sunday for his popular Evanston-area restaurant, [Firehouse Grill](#). A 60-degree sunny day brought a steady stream of customers to the outdoor patio.

"We've been totally full outside all day, so that's been great and people are excited to be out," he said. "It's super nice weather and people are enjoying themselves."

But just as Illinois restaurants and businesses are bouncing back from months of restrictions amid a growing number of people getting vaccinated, health officials warn of a possible 'third wave' of COVID-19.

The possibility is alarming for Fowler.

"It's always disappointing to hear more restrictions might be placed on us, but for us, the health and safety of our employees and our customers is the most important thing to me," Fowler said. "So, if that's what we need to do to put an end to this pandemic, we're more than happy to do it."

Dr. Rachel Rubin of the Cook County Department of Public Health insists a decision on restrictions is still "a matter of days" away but says she is monitoring what she calls a "concerning increase in COVID-19 cases."

Public health statistics show Suburban Cook County recorded nearly 500 new cases a day over the last week. Nearly 80 percent of Suburban Cook County residents 65 or older have been vaccinated with at least one shot. Dr. Rubin attributes to spike to younger people, mainly in their 20s and 30s.

The latest figures show a county-wide positivity rate hovering around 5%. The number that triggered shutdowns and restrictions last fall was 8%.

In Illinois, just under 19% of the total population has been vaccinated.

"We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days," Dr. Rubin said. "I'm not promising that one way or another. We need to evaluate what kind of activities and movements we think are really pushing this surge."

Daily Herald

Spring spike in COVID-19 cases continues

April 5, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210404/spring-spike-in-covid-19-cases-continues>

The early spring spike in COVID-19 cases in Illinois continues, as state health authorities on Sunday reported 2,449 new confirmed and probable cases of the coronavirus -- the highest total for a Sunday since mid-January.

The Illinois Department of Public Health also reported 14 additional deaths from the illness, bringing the state's total to 21,373 since the outbreak began more than a year ago. Among those who died were 10 Cook County residents. The remainder lived downstate.

Sunday marked the 11th time in the last 12 days the daily case total has topped 2,000. The total exceeded 2,000 only four times in the month before that.

On Saturday, Cook County health officials warned that rising COVID-19 test positivity rates in the suburbs are highest among people under age 20, and urged people to gather safely over the holiday weekend. Because of the increase, officials are evaluating whether to roll back the recent loosening of some restrictions.

In another sign of the rising cases, health officials reported that 1,491 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized Saturday, up from 1,426 on Friday and 1,337 a week ago. Of those in the hospital Saturday, 336 patients were in intensive care and 143 were on ventilators, officials said.

Another 102,215 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were reported administered in Illinois on Saturday, just below the rolling seven-day average of 108,914. In all, nearly 6.3 million shots have been given, and about 2,368,041 state residents -- more than 18.5% of the total population -- are now fully vaccinated, according to the IDPH.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Illinois' coronavirus positivity rate remains at a two-month high

Illinois is seeing a troubling upward trend in its pandemic numbers that could lead officials to tighten restrictions on businesses once again.

Madeline Kenney

Apr 4, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/4/22367008/illinois-coronavirus-positivity-rate-high-data-covid-19>

Illinois' coronavirus positivity rate remained at a two-month high Sunday, continuing a troubling upward trend that could lead officials to tighten restrictions on businesses once again.

State health officials reported 2,449 new and probable COVID-19 cases that were detected among 64,116 tests processed in the last day. That kept the state's seven-day positivity rate for a second day at 3.8%, the highest it's been since Feb. 2.

In March, that figure, which experts use to gauge how rapidly the virus is spreading, dropped to the lowest since summer. In fact, the state's seven-day positivity rate remained below 3% for nearly six weeks, from Feb. 15 to March 27.

Over the last week, though, that figure has been on a gradual rise.

While the state's overall positivity rate remains well below the peak levels seen last fall, suburban Cook County and Chicago's test positivity rates have climbed steadily and are creeping toward the 8% benchmark that could result in a scaling back of recently expanded indoor business capacity limits.

The Chicagoland area's databases aren't updated on weekends. But as of Friday, both suburban Cook County and Chicago had a test positivity rate of 5%. For Chicago, that's up more than a full percentage point from the previous week, when that figure checked in at 3.7% March 26.

Officials warned Saturday that tighter coronavirus restrictions could soon be in store for businesses in suburban Cook County if this upward trend continues.

"We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead and senior medical officer for the Cook County Department of Public Health, who partially blamed the uptick on COVID fatigue. "I'm not promising that one way or the other. We need to evaluate exactly what kinds of activities and movements do we think are really pushing this surge."

Meanwhile, the state has also seen an uptick in coronavirus hospitalizations over the last few weeks. As of Saturday night, 1,491 beds were occupied by COVID-19 patients. Of those, 336 were in intensive care units and 143 were on ventilators, officials said.

Officials on Sunday also reported 14 deaths linked to COVID-19, bringing the state's total pandemic death toll to 21,373.

In total, Illinois has administered 6,290,822 vaccine doses since December, including 102,215 on Saturday, officials said. The state's doled out an average of 108,914 shots per day over the last week.

Chicago Tribune

Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what happened April 3-4 with COVID-19 in the Chicago area

APRIL 04, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-aud-covid-19-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20210403-4tjqvihxmbb7jawnqjhti2emqi-story.html>

Cook County's public health leader on Saturday said the suburbs could soon return to previous COVID-19 restrictions as the region grapples with [what appears to be the start of a third coronavirus wave](#).

As a result, suburban Cook County might again see an indoor dining ban or the gathering limit curtailed from the current cap at 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever is fewer, Rubin said.

Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [updated its guidance](#) to say fully vaccinated people can travel within the U.S. without getting tested for the coronavirus or going into quarantine afterward.

Still, CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky urged caution and said she would "advocate against general travel overall" given the rising number of infections.

"If you are vaccinated, it is lower risk," she said.

Illinois health officials on Sunday announced [2,449 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 14 additional fatalities](#), bringing the total number of known infections in Illinois to 1,256,634 and the statewide death toll to 21,373 since the start of the pandemic.

The 7-day daily average of administered vaccine doses is 108,914, with 102,215 doses given on Saturday. Officials also say a total of [6,290,822 vaccines have now been administered](#).



Cook County Health Officials Issue Warning About Rising COVID-19 Cases, Possible Tighter Restrictions

April 3, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/03/cook-county-covid-19-warning-easter-weekend/>

Cook County health officials on Saturday issued a warning about rising COVID-19 cases.

One of Cook County's top doctors is worried pandemic fatigue might be driving a spike in cases.

Dr. Rachel Rubin warned that the suburbs could see a return to indoor dining bans or lower capacity limits.

"People are out and about, and some people are better about wearing their masks than others, and so we may very well have to clamp down in a matter of days," Rubin said.

The largest surge in cases right now is happening in people between their 20s and 50s.



COVID restrictions may return in suburban Cook Co. if cases continue to rise, health officials fear

Cate Cauguiran and Jesse Kirsch
April 4, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/cook-county-covid-coronavirus-cases-restrictions/10482929/>

Suburban Cook County may be on the brink of having new restrictions imposed after health officials reported a sharp increase in COVID-19 case numbers.

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported more than 2,800 new confirmed and probably cases of COVID-19 with hundreds of those in Cook County.

There are fears numbers of cases will be higher after Easter. County leaders warn that if this upward trend does not change, new restrictions could be coming.

Officials are working to figure out what is causing this spike while threatening the possibility of returning restrictions. Cook County Health said that could mean clamping down on indoor activities like going to restaurants and fitness clubs. Meanwhile, officials are asking people to stay outdoors with gatherings, masked up and socially distant as much as possible.

"We've seen over 600 new cases in suburban Cook in our jurisdiction alone," said Dr. Rachel Rubin. "And so that means that we are in the beginnings of another surge."

Now, county health officials said the uptick in cases could translate to new restrictions imposed if those numbers do not go down.

Cook County Health said the county is on the cusp of another surge. Recent data showed noticeable increases in new cases among people their 20s and 30s, and the positivity rate nearly doubled from the past weeks.

According to recent data, the most significant rise in cases is among the 20s and 30 age group, and the positivity rate nearly doubled from weeks past.

"Our overall positivity rate, I think, is now maybe about five, we were down to three and this is a big problem," Dr. Rubin said.

Despite the expansion of ongoing vaccination efforts, the rising case numbers have county officials contemplating what needs to be done.

"We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days. I'm not promising that one way or another," Dr. Rubin said. "We need to evaluate exactly what kinds of activities and movements are really pushing this surge."

That could mean bringing back restrictions on businesses.

"We need to continue to be safe and those are really the messages and if we need to clamp down more on our [mitigation], you know, back off a little bit on indoor kinds of activities and restaurants and fitness clubs and such like that -- we hope that it won't reach that point that we may need to do that," Dr. Rubin added.

Evanston resident Archie Ong has seen his city go through so many changes over the past year

"It's going to be a major setback, obviously, a lot of the restaurants here are struggling," Ong said. "There's been a number of restaurants that have closed so I hope, I hope it doesn't happen."

He and his family still stay home for the most part and hopes others who may think the worse is over will do the same.

"People are getting vaccinated and thinking it's safe. I guess it is maybe safe but at the same time I think we shouldn't really relax that much," Ong added.

For now, health officials recommend keeping things outdoors while continuing to mask up and keep distance.



Cook County officials warn about surge in COVID cases

April 4, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-officials-warn-rise-104940437.html>

County health officials said the uptick in cases could translate to new restrictions imposed if those numbers don't go down.

Video Transcript

JESSE KIRSCH: Good morning, Mark. Cook County health officials sounding the alarm, saying we are on the cusp of another surge here. Recent data shows noticeable increases in new cases, specifically among people in their 20s and 30s. The positivity rate here nearly twice what it was in weeks past. Officials now working to figure out what exactly is causing this spike, threatening the possibility of returning restrictions.

RACHEL RUBIN: We may very well have to clamp down within a matter of days. I'm not promising that one way or the other. We need to evaluate exactly what kinds of activities and movements do we think are really pushing this surge.

JESSE KIRSCH: Officials saying it is possible we could see further re-tightening of restrictions on indoor activities, such as going to restaurants and fitness clubs. For now, officials stressing that the best way to stay safe is to gather outside, socially distant, with those masks on. Stacey and Mark, back to you.



Some Business Owners Recoil At Warning That New Mitigations On Indoor Dining Could Be Coming Amid COVID-19 Spike In Suburban Cook County

Steven Graves

April 4, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/04/cook-county-covid-spike-indoor-dining-mitigations-business-owners/>

This Easter weekend, business owners are upset about more COVID-19 mitigations that could come this week.

Those in suburban Cook County are now renewing calls for data and vaccine eligibility.

As CBS 2's Steven Graves reported Sunday night, Cook County health officials said this weekend that they were "extremely" concerned with a sharp increase in coronavirus cases, and said [new mitigations on indoor dining could come down in days](#).

Business owners have been left feeling like unjustified targets.

The owner of Oak Park Brewing Co. just has two simple questions.

"Where does it end?" said Jim Cozzens. "When are we going to just be allowed to do what we're supposed to be doing?"

Cozzens' bar and restaurant just opened days ago at 155 S. Oak Park Ave. in Oak Park. The indoor dining capacity is already limited to 50 percent because of COVID-19, and his outdoor space is not even set up.

Right now, any customer traffic is critical.

"The public is probably sick about hearing about how we're on the edge, but at the same time, it doesn't change the fact that there's going to be a very serious problem," Cozzens said.

Concern comes as he and others in suburban Cook County are under a new warning.

"People are out and about, and some people are better about wearing their masks than others, and so we may very well have to clamp down in a matter of days," Cook County Senior Public Health Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin said this weekend.

Health leaders said they have seen a sharp increase in COVID cases with people in their 20s to 50s. The average is 600 cases a day now up from 400 last week.

In response, a capacity cap on indoor gatherings and a limit on spectator events could be looming. And yes, so could a ban on indoor dining.

"The data has shown up until now that outside activities are not generally the major driver," Rubin said.

But Cozzens said, "I haven't seen a lot of data that suggests that restaurants are drivers."

[The CBS 2 Investigators looked into that claim in January](#). We found Illinois' positivity rate rose during a three-month indoor dining ban.

The state maintained that it still posed a risk as people from different households gathered in a space.

But if it's such a risk, Cozzens said, "Then why aren't we important enough to be vaccinated earlier?"

It was not until days ago that restaurant workers in Cook County and even Chicago became eligible for the vaccine.

There has since been a push in the city to prioritize the up to 75,000 restaurant employees who are in the mix with millions of people.

But Cozzens just hopes the threat of more mitigations stays just that – a threat.

It's important to note Cook County's top doc said indoor dining is just a fraction of the problem. She insists more vaccine is coming in, but masks and social distancing are still vital.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Cook County to release 30,000 vaccine appointments at 6 p.m. Monday

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. for residents who qualify under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C of the state vaccination program, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Emmanuel Camarillo

Apr 5, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/4/5/22368897/cook-county-30000-vaccine-appointments-monday>

Cook County health officials will release about 30,000 appointments Monday evening for eligible individuals to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. for residents who qualify under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C of the state vaccination program, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Residents can sign up for appointments at:

Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park;

Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, 1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines;

South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland;

Triton College, 2000 5th Ave., River Grove; and

Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, 7640 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park.

Sign-ups are for appointments this week and include the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which only requires a single shot, and is being administered at the Tinley Park Convention Center, officials said.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Chicago Tribune

Cook County releasing about 30K first dose appointments Monday across five suburban sites

APRIL 5, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-cook-county-releasing-additional-vaccines-20210405-o6qnp4covjbophbvqvsxln4i-story.html>

Cook County Health announced it will open up about 30,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination slots at 6 p.m. Monday across five suburban sites, according to a news release.

The locations are at the Tinley Park Convention Center, Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College, according to the release. Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be available in Tinley Park. Pfizer vaccine will be available at the other locations, according to the release.

Anyone who is in Phase 1a, 1b or 1c can sign up at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday.

All vaccinations are by appointment only.



Cook County to release 30K 1st dose appointments Monday

April 5, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-to-release-30k-1st-dose-appointments-/10488743/>

Cook County Health will release 30,000 COVID vaccine appointments at 6 p.m. on Monday.

Anyone eligible under phases Phases 1A, 1B and 1C can sign up for the appointments.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The appointments being made available are for this week and include the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the Tinley Park Convention Center and the Pfizer vaccine at the Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College.

All vaccinations are by appointment only.



Cook County Releases 30,000 New COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments

April 5, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/05/cook-county-covid-vaccine-appointment-doses-04-05-21/>

Cook County Health released 30,000 first COVID-19 vaccine first-dose appointments at 6 p.m. Monday.

The doses are for those who qualify for the vaccine under phases 1A, 1B, and 1C.

The appointments are for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the Tinley Park convention Center, and the Pfizer vaccine at the Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College, and Triton College.

Vaccines are available by appointment only. Those looking for an appointment should go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Cook County Health releasing 30,000 first-dose vaccine appointments Monday evening

April 5, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-30000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-monday-evening/>

Cook County Health will release approximately 30,000 first-dose vaccine appointments on Monday evening.

The appointments will be available at 6 p.m. for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The release is for appointments this week and includes the Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the Tinley Park Convention Center and the Pfizer vaccine at the Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.

On Monday, 2,102 new cases of COVID-19 [were reported](#) with 11 additional deaths.



Cook County Vaccine: 30K Appointments Released Monday Evening

April 5, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-vaccine-30k-appointments-to-be-released-monday-evening/2478907/>

Cook County Health released 30,000 first-dose COVID vaccine appointments Monday evening for individuals in Phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The appointments were released at 6 p.m. and can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988. The call center will remain open until 10 p.m.

Cook County's vaccination appointments are open to all eligible Illinois residents. Appointments for the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine are available at the following sites:

- 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
- Former HOBO at 7600 West Roosevelt Road in Forest Park

Residents are also able to secure appointments to receive the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine at the Tinley Park Convention Center.

Cook County announced that the suburban portions of the county - operating on a different framework than the city of Chicago - moved into Phase 1C of its vaccination rollout Wednesday.

"All essential workers – including clergy, restaurant staff, energy, legal, retail and transportation and logistics – are now eligible to receive vaccine," the county said, noting that Phase 1C includes the last eligible groups before all residents age 16 and older will be able to get vaccinated in the coming weeks.

The county was previously in Phase 1B Plus. A complete list of Phase 1C eligible groups [can be found on the CCDPH website](#). Anyone eligible in prior phases remains eligible for vaccinations moving forward.



Cook County releasing about 30K first dose appointments Monday across five suburban sites

Chicago Tribune staff, Chicago Tribune

April 5, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-releasing-30k-first-230300480.html>

Cook County Health announced it will open up about 30,000 first-dose coronavirus vaccination slots at 6 p.m. Monday across five suburban sites, according to a news release.

The locations are at the Tinley Park Convention Center, Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College, according to the release. Johnson & Johnson vaccines will be available in Tinley Park. Pfizer vaccine will be available at the other locations, according to the release.

Anyone who is in Phase 1a, 1b or 1c can sign up at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday.

All vaccinations are by appointment only.

Daily Herald

Cook County to release 30,000 vaccine appointments at 6 p.m. Monday

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. for residents who qualify under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C of the state vaccination program, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Emmanuel Camarillo

Apr 5, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210405/cook-county-booking-appointments-for-30000-more-covid-19-vaccinations>

Cook County health officials will release about 30,000 appointments Monday evening for eligible individuals to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. for residents who qualify under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C of the state vaccination program, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Residents can sign up for appointments at:

- Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park;
- Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, 1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines;
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland;
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave., River Grove; and
- Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, 7640 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park.

Sign-ups are for appointments this week and include the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which only requires a single shot, and is being administered at the Tinley Park Convention Center, officials said.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Cook County to release 30,000 vaccine appointments at 6 p.m. Monday

April 5, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-to-release-30000-vaccine-appointments-at-6-p-m-monday>

Cook County health officials will release about 30,000 appointments Monday evening for eligible individuals to receive their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The appointments will be released at 6 p.m. for residents who qualify under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C of the state vaccination program, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

Residents can sign up for appointments at:

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- Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, 1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines;
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Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Daily Herald

Suburbs worry about bottleneck with COVID-19 vaccination eligibility set to expand

Marni Pyke
April 6, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210405/suburbs-worry-about-bottleneck-with-covid-19-vaccination-eligibility-set-to-expand>

Illinois' COVID-19 vaccine expansion to all residents 16 and older beginning next week is causing concern in Cook and some collar counties about meeting the demand for shots.

More than 80 of Illinois' 102 counties have already extended COVID-19 vaccination eligibility, state officials announced Monday, but that's not the case in the Chicago metro area, which is still limiting inoculations to people 65 and older and essential workers.

Eligibility for anyone 16 or older begins April 12.

"There is still a great demand for the COVID-19 vaccine in Cook County and across the country," Cook County Health Communications Manager Elizabeth Pedersen said. "Appointments are typically gone within the first few hours of being released."

Lake County authorities also reported insufficient doses.

"Eligibility will open to all over 16, but vaccine supply still does not meet current demand in Lake County," Lake County Health Department Executive Director Mark Pfister said Monday.

The race to vaccinate comes as the seven-day average of new cases of COVID-19 rose by nearly 16% in a week. Hospitalizations ticked up by about 10% Monday, Illinois Department of Public Health data showed.

The number of Illinoisans fully vaccinated stands at 2,380,733, about 18.7% of the population, and Gov. J.B. Pritzker acknowledged the trajectories of vaccines and infections at an event Monday in Champaign.

"Hospitalizations are rising. ICU beds are getting filled with patients," Pritzker said. "We're now seeing a rise in cases here, but these things come in waves. We have seen this before. Other places have had three surges; we've had two."

Noting the state is averaging more than 100,000 shots a day, he said, "I am hoping that we can overcome the surge for the very first time ever."

Illinois began COVID-19 vaccinations in late December with health care workers and long-term care residents. The next group included people 65 and older and front-line essential workers like police and teachers, and in March more essential workers such as those in restaurants were added.

The wave of seniors seeking appointments and the paucity of shots caused immense frustration this winter, but supplies have ramped up with the Biden administration promising 1 million doses a week for Illinois in April.

"The DuPage County Health Department's COVID-19 vaccine registration list still has more than 200,000 individuals signed up," spokeswoman Stephanie Calvillo said, adding higher than average wait times continue at the county's call center.

"Over the past 14 days, there have been nearly 3,500 new sign-ups per day. DCHD expects sign-ups will increase further once eligibility opens to all Illinois residents 16 years and older," she said.

Lake County's Pfister said "demand is still high and appointments are filling up. However, call volume has decreased as more seniors become vaccinated."

On Sunday, 27,248 more Illinoisans received COVID-19 shots. That's significantly lower than the seven-day average of 105,779, but the weekend, with many people marking Easter, might have delayed reporting, officials said.

The federal government has delivered 7,784,215 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 6,318,070 shots have been administered.

New cases of COVID-19 numbered 2,102 Monday with 11 more deaths from the respiratory disease, the IDPH recorded.

From Monday through March 30, daily averages of new cases came to 2,735, compared to 2,358 from March 23 to 29.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,581 COVID-19 patients Sunday night, the highest number since Feb. 23. From Sunday through March 29, hospitalization daily averages came to 1,452 compared to 1,301 patients from March 22 to 28.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 3.8% based on a seven-day average.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,258,736, and 21,384 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 59,586 virus tests in the last 24 hours.

Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna require two doses several weeks apart. Johnson & Johnson's version takes just one shot.



Chicago Suburbs Could Restore Indoor Dining Ban 'Within a Matter of Days'

Rising COVID-19 numbers, which mirror increases in Chicago, have Cook County officials worried

Ashok Selvam
Apr 5, 2021

<https://chicago.eater.com/2021/4/5/22367906/chicago-suburbs-indoor-dining-halt-cook-county-warning-restaurants>

It's not the news restaurant and bar owners wanted to hear, but over the weekend, a suburban doctor from the [Cook County Department of Public Health told reporters](#) that rising COVID-19 numbers could lead to a "clamp down within a matter of days." Dr. Rachel Rubin, who helps coordinate how the suburbs have responded to the pandemic, echoed the warnings city [officials made last week](#). Her comments came during a Saturday news conference.

This would be the third time indoor dining has been halted since March 2020 for the suburbs. There's also cause for concern in the city with Chicago and suburban Cook County's COVID-19 dining rules mirroring each other. The [rate of COVID-19 cases](#) haven't been this high in Chicago and the suburbs since mid-October. Officials would [halt indoor dining on October 30](#) and dining rooms remained [closed until January 23](#). The current regulations for Chicago and the suburbs allow restaurants to serve a maximum of 50 per room (or 50 percent capacity; whatever number is lower). Fully vaccinated people [don't count against that number](#).

Last week, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot invited restaurant and bar owners [to a special meeting](#) (property managers were also in attendance) where she called for increased vigilance. The city warned that they're ordering more inspections of restaurants looking for COVID-19 rule violators. Lightfoot wants restaurant owners to make sure customers adhere to mask wearing and social distance rules. Spring's sunshine, and more vaccine availability, has brought more diners away from their homes.

There have been reported outbreaks. During last week's special virtual meeting, health officials said 14 people who gathered at a private event and then went on a pub crawl contracted the disease. Now, [according to the Tribune](#), comes news that 46 cases have been connected to a bar's event in February in rural Illinois. The state health department did not share the bar's name or exact location. A school with a 650-student enrollment was forced to close due to the event.

As numbers rise, health officials have been on the attack worried about Easter weekend gatherings and the start of Major League Baseball season. Wrigleyville bars welcomed Chicago Cubs fans back for the first home series of the season of the weekend. The city has allowed ticket holders to fill [Wrigley Field](#) at 25 percent [of the stadium's capacity or 10,343](#). Many Lakeview residents dread home Cubs games with increased traffic in the area, but it's still a boon for bar and restaurant owners. At reduced capacity, hunting for parking wasn't a big problem over the weekend.

On the self-enforcement angle, restaurants have heard from customers pleading that they have a preexisting health condition (such as pulmonary disease) that exempts them from wearing a mask. For many workers, the argument seems to be more anti-mask than about an individual's health. Restaurants and [retailers can avoid legal challenges by providing reasonable accommodations](#) to "mask intolerance" by offering curbside services or delivery, according to [the National Law Review](#).

As a response — whether actually used at restaurants or just a joke — a social media post is being shared showing laminated badges that state “I am exempt from any ordinance requiring interaction from individuals not wearing a mask.” Workers feel they need something to show dishonest diners trying to evade COVID-19 safety protocols.

Still, that blame isn’t fully on customers. Customers told Eater Chicago of scenes over the weekend inside Lakeview bars where bartenders and bouncers refused to wear masks as mandated. In some cases, workers picked on tables with customers they didn’t like, threatening them to use facial coverings or be thrown out of the bar. Other customers were left alone. Enforcement, for whatever reason, wasn’t uniform.



Cook County Health chair to step down

Hill Hammock, who served two terms on the board of one of the nation's largest public health systems, plans to depart once his term ends in June, Crain's has learned.

A.D. QUIG and STEPHANIE GOLDBERG

April 5, 2021

https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/cook-county-health-chair-step-down?utm_source=breaking-news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20210405&utm_content=hero-headline

Cook County Health Chairman Hill Hammock is planning to step down at the end of his term, Crain's has learned.

Hammock, who serves as a senior adviser for local banking advisory firm Verit, will not seek another term once his current one expires at the end of June, sources familiar with the situation say. He was appointed to the Cook County Health board in July 2013, [according to his bio](#).

He did not immediately respond to Crain's request for comment.

The two-hospital network's 12-member board has five standing committees that oversee its finances, personnel issues, quality and patient safety, as well as its Medicaid managed care plan which serves over 380,000 people in Cook County. Board members elect one of their own to serve as Chair and Vice Chair each year annually. The current Vice Chair is David Ernesto Munar, the President and CEO of Howard Brown Health.

Hammock's term is set to expire in June. He previously spent 31 years at LaSalle Bank, retiring in December 2006 after the organization was acquired by Bank of America. He went on to serve as chief administrative officer for Chicago Public Schools, and continues to serve on a number of civic boards.

Two other members' terms – Mary Driscoll and Chicago Federation of Labor President Bob Reiter – are also expiring around the same time as Hammock's. Driscoll, a retired administrator with the Illinois Department of Public Health who was appointed to CCH in 2016, did not immediately return a request for comment. Reiter, appointed in 2017, told Crain's he plans to apply again.

The board late last year tapped Israel Rocha Jr., previously an executive at NYC Health + Hospitals, to lead the Cook County's public health system, after voting to remove Dr. John Jay Shannon from the role he'd held for roughly five years.

Following Shannon's exit, the Cook County Board of Commissioners regained more control over hospital system decisions, granting Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle a direct appointment to the independent board and the power to approve all future CEOs.

The rising cost of uncompensated care is among the most pressing matters addressed by the board in recent years. In 2019, CCH's flagship hospital spent \$309 million – or 51 percent of its revenue – on charity care, according to the latest state data. As a percentage of revenue, the public health system [spends far more on free care for low-income patients than other large hospitals](#) in the county. While CCH gets a tax allocation from the county for public health and correctional health operations, it doesn't get taxpayer money for traditional medical services.



Northbrook Restaurateur Says She Welcomes Renewed COVID Mitigations If It Will Help End Pandemic

Marie Saavedra
April 6, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/06/northbrook-restaurateur-welcomes-covid-mitigations/>

With COVID-19 numbers on the rise, suburban Cook County is dangerously close to a new round of dining restrictions.

It could be another blow to a beat-up industry, and [some restaurateurs are worried that it will be](#). But CBS 2's Marie Saavedra found one chef willing to do anything – even shut down – if it gets us on the other side of the virus.

Walk into Chef Sarah Stegner's Prairie Grass Café in Northbrook, and you'll experience the sounds and smells of a kitchen – and diners filling booths. It looks almost pre-pandemic. Almost.

"We followed the rules from beginning to end," Stegner said.

The Prairie Grass Café has a loyal clientele helping the restaurant break even. From to-go only to welcoming diners back, the only constant has truly been change.

"This long, slow kind of middle ground seems to be painful for everybody," Stegner said.

Her restaurant, and every other one in suburban Cook County is [teetering on the edge of another change](#).

"We are really evaluating on a day-to-day basis," said Dr. Rachel Rubin of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Rubin said the COVID-19 positivity rate in suburban Cook County is up – and new daily cases, once in the 200s, are climbing too.

"I mean, we were very scared when we saw a couple of days close to 600 or even in the 500s," Rubin said. "But we don't just look at those things."

The county also weighs hospital admissions and ICU beds. But if the numbers stay high in the coming days, Dr. Rubin says the county will be forced to shrink dining room capacities yet again.

Whispers of these changes put restaurateurs back in limbo. But Chef Stegner has a take on what to do next that you rarely hear in her industry.

"I know it's not popular," she said. "But if we would just do it, and reopen, everybody would be better off."

Be it smaller capacity or a full shut down, she'll take it – for a set amount of time – if it will really make a difference in stamping out the virus.

“For me, what I would ask is it’s not just the restaurants, that it needs to be across the board,” Stegner said. “If it is serious enough that people’s lives are at stake, then let’s do this.”

So Stegner will wait and watch the numbers – hoping they stay low, so someday, more people can safely fill her seats.

“I feel it’s important to step up, and it should be all of us,” she said.

We asked the Illinois Restaurant Association for its take on possible new restrictions. The organization said another round of closures would put countless people out of work and force some businesses to close for good.



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A.D. QUIG and STEPHANIE GOLDBERG

April 5, 2021

<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/people/cook-county-health-chair-step-down>

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West Side Groups Want Longterm COVID-19 Vaccination Site In Austin As City's Temporary Neighborhood Clinics Close

With coronavirus cases rising, Austin residents are asking where they can get vaccinated locally — but there aren't many appointments available.

Pascal Sabino

Apr 6, 2021

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/04/06/west-side-groups-want-longterm-covid-19-vaccination-site-in-austin-as-citys-temporary-neighborhood-clinics-close/>

West Side groups are trying to bring a vaccination clinic to Austin as the city closes its temporary neighborhood sites despite surging coronavirus cases.

The Austin area had two Protect Chicago Plus sites where any adult residents could get vaccinated. The program was meant to help neighborhoods hit hard by the pandemic, ensuring vaccines were provided in those areas. But each Protect Chicago Plus site was set to last just eight weeks — and Austin's already phased out first doses and is working on completing people's course of second doses.

Some residents are scrambling to figure out where they can get shots as cases are spiking. Nearly 600 cases are being reported per day in Chicago — a 24 percent jump just from a week ago.

At the same time, the neighborhood's main community health center, Loretto Hospital, is not administering first doses because it's been embroiled in scandals for giving the shots to ineligible people outside Austin — including [a doctor's family in the suburbs](#) and [people at a luxury jewelry store in Gold Coast](#).

The city-run sites and other pop-up vaccination clinics have been helpful in making the vaccines accessible to locals. But there needs to be a permanent location for vaccinations in the neighborhood, said Cassandra Norman, president of South Austin Neighborhood Association.

"Now that people are more educated, everything is kind of dried up. Now they have to search for it or go out of the neighborhood," Norman said. "Austin needs a standard location at all times where you know you can go and get a shot ... right here in your community. Especially since this area has been impacted the way it has been. And we should not be punished for what happened with Loretto."

In particular, older people who are most vulnerable to coronavirus are struggling to access the vaccines since it's harder for them to travel out of the neighborhood, Norman said.

Neighborhood groups have received little guidance from the city on how residents can access vaccination appointments locally now that the Protect Chicago Plus sites in Austin aren't scheduling first-dose appointments, said James Coleman, director of community wellness for Westside Health Authority.

“The city has not communicated with community-based organizations at all,” Coleman said. “We need to be at the table when these decisions are being made The city has not been inclusive in this process. And I think that’s been a pattern.”

“We were seeing some apprehension” about the vaccines when the city-run sites in Austin opened, Coleman said. But now that many people in Austin are more comfortable with getting vaccinated, the window to make appointments at the local city sites has closed, Coleman said.

Most local health centers — including PCC Wellness, Access Community Wellness and West Suburban Medical Center — are only vaccinating established patients since vaccine supply is still limited.

“There absolutely should be an identified clinic or location in the Austin community so when individuals decide to get the vaccine, they can get vaccinated. There’s still demand for the vaccines,” Coleman said.

Austin’s vaccination rate is behind that of the rest of the city, according to city health department data. About 31 percent of Chicago residents had gotten their first dose as of Sunday — but in the 60644 ZIP code, which encompasses South Austin, only 20.8 percent of people have gotten their first shot.

The city’s temporary vaccine clinics in Austin were highly effective in boosting vaccination rates, said health department spokesperson Elena Ivanova. Since the initiative launched in Austin, first-dose vaccination rates have increased by 287 percent in Austin, compared to a 239 percent increase citywide.

Although the Austin Protect Chicago Plus sites were phased out, the health department will stage vaccination events and launch additional equity-driven strategies to boost vaccine rates in target neighborhoods, Ivanova said. The city will share those plans in coming weeks, she said.

Austin residents are also prioritized for appointments at the United Center vaccination site, Ivanova said, and the city is offering free Uber and CTA rides to make it easier to travel across town to make the appointments. Residents can call 312-746-4835 to book an appointment at the United Center.

Doses have also been allocated to pharmacies and providers in the area, and [appointments can be made on ZocDoc](#), Ivanova said.

Demand for the vaccine is still high across the West Side, said Donald Dew, president of Habilitative Systems Inc., a health organization that has focused on increasing vaccine access for people with mental illness, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities.

Many people have also had trouble scheduling appointments due to confusion over eligibility, Dew said.

Community-based vaccine sites are needed since they can reach people where they’re at and can lead to a “decrease in fear [and] distrust by activating more trusted messengers,” Dew said.

“Given the increase in the positivity rate, I am hopeful vaccine availability will continue to increase,” Dew said.

Chicago’s positivity rate is up to 5.1 percent — which officials previously said was a sign coronavirus was spreading unchecked.

The city’s vaccine clinics in North Lawndale made it easy for local residents to get the shot, said Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer (2nd). But as the city’s Protect Chicago Plus have started to wind down, “certainly there is still concern about vaccinations in Lawndale,” Deer said.

The West Side needs more local vaccine options to improve access, Deer said. But it’s not only up to local governments: health centers, pharmacies, neighborhood groups and companies need to be on board to create long-term accessibility to the vaccines, he said.

“This is all hands on deck, not only with vaccinations but also with education,” Deer said. “Underserved communities are the ones that are always left out and it is our job to make sure that doesn’t keep happening.”

Where To Get Vaccinated Near Austin:

Walgreens

Make an appointment at on the [Walgreens website](#) or by calling your local store.

Cook County Vaccine Clinics

Clinics accessible to the West Side are the former HOB0 Store, 7630 Roosevelt Road in Forest Park, and the Austin Health Center of Cook County at 4800 W. Chicago Ave.

Appointments can be made [online](#) or by calling 833-308-1988.

Lawndale Christian Health Center

Lawndale Christian Health Center is vaccinating eligible people who live in the 60623, 60624, 60612, 60608 and 60632 ZIP codes.

Appointments are required. Call 872-588-3000 to book a vaccination. The vaccinations will be done at 3745 W. Ogden Ave. or 3517 W. Arthington St.

The center is also allowing people to sign up to be on a list to get a shot if there are extra doses at the end of the day. [More information is available online.](#)

St. Anthony Hospital

St. Anthony Hospital, 2875 W. 19th St., is vaccinating eligible people who live in the 60608, 60609, 60612, 60616, 60623, 60624, 60629, 60632, 60644 or 60804 ZIP codes. Appointments are required.

[Sign up for an appointment online.](#)

Mt. Sinai Chicago

Mt. Sinai Hospital, 1500 S. Fairfield Ave., is vaccinating community members. Request an appointment [on its website.](#)

Oak Street Health

Oak Street Health, which has a location at 3433 W. Madison St., is vaccinating eligible people. Appointments are required.

For information on how to book an appointment, [sign up online.](#)

Rush University Medical Center

Rush is also vaccinating eligible people at its main location, 1620 W. Harrison St.

Appointments are required. You can make appointments through MyChart if you are an existing patient of Rush. People new to Rush can [make appointments online.](#)

United Center

Any adults who live in select ZIP codes — including ones on the West Side — can sign up to get vaccinated at the United Center. Appointments are required.

Call 312-746-4835 to make an appointment or [sign up online](#) and use the voucher code, “CCVIVAXCHI21.”

Zocdoc

People can sign up online for open appointments through Zocdoc. The tool will check if you are eligible to be vaccinated. If you are, it will show nearby vaccination locations and open appointments. People can then make an appointment.

[You can use the Zocdoc tool by clicking here.](#)

Cook County Mass Vaccination Sites

Cook County does have vaccination sites that are accepting appointments so long as you are eligible under Phase 1B+ and you live and/or work in Cook County. Appointments fill up fast. You can [register with the county here](#) or call 833-308-1988 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Friday to make an appointment and/or to get updates.

Homebound

People who are homebound for various reasons can sign up online to get vaccinated against coronavirus at their home. Their caregivers will also be vaccinated under the program. The program is expected to take several months to complete.

[Here's How Homebound Chicagoans Can Get Vaccinated Against Coronavirus](#)



Watch Live: Cook County to Update on COVID Restrictions

April 7, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-to-update-on-covid-restrictions/2480296/>

Cook County health officials will give an update Wednesday on whether or not COVID restrictions will be tightened as the county sees coronavirus metrics rise.

Drs. Kiran Joshi and Rachel Rubin, co-leads of the Cook County Department of Public Health, will hold a media availability at 2:30 p.m. to "discuss their decision whether to tighten mitigation regulations and guidelines for indoor and outdoor gatherings," the county said.

Joshi and Rubin will share their decision as well as the "the applicable data points and trends," the county said.

The update comes days after Rubin warned that the county could see some previous mitigations return amid what appeared to be the beginning of a third surge of the pandemic.

Both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, Rubin said Saturday. Just a few weeks prior, Rubin said approximately 250 cases were reported each day.

The daily positivity rate in COVID testing has also increased, standing at 6.4% for the last few days as of Wednesday. The seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 5%.

Officials in Chicago [have expressed concern over a "quantum leap" in coronavirus cases](#), saying that a failure to curtail those gains could cause some restrictions to be re-imposed after they were loosened earlier this year.

"The data has shown it is not necessarily outdoor activities, but indoor, so these are the kind of things we have to evaluate and look at the data," Rubin said Saturday.

As is the case in Chicago, Rubin said cases are spiking in Cook County's younger population, particularly people in their 20s and 30s who are part of the age group that does not have widespread access to the vaccines yet.

Late last month, Cook County announced the gradual reduction of COVID-19 mitigation measures, particularly on outdoor gatherings, in alignment with the city's easing of restrictions.

The updated capacity limits include:

Outdoor Dining: Groups of 10 people

Amusement Parks: Can open at 25% capacity

Outdoor Fitness Classes, Meetings, Social Events and Recreation Activities: Can increase to 50% capacity or 100 people

Seated Spectator Events: Venues with a capacity less than 200 are limited to 50% and no more than 50 individuals. Larger venues with a capacity of more than 200 are limited to 25% capacity.

Indoor service remained limited to the lesser of 50 patrons or 50% capacity per room.



Could Cook County Restaurants Face Tougher COVID-19 Restrictions Again?

Kelly Fisher
April 7, 2021

<https://www.iheart.com/content/2021-04-07-could-cook-county-restaurants-face-tougher-covid-19-restrictions-again/>

Surging COVID-19 cases could prompt another ban on **indoor dining in Chicago** suburbs, health experts say.

During a news conference Sunday (April 4), Dr. **Rachel Rubin** of the Cook County Department of Public Health said **the rise in COVID-19 cases** could prompt officials to “clamp down within a matter of days.”

If officials opt for another ban on indoor dining at local restaurants, that would mark the third time a ban has been in place in the suburbs since March 2020, when the pandemic started, **Eater Chicago** noted on Monday (April 5).

Pat Fowler, of the Firehouse Grill around Evanston, told **WGN 9** that it was “great” to see customers enjoying the restaurant’s patio recently. The looming possibility of further restrictions is “always disappointing...but for us, the health and safety of our employees and our customers is the most important thing to me. So, if that’s what we need to do to put an end to this pandemic, we’re more than happy to do it.”

Others in the restaurant industry shared similar sentiments with local news outlets.

Chef **Sarah Stegner** of the Prairie Grass Café in Northbrook, told **CBS Chicago** that restrictions on restaurants are “not popular. But if we would just do it, and reopen, everybody would be better off.”

The **Cook County Department of Public Health** has tracked more than 227,000 confirmed cases as of Wednesday (April 7), the latest data available. Cook County is at a weekly case rate of 157 per 100,000 residents, and a 5.7% positivity rate in the last week.

Cook County officials had not made a decision as of around midday Wednesday. Rubin said officials are evaluating COVID-19 data daily.



House calls helping homebound residents become vaccinated in Lake, Cook counties

Jenna Barnes
April 7, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/house-calls-helping-homebound-residents-become-vaccinated-in-lake-cook-counties/>

Seniors and other residents in Lake County, who were unable to leave their homes, are becoming vaccinated against COVID-19 through a unique push by health officials.

The county is bringing shots to them.

Harry Leventhal and his wife Lois have been married for 52 years, but Wednesday marked another milestone in their story – her COVID-19 vaccination.

Leventhal says his wife suffered a stroke that left her unable to walk. With the threat of COVID-19 lingering, it was paramount that Lois' shot came to her.

Roshani Patel, owner of Prime Care Physicians, a home health care company, says in addition to treating her 2,000 regular patients, she's partnering with Cook County and Lake County to make vaccine house calls.

"We vaccinated some people who are quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down, some people who were on ventilators," she said. "There is no way they would have gotten a vaccine if we weren't able to come to their home."

She says limited resources and logistical challenges, especially with the 2-dose Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, make it tough.

"We have to stick to that same route, same number of patients," Patel said. "Like, if we vaccinate eight people today, three weeks from now, those eight people have to agree to be vaccinated."

Wednesday's doses from Lake County's Health Department are Johnson and Johnson, which Patel says frees up much-needed time.

"Now that we have some supply of Johnson and Johnson coming in, we're able to equip these mobile units in the county to go out and reach some of those hard-to-reach individuals and communities," said Hannah Goering with Lake County Health Department.

Not all counties in the Chicago area have started vaccinating people who are homebound. Will County tells WGN News its homebound vaccination program will be dependent on wider availability of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

DuPage County says it's working on several options for homebound people, including equipping EMTs and firefighters with doses. A statement read, in part, "DCHD is partnering with various healthcare providers and pharmacies, including those who currently provide care to homebound patients, to ensure they have access to vaccine and staff resources to administer vaccines to individuals in their homes."

Cook County and Chicago already have programs up-and-running, but the demand is high.

We are expanding all our mobile operations to meet the needs of this and other populations that may lack mobility. Homebound residents or their caretakers may call [833-308-1988](tel:833-308-1988) to register to receive a vaccine. CCDPH will call back at a future date to either collect more information or schedule a dose.

COOK COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS

“I’m getting lists of patients even from Chicago because their list is months long,” Patel adds. “It’s challenging, but I know that what we’re doing, it’s making a difference for a lot of people and that’s pretty much what keeps us going.”

Her work has made a difference, especially for the Leventhals, who both survived COVID-19 hospitalizations in December.

“It’s everything,” Harry Leventhal said. “I mean, it means a lot.”



Cook County warns of increasing COVID-19 cases; new restrictions possible

Nate Rodgers

April 7, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-warns-of-increasing-covid-19-cases-new-restrictions-possible>

In **Cook County**, officials are worried about the uptick in cases, and it could lead to once again tightening up restrictions.

Public health leaders are "extremely concerned" amid rising **COVID** numbers in suburban Cook County and across the state.

Officials say residents in their 20's and 30's are showing the highest infection rates right now.

"I don't feel as at risk out here because I'm already vaccinated because I'm a teacher," said Amber Plonka, a Park Ridge resident.

Dozens of customers enjoyed a bite to eat outside The Harp and Fiddle Irish Pub in **Park Ridge**.

This comes as the suburb will again extend outdoor dining from May 1 until October 31.

Plans include closing off traffic along Main Street, allowing for tables, umbrellas and lots of outdoor dining space.

At least seven suburban Cook County communities have seen COVID infections increase more than 200 percent recently, including **Lynwood**, Berkeley, Riverside and Glencoe.

Public health leaders say we must remain disciplined in following safety guidelines.

Chicago Tribune

Public health official says Cook County ‘will not hesitate’ to impose further COVID-19 restrictions if suburban case numbers don’t improve

ALICE YIN, JENNY WHIDDEN and DAN PETRELLA
APR 07, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-cook-county-update-20210407-ridlowj7lzdylsagqrzqr6m-story.html>

A Cook County public health leader said Wednesday there won’t be a return to past COVID-19 mitigations just yet in the suburbs, but an [ongoing third wave](#) of the virus warrants enough alarm to keep the possibility on the table.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health that guides COVID-19 response in most of suburban Cook, said a future decision to clamp down on limits for gatherings and businesses depends on whether the current trends, which have her “extremely concerned,” continue.

“We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we’re not taking such actions now. Not yet,” Rubin said on a call with reporters. “But if the trend continues in the wrong direction, we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings, indoor or outdoors.”

Her warning follows a similar message she [delivered over the weekend](#) in which she said suburban Cook County might again see an indoor dining ban, or the gathering limit curtailed from the current cap at 50% capacity or 50 people, whichever is fewer. On Wednesday, she said future restrictions would more likely look like “mini steps” such as gradually dialing back capacity until possibly reaching the previous Tier 1 stage, which limited indoor dining to 25 people total or 25% capacity, among other requirements.

Rubin said suburban Cook County has not yet met the state’s criteria for moving backward, and open intensive care unit beds remain above the 20% threshold of concern, but the region is “inching in that direction” regarding other factors.

The latest tally of daily coronavirus cases and the statewide positivity rate for tests in Illinois rose to levels not seen since late January, public health officials reported Tuesday.

Across the state, officials reported [3,790 new confirmed and probable cases](#) of COVID-19, the highest count since 4,156 cases were reported Jan. 29. Wednesday’s cases resulted from a batch of 80,628 tests.

The seven-day statewide positivity rate for cases as a share of total tests is 4.1% as of Tuesday, the highest since a rate of 4.3% was reported the week ending Jan. 28.

In the city, Mayor Lori Lightfoot has expressed reluctance to shut down more businesses or events due to the economic toll such a move would cause, but also has said she would do so if COVID-19 metrics worsen. Any decision the county makes will be in “fairly close lockstep” with Chicago, Rubin said Wednesday.

Unlike in Chicago, where rising cases have been mostly concentrated on the North Side and pockets of the Northwest Side, Cook County has not seen geographic hot spots, Rubin said. The seven towns with the highest jump in cases over the past two weeks — all more than 200% — are Glencoe, Norridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey, Lynwood and Berkeley, according to this week’s figures.

But there are spikes among younger age groups: The weekly average of positivity rates shows the highest percentages among those in their 20s, at about 7.6%, followed by the 30s at about 7% and 40s at 6.25%, compared with the 5.7% rate overall. The seven-day average of new cases is 456.

Meanwhile, an additional [139,724 doses of coronavirus vaccine](#) were administered Tuesday, bringing the statewide total of vaccinations to 6,552,982. An average of 107,302 vaccinations were administered daily over the last seven days, the state said.

The number of residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required shots, or Johnson & Johnson’s single shot — reached 2,494,651, or 19.58% of the total population.

As of Wednesday, 41.42% of residents 16 and older have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine.

As of Tuesday night, 1,710 people in Illinois were hospitalized with COVID-19, with 353 patients in intensive care units and 142 patients on ventilators. The seven-day average of total hospitalizations is 1,530, the highest since an average of 1,539 was recorded Feb. 23.

Officials also reported 28 additional fatalities, bringing the statewide death toll to 21,423. The total number of known infections in Illinois since the start of the pandemic is 1,265,457.

“Younger folks are also, as we know, the ones that are more likely to be out and about and maybe being a little bit less observant of the guidance,” Rubin said. “So they are driving this pandemic right now. However it doesn’t mean that other groupings, other than our older seniors, are not also seeing rises because younger people will transmit to their older family or friends.”

Statewide, people in their late teens and 20s are driving the surge in cases, Illinois Department of Public Health spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said.

In the most recent week, cases are up nearly 25% among people ages 18 to 24, and over the past four weeks, cases among the 18 to 24 and 25 to 29 age groups have roughly doubled, Arnold said.

Rubin said her take-home message was to gather outside with masking and social distancing in place, and to avoid indoor dining or even crowded outdoor patios.

“If you go out, wear your mask, be outside and enjoy the weather as opposed to going into a restaurant,” Rubin said. “Get carryout, have a picnic outside, do those things to make yourself safe.”



These 7 Cook County Suburbs Have Seen COVID Cases Rise More Than 200% in 2 Weeks

In some cases, the numbers jumped as much as 520%

April 7, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/these-7-cook-county-suburbs-have-seen-covid-cases-rise-as-much-as-520-in-2-weeks/2480771/>

Cook County health officials [warned Wednesday](#) that COVID metrics in suburban communities are going in the wrong direction, but in seven particular communities, the numbers are rising at alarming rates.

According to officials, seven suburbs saw their number of COVID cases rise more than 200% and as much as 520% in the last two weeks.

County data as of Monday showed those suburbs include:

- Glencoe (250%)
- Norridge (204%)
- Riverside (312%)
- Robbins (200%)
- Harvey (211%)
- Lynnwood (520%)
- Berkeley (400%)

The suburbs are part of more than 125 municipalities in suburban Cook County. When broken up by number of new cases, the increases come out to:

- Glencoe: 20 cases reported Monday, up from eight cases two weeks ago
- Norridge: 47 cases reported Monday, up from 23 cases two weeks ago
- Riverside: 25 cases reported Monday, up from eight cases two weeks ago
- Robbins: 12 cases reported Monday, up from six cases two weeks ago
- Harvey: 57 cases reported Monday, up from 27 cases two weeks ago
- Lynwood: 26 cases reported Monday, up from five cases two weeks ago
- Berkeley: 20 cases reported Monday, up from five cases two weeks ago

Health officials, calling the increase in cases for the so-called hot spots "very concerning," have said that if the current trend continues, the county "will not hesitate to tighten restrictions."

Suburban Cook County as a whole saw 614 new cases reported Tuesday alone, an increase from the 417 reported a day earlier and from the 493 reported one week prior.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said she "is extremely concerned with the rise in new cases and increase in the positivity rate of COVID-19 in suburban Cook, and throughout the state of Illinois" and urged people to gather outside rather than inside.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now, not yet," she said.

The update comes days after Rubin warned that the county could see some previous mitigations return amid what appeared to be the beginning of a third surge of the pandemic.

As of Saturday, both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, Rubin said. Just a few weeks prior, Rubin said approximately 250 cases were reported each day.

The daily positivity rate in COVID testing has also increased, standing at 6.4% for the last few days as of Wednesday. The seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 5%.

Officials in Chicago [have also expressed concern over a "quantum leap" in coronavirus cases](#), saying that a failure to curtail those gains could cause some restrictions to be re-imposed after they were loosened earlier this year.

As is the case in Chicago, Rubin said cases are spiking in Cook County's younger population, particularly people in their 20s and 30s who are part of the age group that does not have widespread access to the vaccines yet.

"It's you know our 20s and 30-year-olds and somewhat 40-year-olds that are the ones that are testing positive. Younger folks are also, as we know, the ones that are more likely to be out and about and maybe being a little bit less observant of the guidance, which means not wearing masks and congregating in big groups which we don't advise," Rubin said. "So, they are driving this pandemic right now, however it doesn't mean that other groupings other than our older seniors are not also seeing rises because younger people will transmit to their older family or friends."

Late last month, Cook County announced the gradual reduction of COVID-19 mitigation measures, particularly on outdoor gatherings, in alignment with the city's easing of restrictions.

The updated capacity limits include:

- **Outdoor Dining:** Groups of 10 people
- **Amusement Parks:** Can open at 25% capacity
- **Outdoor Fitness Classes, Meetings, Social Events and Recreation Activities:** Can increase to 50% capacity or 100 people
- **Seated Spectator Events:** Venues with a capacity less than 200 are limited to 50% and no more than 50 individuals. Larger venues with a capacity of more than 200 are limited to 25% capacity.

Indoor service remained limited to the lesser of 50 patrons or 50% capacity per room.



Some Suburban Cook County Residents Have Struggled To Find COVID Shots For The Homebound; County Says ‘Modest’ Program Now Up And Running

Marie Saavedra
April 7, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/07/suburban-cook-county-residents-covid-shots-homebound/>

With more and more people becoming eligible for the COVID vaccine, we’re asking – what about those who can’t get to a pharmacy or other vaccination sites?

One south suburban woman told CBS 2’s Marie Saavedra she is struggling to find anyone who will bring her homebound brother a shot.

“It is a scare, daily, to check in and see, is he OK?” said Vernita Echols. “Is everything safe?”

Every day, Echols wonders if this is the day her brother, Clarence, gets sick.

“My brother is disabled. He has been disabled for over 30 years,” Echols said. “As a result of that, he developed gross obesity, which of course adds all kinds of major health problems.”

For that reason, Echols’ brother is homebound. The 68-year-old cannot physically get to a vaccination site, as he told us on a video call.

“Well, I’m trying to get one, because I’ve got two grandkids,” Clarence said.

His sister is desperate for a solution. The City of Chicago has brought shots to the homebound for weeks now, but he lives in Steger.

So Echols she called the Cook County Department of Public Health.

“They said: ‘Well, call back in a few weeks. Right now, we don’t have any programs,’” Echols said. “I reached out to Cook County again, and they said, ‘Well, you should call the Governor’s office,’ so it became a vicious circle.”

On Wednesday, CBS 2 brought her question to the county.

“We do have a program,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, senior public health medical officer at the Cook County Department of Public Health. “It’s modest at the moment, because we’re building up providers that are going to be into vaccinate homebound individuals.”

How modest? Just 650 homebound people have received their shots so far.

But that should change.

The county said the state has recently made it easier for home healthcare agencies to apply to be vaccine providers, which would give greater access to those patients.

As for other counties, we found DuPage and Lake counties just started homebound vaccinations this week. Will is working on a start date.

With suburban Cook County now up and running, Echols wants her brother protected.

“I am extraordinarily excited to hear that they are on the radar,” she said, “but at the same time, every day is a risk.”

If you are in suburban Cook County and need to sign up for the homebound program, call (833) 308-1988 and ask specifically for homebound shots. The county says it will then contact you when your appointment is scheduled.



COVID vaccine: Homebound seniors face extra challenge getting vaccinated

Stacey Baca
April 7, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/homebound-seniors-face-extra-challenge-getting-vaccinated/10495577/>

At 94, Gladys Palach should be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine, but that's not the case because she's homebound and cannot leave her condo.

"It's been an ongoing thing. It's like a full-time job already. I'm just exhausted from it all," said Alice Palach-Spera, her daughter who has worked tirelessly on the issue.

Gladys Palach, like so many seniors, is homebound, and can't leave her LaGrange condo because of her health conditions. Her family is trying to get her vaccinated at home, but they have not been successful so far.

"It's been such a struggle because we're so worried because she's at such high risk because of her age, and all her health conditions," Palach-Spera said.

In February, Gladys Palach spent six days in the hospital fighting pneumonia. When she was released, Palach-Spera said the doctor recommended her mom have palliative care, which includes a nurse practitioner and social worker. She also has two caregivers.

But family visits haven't happened since her 94th birthday in December 2020, and her daughter believes that's having a tremendous impact. "She can't hug us, we can't give her a kiss - none of those things. I think that's why she is getting more and more depressed," she said.

COOK COUNTY HOMEBOUND HOTLINE: 1-833-308-1988

[Chicago Homebound Program Information:](#)

[Chicago Homebound Sign-Up](#)

Cook County Health and AgeOptions are reaching vulnerable seniors through pop-up clinics in suburban Cook County, according to Diane Slezak, president and executive officer of AgeOptions, an organization that coordinates, advocates, and funds services for seniors in suburban Cook County.

Slezak said they have had five pop-up clinics so far, and seven more are scheduled soon in Franklin Park, Bartlett, Arlington Heights, Oak Forest, Bridgeview, Berwyn and Calumet City.

"We know the next step that we need to take is to get to the homebound, and that is a challenge," said Slezak.

As a priority, Slezak said caregivers must be vaccinated. If elderly loved one can get into a car, she said families should take their homebound loved one to a drive-through vaccination site. And, as a last resort, she said families could call the Cook County hotline for homebound residents to get on a waiting list.

"They are taking names of people to be vaccinated in their homes. We cannot tell you right now exactly when we are going to be able to start that because it depends on supplies," Slezak said.

Organizations that help older adults - like Aging Care Connections - have faced the challenge.

"It's been frustrating not only for us, but those people who really want to help their parents, their loved ones," said Debra Verschelde, executive director of Aging Care Connections. "

Gladys Palach's daughter has called the hotline, and still doesn't have a confirmed visit scheduled. She hopes her mom's experience will force health officials to find a solution soon. Her mom is waiting.

"I hope this will open the eyes to those scheduling the vaccines and come up with some kind of solutions for people who need it the most," she said.



Homebound seniors face extra challenge getting vaccinated

April 7, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/homebound-seniors-face-extra-challenge-221411222.html>

At 94, Gladys Palach should be able to get the COVID-19 vaccine, but that's not the case because she's homebound and cannot leave her condo.

Video Transcript

STACEY BACA: Gladys Palach is 94, and her daughter is still struggling to get her the COVID-19 vaccine.

ALICE PALACH-SPERA: It's been an ongoing thing. It's like a full time job, already. I'm just exhausted from it all.

STACEY BACA: Gladys, like so many seniors, is homebound and cannot leave her La Grange condo. Her family is trying to get her vaccinated at home.

ALICE PALACH-SPERA: It's been such a struggle because-- we are so worried because she's at such high risk because of her age and all her health conditions.

STACEY BACA: Cook County Health and AgeOptions are reaching vulnerable seniors through pop-up clinics in suburban Cook County. They've had five so far, and seven more are scheduled.

DIANE SLEZAK: We know the next step that we need to take is to get to the homebound, and that is a challenge.

STACEY BACA: The president of AgeOptions says that first, caregivers must be vaccinated. If your elderly loved one can get into a vehicle, then consider a drive-through vaccination site. And as an absolute last resort, call the Cook County homebound hotline to get on a waiting list, and we'll have that number in just a moment.

DIANE SLEZAK: They are taking names of people to be vaccinated in their homes. We cannot tell you right now exactly when we're going to be able to start that because it depends on supply.

STACEY BACA: Organizations that help older adults, like Aging Care Connections, have faced the challenge.

DEBRA VERSCHELDE: It's been really frustrating, not only for us but for those people who really want to help their parents, their loved ones.

STACEY BACA: Gladys's daughter has called the hotline and still does not have a confirmed visit scheduled. She hopes her mom's experience will force health officials to find a solution soon.

ALICE PALACH-SPERA: She can't even hug us. We can't give her a kiss, nothing, you know. And I think that's why she's getting even more and more depressed.



'Double Mutation' Variant May Be in Illinois Already, But We'll Know for Sure Soon, Official Says

"Is it circulating here? Probably," Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said

April 7, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/new-double-variant-may-be-in-illinois-already-but-well-know-for-sure-soon-official-says/2480747/>

A new "[double mutation](#)" variant of the coronavirus that was discovered in California and is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States could already be in Illinois, Cook County health officials said Wednesday.

"Is it circulating here? Probably," Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said during a new conference about rising coronavirus metrics, calling news of the new variant "worrisome."

"It might be here, but we don't know yet," she added. "I mean we're just beginning to expand- the state and CDC are beginning to expand, they're testing for variants, and so we'll know soon whether we have it circulating in Illinois."

Rubin said an official determination could arrive "in the coming days."

The double mutation is believed to be responsible for a recent surge in cases in India.

Stanford Health experts [confirmed the new double mutation of the coronavirus in at least one case in California's Bay Area](#) and suspect there are more.

It is still unclear if this new variant is more dangerous, although it is believed to be more easily transmitted than others.

"With this double variant, it could very well be that there might be what we're calling more 'breakthrough cases,' which means individuals that have been vaccinated to do get positive, but we don't have enough information about this double variant to know about what level of protection the vaccine provides with respect to preventing serious illness," Rubin said. "And we should get that information, you know, eventually."

The three vaccines are said to still be effective against the India variant.

"Most people will mount an immune response. Maybe it will not protect against an all-out infection but at least it will protect against moderate or severe disease," said Dr. Dean Winslow with Stanford University.

Because the India variant is believed to be more transmissible, health experts are reinforcing how essential it is to get vaccinated.

"What this really just emphasizes is how important it is for the entire U.S. population to get immunized as soon as possible," Winslow said.

Right now, Santa Clara County said the CDC doesn't consider this new variant a "variant of interest."

Meanwhile, Illinois and Chicago are reporting a rise in COVID metrics, with Chicago officials noting spread of the U.K. variant has been rising in the city, though other variants have also been discovered in the city and state.

Cook County health officials warned Wednesday that if the current trend of rising coronavirus metrics continues, the county "will not hesitate to tighten restrictions."

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues," Rubin said.

The update comes days after Rubin warned that the county could see some previous mitigations return amid what appeared to be the beginning of a third surge of the pandemic.

As of Wednesday, Cook County Health officials said seven suburban communities had seen a more than 200% increase in the last two weeks. Those communities included Glencoe, Northridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey Lynwood and Berkeley.

As of Saturday, both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, Rubin said. Just a few weeks prior, Rubin said approximately 250 cases were reported each day.

The daily positivity rate in COVID testing has also increased, standing at 6.4% for the last few days as of Wednesday. The seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 5%.

Officials in Chicago [have also expressed concern over a "quantum leap" in coronavirus cases](#), saying that a failure to curtail those gains could cause some restrictions to be re-imposed after they were loosened earlier this year.

As is the case in Chicago, Rubin said cases are spiking in Cook County's younger population, particularly people in their 20s and 30s who are part of the age group that does not have widespread access to the vaccines yet.

"It's you know our 20s and 30-year-olds and somewhat 40-year-olds that are the ones that are our testing positive. Younger folks are also, as we know, the ones that are more likely to be out and about and maybe being a little bit less observant of the guidance, which means not wearing masks and congregating in big groups which we don't advise," Rubin said. "So, they are driving this pandemic right now, however it doesn't mean that other groupings other than our older seniors are not also seeing rises because younger people will transmit to their older family or friends."



Cook County COVID surge may lead to tightened restrictions, health officials warn

Mark Rivera and Eric Hornig
April 7, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-eyes-tighter-restrictions-as-covid-cases-surge/10495666/>

The Cook County Health Department is sounding the alarm that more restrictions could be coming if COVID case numbers continue to rise.

There is serious concern in Cook County tonight about ICU bed availability, which currently sits at 22%, the lowest in the region.

If it falls below 20% for three consecutive days, tougher mitigations could go into place.

"If the trend continues in the wrong direction we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Cook County Health Dept.

Rubin said after a sharp COVID uptick driven by young people, suburban Cook County Health officials are eyeing more COVID restrictions in the coming weeks if cases and hospitalizations continue to climb.

"It's the 20s and 30-year-olds, and somewhat 40-year-olds, are the ones that are testing positive. And we know the younger people are more likely to be out and about and maybe be a little less observant of the guidance, which means masks," Rubin said

The test positivity rate in Cook County is currently at 5.7%, more than a point above the statewide average.

No corner of the county is untouched. In Glencoe, Lyons and Harvey, infections have more than tripled in recent weeks. In Berkeley, they're up 400% and Lynwood has seen a more than six-fold increase in COVID cases.

"That's alarming," said Henry Barber, owner of Classic Bowl in Morton Grove. "I was hoping we were on the downhill side of this as more people get vaccinated."

Barber said business was just starting to pick back up at Classic Bowl and patrons are hopeful it can stay that way.

"It's been hard to manage, hard to plan for, and we really don't know what to expect from business moving forward," Barber said.

"We didn't see each other at all during the pandemic so this is our only way to get together," bowler Sue Lysy said.

If cases don't level off in the coming days, officials would consider reducing indoor bar and restaurant capacity, which is currently at the lesser of 50% or 50 people.

Retail, large events and spectator sports - even those held outdoors - could also see capacity reductions.

Ryan Tracy, owner of Off the Wall Cafe in Park Ridge, is asking everyone to do their part to keep businesses thriving. Especially in Park Ridge, where Cook County data shows cases have jumped 120% in the past two weeks.

"It's just kind of rough to see the continued mitigation come directly at our industry," Tracy said.

And with Chicago and suburban Cook so interconnected, similar trends are being seen in the city.

"We are in communication with the city of Chicago," Rubin said. "We want to be in probably close lock step with them, and so we would be in discussions with them if anything were to be advanced."

Chicago officials remain cautious.

"We're going to see," Chicago Dept. of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwardy said Tuesday. "Assuming that things don't completely take off, my preference would be not to have to dial back."

In addition to cases, hospitalizations, and test positivity, officials will also look at hospital capacity. Fortunately, Cook County is not in the warning zone right now in terms of the number of beds available.



Cook County Could be Near a 'Tipping Point' Requiring New COVID Mitigations: Officials

April 7, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-could-be-nearing-a-tipping-point-requiring-new-covid-mitigations-officials/2480754/>

As COVID-19 metrics continue to increase throughout the region, Cook County health officials warned Wednesday that the area could see a tightening of restrictions if certain numbers are reached.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said that she "is extremely concerned with the rise in new cases and increase in the positivity rate of COVID-19 in suburban Cook, and throughout the state of Illinois."

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Cook County would have to experience a positivity rate over 8% and staffed intensive care unit bed availability below 20% for three consecutive days to move back to Tier 1 mitigations.

Cook County's seven-day rolling test positivity rate is sitting at 5.2%, according to the latest IDPH date, which has been steadily increasing since the end of March. As of Tuesday night, the county's ICU bed availability was at 22%, falling close to the state's threshold over the past week.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now, not yet," Rubin said.

Because Illinois health officials would have to mandate a move to Tier 1 mitigations, Rubin said "stepping back" some restrictions within Phase 4 would be the "most logical thing" for Cook County officials to do.

The update comes days after Rubin warned that the county could see some previous mitigations return amid what appeared to be the beginning of a third surge of the pandemic.

As of Wednesday, Cook County Health officials said seven suburban communities had seen a 200% increase in the last week. Those communities included Glencoe, Northridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey Lynwood and Berkeley.

As of Saturday, both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, Rubin said. Just a few weeks prior, Rubin said approximately 250 cases were reported each day.

The daily positivity rate in COVID testing has also increased, standing at 6.4% for the last few days as of Wednesday. The seven-day rolling average positivity rate is at 5%.

Rubin explained that the county could possibly continue to increase in cases, then flatten the curve for a period of time before finally decreasing. She advised that, as the weather continues to warm, residents should spend more time outdoors to prevent the spread of the virus.

Officials in Chicago [have also expressed concern over a "quantum leap" in coronavirus cases](#), saying that a failure to curtail those gains could cause some restrictions to be re-imposed after they were loosened earlier this year.

As is the case in Chicago, Rubin said cases are spiking in Cook County's younger population, particularly people in their 20s and 30s who are part of the age group that does not have widespread access to the vaccines yet.

"It's you know our 20s and 30-year-olds and somewhat 40-year-olds that are the ones that are our testing positive. Younger folks are also, as we know, the ones that are more likely to be out and about and maybe being a little bit less observant of the guidance, which means not wearing masks and congregating in big groups which we don't advise," Rubin said. "So, they are driving this pandemic right now, however it doesn't mean that other groupings other than our older seniors are not also seeing rises because younger people will transmit to their older family or friends."

Late last month, Cook County announced the gradual reduction of COVID-19 mitigation measures, particularly on outdoor gatherings, in alignment with the city's easing of restrictions.

The updated capacity limits include:

Outdoor Dining: Groups of 10 people

Amusement Parks: Can open at 25% capacity

Outdoor Fitness Classes, Meetings, Social Events and Recreation Activities: Can increase to 50% capacity or 100 people

Seated Spectator Events: Venues with a capacity less than 200 are limited to 50% and no more than 50 individuals. Larger venues with a capacity of more than 200 are limited to 25% capacity.

Indoor service remained limited to the lesser of 50 patrons or 50% capacity per room.



Cook County Officials Not Reimposing COVID-19 Restrictions – Yet

Kristen Thometz

April 7, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/07/cook-county-officials-not-reimposing-covid-19-restrictions-yet>

Suburban Cook County health officials are extremely concerned with the rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations but are holding off on reimposing mitigations to curb the spread of the virus, at least for now.

“We’re making great progress in vaccinating our 2.5 million residents, but if the trends continue going in the wrong direction we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings, indoors or outdoors,” said Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Department of Public Health.

Over the weekend, officials made a [similar announcement about implementing new restrictions](#), saying the suburbs were “in the beginnings of a new surge.”

Cook County’s seven-day rolling average test positivity rate hit 5.2% on Wednesday, according to [Illinois Department of Public Health data](#). Suburban Cook County has also seen the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations increase for 10 consecutive days, according to the data.

A test positivity of 5% or greater means COVID-19 is spreading unchecked, according to officials.

The surge in suburban cases is being driven by residents under the age of 20, as well as those in their 20s and 30s, according to Rubin, who said cases are rising across the suburbs. “We can’t say one particular area is carrying the burden of these positive cases,” she said.

While there are hot spots throughout the suburbs, some areas have seen cases increase by more than 200% over the past two weeks, including Norridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey, Lynnwood, Berkeley and Glencoe, according to officials. “We know there’s widespread community (transmission) of COVID not only in these communities ... but (also) in those around them,” Rubin said.

Despite increases in test positivity and hospitalizations, the county has not yet met state metrics that would trigger the return of tightened restrictions, according to Rubin. “We’re inching in that direction but we have not reached those thresholds,” she said.

Rubin said she’s concerned about the spread of COVID-19 following the loosening of restrictions on gatherings and restaurants and bars earlier this year.

On Wednesday, [state officials announced 3,790 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19](#) – the largest single-day increase since late January, according to IDPH data. Officials also announced 28 virus-related deaths, including seven Cook County residents.

County officials followed Chicago leaders in allowing businesses to serve more customers outdoors starting March 26, citing data that shows the virus is less likely to spread outdoors.

County rules now limit most businesses to serving no more than 50 people indoors, or no more than 50% of their normal capacity. Rather than immediately revert to tier 1 mitigations, which limit bars and restaurants to 25% capacity, officials could reduce capacity to 40% to stop the surge in cases, according to Rubin.

While county officials mull tighter restrictions, they will consult with their counterparts in Chicago. “We want to be fairly close in lockstep with them,” Rubin said.

Rubin urged people to avoid indoor gatherings, wear masks, social distance and wash their hands. To avoid further restrictions on businesses, Rubin called on restaurants, bars and event spaces to strictly adhere to and enforce health guidelines.

“We’re all hoping for a great summer, but we all must work together to make that happen,” she said.

Daily Herald

State reports most new cases since late January, and Cook County warns of new limits

Marni Pyke
April 8, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210407/state-reports-most-new-cases-since-late-january-and-cook-county-warns-of-new-limits>

New cases of COVID-19 numbered 3,790 Wednesday, the highest since late January, with 28 more deaths from the respiratory disease, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported.

Upswings in caseloads and COVID-19 hospitalizations mean the Cook County Department of Public Health is teetering on the brink of stricter limits on activities for suburban residents, authorities said at a briefing Wednesday.

"If the trend continues in the wrong direction, we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions," said Dr. Rachel Rubin. Actions could include reducing capacity in restaurants and shops, among other things.

Cook County health officials pinpointed seven municipalities with more than a 200% increase in cases over two weeks: Glencoe, Norridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey, Lynwood and Berkeley.

"It's all over. We can't say it's one particular area carrying the burden of these positive cases versus others," Rubin said.

She also noted a spike in testing and positive results involving those younger than 20, plus people in their 20s and 30s. That increase, however, is influenced by more testing among students returning to classes and the fact that a significant number of seniors have been vaccinated and aren't getting tested, Rubin said.

On Tuesday, 139,724 more Illinoisans received COVID-19 shots. The seven-day average is now 107,302.

The federal government has delivered 8,423,845 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 6,552,982 shots have been administered.

So far, 2,494,651 people -- nearly 20% of Illinois' population -- have been fully vaccinated. Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna require two doses several weeks apart.

Illinois hospitals were treating 1,710 COVID-19 patients Tuesday night, another spike when compared with the seven-day average of 1,530.

The state's positivity rate for COVID-19 cases is 4.1% based on a seven-day average, reflecting an upward trend. The positivity rate for cases, which means the total positive tests divided by all tests over seven days, last hit the 4% range on Jan. 30.

The warning signs come amid worries of a third pandemic surge in Illinois even as the race to get vaccine shots into arms accelerates.

"Unfortunately ... the number of hospitalizations is increasing, the number of people going into ICU beds is increasing, and that's of great concern," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said at an event in Rockford. "We want to make sure before we reopen any further in the state we get that under control."

"As we get more people vaccinated, I think those case numbers, those hospitalizations, those ICU bed numbers will come down, and of course the number of deaths."

About 54% of those 65 and older are fully vaccinated compared to 16.8% of those ages 16 to 64, state health officials report.

The state is currently under Phase 4 of reopening, allowing indoor dining and greater capacities at public spaces.

Will County Health Department officials on Wednesday cautioned against holding large social events indoors.

Health department contact tracers reported several large wedding parties from March 10 to 13 attended by about 120 people with limited masking and social distancing that resulted in more than 20 confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases.

State health data also indicated cases of more infectious COVID-19 mutations have more than doubled in two week.

On March 25, there were 227 COVID-19 variant infections compared to 600 on Tuesday. The most predominant strain is one originating in the United Kingdom.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,265,457, and 21,423 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 80,628 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



Health experts warn not to skip 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine

Sally Schulze

April 7, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/health-experts-warn-not-to-skip-2nd-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine>

As millions of people get their COVID vaccines, experts are warning you not to skip your second dose.

Health officials fear that worries of potential side effects are fueling a new form of vaccine hesitancy in which people decide to forgo the second recommended dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Doctor Sharon Welbel from Cook County Health says there's no difference between the first and second doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, but more people are having stronger symptoms after the second, as the body revs up the immune response.

"The most common is going to be arm soreness, like we'd get with any vaccine. People can get a headache. They can get muscle aches. They can get a fever," Dr. Welbel said.

She says the side effects are a sign that the body is responding and giving us more protection from COVID-19. She also says we need all the protection we can get with new, more contagious variants in circulation.

"They looked at one injection, of course, but they found that by giving two injections people had a higher antibody response than they did with just the first," Dr. Welbel said.

To potentially lessen the side effects, Doctor Welbel says to get a good night's sleep before the shot and drink plenty of water. Then, after the vaccine, you can ice your injection site and move your arm around. She says you can take pain relievers if necessary.

Doctor Welbel's bottom line is this: the vaccine side effects can last 24 to 36 hours, but she says COVID can leave you with longterm symptoms and it continues to kill every day.



Johnson & Johnson vaccine deliveries for Illinois, Chicago will plunge after factory mix-up

*Eric Horng
April 8, 2021*

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/johnson-and-johnson-vaccine-deliveries-for-il-chicago-to-plunge/10496508/>

Chicago and the state of Illinois are about to see a major drop in the number of Johnson and Johnson shots they'll get from the feds next week.

For weeks, officials have been saying we're in a race between the vaccine and the variants. But now, vaccination efforts have been dealt a setback.

The month of April was when immunizations were supposed to hit their stride, and the Johnson and Johnson vaccine was to be the work horse supporting several newly-announced mass vaccination sites in Chicago and the suburbs.

But now, a supply crunch. Numbers released late Wednesday by the CDC show the allocation plummeting.

Chicago is set to receive just 4,800 doses next week - a sharp drop from the nearly 40,000 delivered this week.

And the state is also taking a hit. Just 18,000 Johnson & Johnson doses are set to be delivered next week compared to this week's 148,000.

Next week's allocations of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines for the city and state are essentially equal to this week's deliveries, according to CDC data.

"We thought in April we'd see a significant increase in the amount of weekly doses that we're getting, but unfortunately we're not seeing that," Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot said.

Gov JB Pritzker's office confirmed a recently-reported mix-up at a Baltimore plant is behind the steep decline nationwide, despite federal assurances that J&J will still meet April and May projections.

"This drop is the unfortunate result of the error in production at the Emergent BioSolutions facility. Johnson and Johnson allocations are being reduced around the nation, but we look forward to production ramping back up so we can expand the use of this popular option for vaccination," a spokesperson for Pritzker said in a written statement.

The word comes less than a week before Illinois fully expands vaccine eligibility, and less than two weeks before

Chicago's expansion date - which was just moved up to be aligned with the White House.

"We want to get as many people vaccinated as possible, but that's really going to be dependent upon supply," Lightfoot said.

The timing is critical with the virus surging in suburban Cook County, where infections in recent weeks are up six-fold in some suburbs. New restrictions could be coming.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now. Not yet," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Medical Officer, Cook County Dept. of Public Health.

Cook County health officials say they're in communication with their counterparts in Chicago, and any pullback would likely be coordinated with the city.



Cook County Health psychiatrist talks coping with reopening anxiety

April 7, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgkVH6JP9FA>

The pandemic is causing a lot of strain on mental health. Dr. Michael Moreno talks with WGN about how to deal with pandemic-induced anxiety.





Younger People, Women More Likely to Report COVID Vaccine Side Effects: Arwady

What makes someone more likely to experience them than others?

April 8, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/younger-people-women-more-likely-to-report-covid-vaccine-side-effects-arwady/2481828/>

Side effects are possible after receiving either one or two doses of any of the three coronavirus vaccines currently being administered in the U.S., but not everyone experiences them.

So what makes someone more likely to experience them than others?

Chicago's top doctor, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady, broke it down Thursday, saying in Facebook Live that younger people are more likely to experience side effects "because younger people have more robust immune system broadly."

Arwady noted that women are also more likely to report side effects than men.

"Some of this is because women may just be better reporters... but there probably is something real to this too because something else interesting for those who may not know as much about immunity is that autoimmune diseases? Much, more likely in women, too," Arwady said. "And even the, like, more serious like the allergic reactions, the more serious allergic reactions? More likely in women."

Why is that?

Arwady said estrogen can elevate immune responses, while testosterone can decrease it. At the same time, she noted that "a lot of your immune modulating genes" can live on an "x" chromosome, which women have two of, while men have one.

"So there's all these reasons that sort of immunity in general goes up a little bit different in women than it does in men," she said. "And so we're seeing women, a little more likely to report some of the side effects."

Data from the [CDC](#) also reported women were more likely to experience side effects than men, according monitoring from the first month of vaccinations.

From Dec. 14 through Jan. 13, more than 79 percent of side effects were reported by women, the data showed. Meanwhile, women received roughly 61.2 percent of the doses administered during that same time.

Side effects could also vary depending on whether or not you've had coronavirus.

"We have seen more likely that people will report some side effects because that is acting a little bit like a booster dose to your immune system," Arwady said. "Your immune system has already learned some of those lessons of how to protect itself, not in as long a way not as protective a way."

"That is also probably that booster effect," Arwady said.

Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health in Illinois, agrees.

"If you had COVID a while ago or you've already got some immunity, it's more like a booster," he said. "And boosters for some people are completely asymptomatic, boosters for other people trigger their immune response against it so they have some inflammation with it."

People are also more likely to report side effects after their second dose, Arwady said, echoing reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the CDC, side effects after your second shot "may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot."

"These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days," the CDC states.

In trials of both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, more people experienced side effects after the second dose.

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't get your second shot if you get side effects after your first, experts say.

"When people receive that second dose, they are receiving the second booster to try and reach the maximum efficacy," said Dr. Edward Cachay, infectious disease specialist at UCSD.

The CDC also noted that both shots are needed.

"The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots in order to get the most protection," the CDC states. "You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it."

But not getting side effects isn't negative, health experts say.

"If you don't get side effects it does not mean that you are not protected," Arwady said. "I want to be really clear about that."

According to Loafman, it simply means "your body didn't react with as much of an inflammatory response.

"You're still making antibodies," he said.

The CDC reports the most common side effects for all three authorized vaccines is at the injection site. They include:

- Pain
- Redness
- Swelling

Common side effects in the body include:

- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises people to stick around for 15 minutes after vaccination, and those with a history of other allergies for 30 minutes, so they can be monitored and treated immediately if they have a reaction.

Read more about side effects [here](#).

Chicago Tribune

Tinley Park Convention Center vaccination site, 5 schools put on temporary lockdown after car stolen and shots fired in south suburbs: officials

PAIGE FRY
APR 08, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-tinley-park-vaccination-center-20210408-ehk6c4b4mba7tl7qymyy5fefhq-story.html>

The Tinley Park Convention Center vaccination site was put on lockdown for a brief period Thursday morning due to police activity, according to Cook County Health.

The center, at 18451 Convention Center Drive, went into lockdown about 8:45 a.m., health department spokeswoman Kate Hedlin wrote in an email. She directed all questions related to the police investigation to the Tinley Park Police Department.

About 9 a.m., a notice of police in the area of 183rd Street from Harlem Avenue to Oak Park Avenue was made on the village's Public Safety Department Facebook page.

The incident began at 7:15 a.m. when someone got into a Buick Rendezvous that was left unoccupied and running at a Speedway gas station, at 19880 Crawford Ave. in Olympia Fields, Olympia Fields Administrative Sgt. Derrick Blasingame said. The victim of the stolen vehicle did not contact police and instead gave chase in another vehicle. Police didn't have details on how the victim had access to another vehicle to undertake the chase.

Country Club Hills Police Department contacted Olympia Fields police an hour later, saying that someone was chasing after a vehicle that was stolen out of Olympia Fields, Blasingame said.

Pat Carr, the assistant village manager of Tinley Park, said Tinley Park authorities later learned that there had been a stolen vehicle and shots fired. It's unclear where shots were fired, but no one was injured. The vehicle was ditched on Interstate 80 near Oak Park Avenue in Tinley Park. Those inside the vehicle ran toward a subdivision north of the area.

Tinley Park police and the Cook County sheriff's office searched for three males in dark clothing for about an hour, Carr said. A Chicago police helicopter assisted in the search.

Five schools in the area went on lockdown in addition to the convention center, Carr said. The men weren't found, and the search was lifted around 10:15 a.m. No one is in custody. The Olympia Fields Police Department is conducting the investigation.

Those whose vaccination appointments at the center were affected can reschedule by calling 833-308-1988, Hedlin said. There will be appointments available for them from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday.



Suburban Cook to expand vaccine eligibility Monday

An additional 150,000 new first-dose vaccine appointments will be made available in Cook and the collar counties the week of April 12.

A.D. QUIG

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/suburban-cook-expand-vaccine-eligibility-monday>

Suburban Cook County will expand vaccine eligibility to all adults 16 and up on Monday, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle announced this morning at an event with Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

An additional 150,000 new first-dose vaccine appointments will be made available at the 11 state-supported mass vaccination operations in Cook and the collar counties and area pharmacies the week of April 12, the governor said today. Those are open to any Illinois resident, including Chicagoans who may want to venture out to the suburbs to get a shot.

April 12 represents “an important step in our recovery,” Preckwinkle said today. “The weather is warming, and we know we’re all hoping for a great summer. But to get there, we must work together.”

At least 32.3 percent of suburban county residents – and 87.1 percent of seniors – have received at least one dose. Since March 22, Cook County has been vaccinating those under Phase 1A, 1B and 1B+—which includes those over 16 with certain underlying health conditions. More than 1.2 million individuals have registered with Cook County to get a dose and are still awaiting their appointment, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said.

Suburban Cook had often matched its eligibility rollout to the city of Chicago. Both were limiting appointments to respond to what they said was low supply. Cook now tracks with the state and a majority of its counties.

As of April 5, the state’s Department of Public Health reported that 84 of Illinois’ 102 counties had expanded vaccine eligibility to all residents 16 and up. The state authorized all local health departments that were seeing early signs of unfilled appointments to start vaccinating everyone 16 and up at their discretion “in order to use their vaccine as quickly as possible and mitigate a rise in new COVID-19 cases.”

The number of COVID hospitalizations statewide has grown to 1,800 from 1100 a month ago, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said, “hand-in-hand” with rising cases. The state logged roughly 3,800 COVID cases yesterday – up from just under 1,100 a month ago. *See charts for city and state below.*

Those interested in booking an appointment in the suburbs can visit vaccine.cookcountyiil.gov when more first-dose appointments open up, or call 1-833-308-1988, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Chicago is on track to expand vaccine eligibility to all adults 16 and up by April 19. Mayor Lori Lightfoot [said this week](#) that local officials are “actively engaged” with the state about the need for more vaccine in the highly populated Northeast region. She said she hopes “those conversations will result in more vaccine coming to Chicago and suburban Cook and the surrounding area.”



150,000 first-dose vaccine appointments coming to Chicago suburbs

AP NEWS

April 8, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/150000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-coming-to-chicago-suburbs>

As Illinois is poised to open up eligibility for the **coronavirus vaccine** to residents as young as 16, Gov. **J.B. Pritzker** said Thursday that the state will make 150,000 more first-dose vaccination appointments available in the Chicago suburbs.

The governor said the vaccinations will be available at 11 state-run mass vaccination sites in the suburbs and at area pharmacies.

Starting on Monday, residents 16 years and older will be able to schedule appointments in suburban Cook County as well as the state's other 101 counties.

Officials have said that universal eligibility will be expanded to Chicago on April 19, meeting a goal **set this week by President Joe Biden**, but Pritzker said Chicago residents are "absolutely welcome" to sign up for appointments at the state-run vaccination sites outside the city.

Pritzker cautioned residents to not expect to get an appointment immediately.

"Even with all of these new appointments, there will not be enough vaccine in week one to get everyone that wants to be vaccinated," he said.

The push for more vaccines comes as the state is seeing a troubling increase in the number of COVID-19 cases.

In Chicago, that increase was evident at the University of Chicago, where officials on Thursday reported that at least 50 new cases involving undergraduates — many of whom live in residence halls — had prompted the school to impose a stay-at-home order and halt in-person classes.

"Many of these cases may have been connected to one or more parties held by off-campus fraternities over the last week," the school said in a statement, according to a Chicago Tribune, that also included a warning that officials expect the number of cases to increase.

Also Thursday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 3,739 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases. In recent weeks, a daily rise in cases of more than 2,000 has become routine. Last month, there were several days when there were fewer than 2,000 cases and the health department reported the total for March 8 was 1,182 cases.

The **latest totals** bring the number of confirmed and probable cases to 1,269,196 and the 34 more COVID-19 deaths brings the total death toll since the pandemic began last year to 21,457.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Pritzker Discusses Vaccinations, Cook County Warning as Cases Rise

April 8, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-pritzker-to-speak-cook-county-warning-on-mitigations-as-covid-cases-rise/2481126/>

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker delivered a COVID vaccine update from a suburban vaccination site on Thursday.

Meanwhile, as COVID metrics continue to rise in Cook County, health officials are warning about a potential tightening of restrictions.

And a new "[double mutation](#)" variant of the coronavirus that was discovered in California and is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States could already be in Illinois, officials said Wednesday.

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

Gov. Pritzker Gives COVID Vaccine Update, Visits Vaccination Site

Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker delivered a COVID vaccine update from a suburban vaccination site on Thursday.

Pritzker joined local officials at 10 a.m. to visit the Forest Park vaccination site and deliver the update.

He reiterated that the state - outside Chicago - will expand eligibility to anyone over 16 on Monday in line with his previous announcement. He also said 150,000 new first-dose appointments for next week would open in the coming days for state-supported mass vaccination sites and Chicago-area pharmacies.

"As a reminder, even with improved vaccine shipments, patience continues to be the watchword here," Pritzker said. "We continue to have special vaccine clinics for seniors and those most vulnerable. So some doses are still reserved for them. But it is important that we begin to address the whole population, because the danger of the new variants, spreading means that we want every dose to get into arms as soon as humanly possible. The vaccine is the best weapon against the variants and it's the fastest ticket back to normal life."

Illinois has administered 6.7 million doses of vaccine thus far, Pritzker said, noting that 73% of seniors and 42% of people age 16 and up have had at least one dose. He added that the state is on track to break a single-day vaccination record on Thursday.

'Double Mutation' Variant May Be in Illinois Already, But We'll Know for Sure Soon, Official Says

A new "[double mutation](#)" variant of the coronavirus that was discovered in California and is believed to be the first of its kind in the United States could already be in Illinois, Cook County health officials said Wednesday.

"Is it circulating here? Probably," Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said during a new conference about rising coronavirus metrics, calling news of the new variant "worrisome."

"It might be here, but we don't know yet," she added. "I mean we're just beginning to expand- the state and CDC are beginning to expand, they're testing for variants, and so we'll know soon whether we have it circulating in Illinois."

Rubin said an official determination could arrive "in the coming days."

[Read more here.](#)

Cook County Could be Near a 'Tipping Point' Requiring New COVID Mitigations: Officials

As COVID metrics continue to rise in Cook County, health officials are warning about a potential tightening of restrictions.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said that she "is extremely concerned with the rise in new cases and increase in the positivity rate of COVID-19 in suburban Cook, and throughout the state of Illinois."

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Cook County would have to experience a positivity rate over 8% and staffed intensive care unit bed availability below 20% for three consecutive days to move back to Tier 1 mitigations.

Cook County's seven-day rolling test positivity rate is sitting at 5.2%, according to the latest IDPH date, which has been steadily increasing since the end of March. As of Tuesday night, the county's ICU bed availability was at 22%, falling close to the state's threshold over the past week.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now, not yet," Rubin said.

[Read more here.](#)

These 7 Cook County Suburbs Have Seen COVID Cases Rise More Than 200% in 2 Weeks

Cook County health officials [warned Wednesday](#) that COVID metrics in suburban communities are going in the wrong direction, but in seven particular communities, the numbers are rising at alarming rates.

According to officials, seven suburbs saw their number of COVID cases rise more than 200% and as much as 520% in the last two weeks.

County data as of Monday showed those suburbs include:

- Glencoe (250%)
- Norridge (204%)
- Riverside (312%)
- Robbins (200%)
- Harvey (211%)
- Lynnwood (520%)
- Berkeley (400%)

[Read more here.](#)



Illinois COVID Vaccine: Gov. Pritzker announces 150K more vaccination appointments for Chicago suburbs next week

Cook County to release 15,000 vaccine appointments Friday at 12 p.m.

Craig Wall, Eric Horng and ABC 7 Chicago Digital Team

April 8, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/gov-pritzker-announces-150k-additional-vaccine-appointments-for-cook-and-collar-counties-next-week/10498119/>

Governor JB Pritzker announced thousands of new COVID vaccine appointments will be coming to the Chicago area next week with the state set to expand eligibility.

On Monday, April 12, all residents 16 and older will be eligible to get a vaccine in Illinois. Chicago will wait until April 19 to expand eligibility. Chicago residents are eligible to get vaccinated at suburban sites.

"But it is important that we begin to address the whole population, because the danger of the new variants, spreading means that we want every dose to get into arms as soon as humanly possible," Governor Pritzker said. "The vaccine is the best weapon against the variants and it's the fastest to get back to normal life."

With the expansion, the governor said 150,000 additional vaccine appointments would be made available at eleven state-run sites in Cook County and the collar counties. That is in addition to doses being given at local hospitals and pharmacies.

"Even with all of these new appointments, there will not be enough vaccine in week one to get everyone that wants to be vaccinated a dose. But vaccine doses will be arriving more quickly than ever before and the public health system is doing everything in its power to get these vaccines in the arms of our residents as quickly as the federal government can deliver them."

Pritzker said a quarter million doses would be coming to Cook County and the collar counties next week alone. The governor said as of Thursday, there are more than 1,000 vaccination locations in Illinois, including 20 National Guard operations as well as at Costco, CVS, Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Jewel-Osco, Mariano's and more.

But with 15 million doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine being destroyed due to contamination, the [supply to Illinois, which this week was more than 148,000, will plummet to only 17,600 next week.](#)

The governor did not seem overly concerned, and his office said the state has about 2 million vaccination doses on reserve, though some are already allocated.

"Yes, 15 million doses being lost is a big deal, but at the same time, millions more doses are being added every week to what's being distributed to the state of Illinois and to the rest of the country, so I feel good about the trajectory here," Pritzker said.

Chicago is also impacted, and the city's top doctor says that low allocation could continue for three weeks.

"We knew that it was probably going to fall off, so we held a little bit of Johnson & Johnson to be able to cover Chicago State University of the union sites," said CDPH Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady.

Logistics expert Hani Mahmassani, director of the Northwestern University Transportation Center, said now is the time to utilize all of it, as millions more people are set to become eligible around the state Monday.

"Unless we expand that number significantly, we're going to have a period of frustration," he said.

The additional doses for the Chicago area will go to state-supported sites outside the city. But the governor says Chicago residents, if they can make it to the suburbs, are eligible for those appointments.

Meanwhile, an uptick in COVID cases in Cook County has concerns about the third surge top of mind, and the county raising the prospects of re-imposing restrictions.

"But if we have trends in the wrong direction will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings indoors or outdoors," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "Our future rests upon the decisions made in this critical moment."

Cook County to release 15,000 vaccine appointments Friday

Cook County Health will release 15,000 COVID vaccine appointments at noon Friday for the week of April 12.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyl.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

This will be the first release of appointments under the eligibility expansion that includes individuals 16 years and older and will include appointments for all three authorized vaccines - Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson - at the following Cook County mass vaccination sites.

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17-year-olds. As such, it is important for these individuals to schedule at a Pfizer site. A parent or guardian must accompany these individuals to their appointment. All vaccinations are by appointment only.

Cook County said it expects to release additional appointments early next week.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

With vaccine arriving and eligibility widening, Pritzker urges frustrated Chicagoans to hit the suburbs — Arwady suggests Indiana

“We now need to get as many shots into arms as quickly as we possibly can,” the governor said. “I want to make sure that people in Chicago know that they are welcome to sign up for our mass vaccination sites.”

Mitchell Armentrout

Apr 8, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/8/22373705/illinois-coronavirus-vaccine-chicago-suburbs-all-eligible-appointments-cases-deaths-pritzker-april-8>

COVID-19 vaccine providers will open 150,000 appointments across the Chicago suburbs next week when eligibility expands to all Illinois residents 16 or older, Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Thursday.

Chicago residents can snap up some of those suburban slots since the city won't make adult vaccine eligibility universal until April 19 — and they're “absolutely” encouraged to do so, as the entire state faces a third coronavirus surge, Pritzker said.

“We now need to get as many shots into arms as quickly as we possibly can,” the governor said at a west suburban Forest Park mass vaccination site. “We're reserving some vaccine to make sure we're targeting particularly vulnerable groups that aren't fully vaccinated yet, but right now we just want people to show up and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“I want to make sure that people in Chicago know that they are welcome to sign up for our mass vaccination sites,” Pritzker said.

Last week, the governor [criticized Mayor Lori Lightfoot's administration](#) for keeping a tighter lid on eligibility due to short supply. Pritzker took a softer stance Thursday, saying the vaccine rollout has been “a complicated endeavor for everybody.”

“There will just be a week there between April 12 and April 19, but if people choose to come to our mass vaccination sites, they're absolutely welcome,” he said.

Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady encouraged city residents to hit the road, too, whether it's to the suburbs, downstate or even across the state line.

“Indiana has got plenty of vaccine and not enough people taking it,” Arwady said during an online Q&A, referencing a federally operated mass vaccination site in Gary that had [hundreds of appointments available online](#) Thursday afternoon.

“I am frustrated that Chicago residents would need to leave Chicago to get vaccinated, but on the other hand, if you have the means to do that, if you are willing to take a drive ... I want Chicago residents to know that they are eligible there,” she said.

Chicago-area providers are slated to receive more than 250,000 doses in all next week, including for the 11 collar county mass vaccination sites plus pharmacies, hospitals and other local sites.

After a record-breaking 154,201 shots were given statewide Wednesday, one in five Illinois residents is now fully vaccinated, according to the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The state is vaccinating more people than ever, averaging almost 113,000 shots per day over the past week. About 42% of residents 16 or older have gotten at least one dose, and 73% of seniors have gotten a shot.

Eighty-four county health departments outside the Chicago area have already completely opened eligibility. Pritzker allowed them to do so last week, citing falling demand and rising infections.

Previously, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle had mostly stayed in lockstep with Lightfoot in remaining a step behind the rest of the state in opening vaccine eligibility. On Thursday, Preckwinkle said “to get to the other side of this extraordinary moment, we need to continue vaccinating as many people as possible.”

But she tempered talk of “another step toward normalcy” to note that daily COVID-19 caseloads have more than doubled across the suburbs since early March, part of a troubling statewide trend.

“If we have trends in the wrong direction, we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings indoors or outdoors. Our future rests upon the decisions made in this critical moment,” Preckwinkle said.

Illinois’ infection rate is still less than a third of what it was during the worst days of the pandemic last fall — but it’s doubled in the last four weeks.

Officials reported 3,739 new cases of the deadly respiratory disease were diagnosed statewide among 97,741 tests. The state’s testing positivity rate is at 4.2%, its highest point since the end of January and up from 2.1% on March 12.

Nightly COVID-19 hospitalizations are up 66% since then, with hospitals treating nearly 1,800 COVID-19 patients Wednesday night.

“Yes, we have a vaccine and we are elated about that, but it doesn’t mean that this pandemic is completely over,” Illinois Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike said. “We do need to continue to wear our masks before we can return to what we were doing pre-pandemic, in the way we did it pre-pandemic.”

The state also reported 34 more coronavirus deaths, including that of a Cook County man in his 30s.

The virus has claimed 21,457 Illinois lives over the last year, as almost 1.3 million residents have tested positive.

For help finding a vaccine appointment, visit coronavirus.illinois.gov or call (833) 621-1284.



Vaccine Eligibility Expands Monday In Suburban Cook County

150,000 appointments will be available next week in the collar counties. Everyone can sign up, regardless of where they live or work.

Jonah Meadows

Apr 8, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/chicago/vaccine-eligibility-expands-monday-suburban-cook-county>

An additional 150,000 appointments to receive a first jab of the coronavirus vaccine will be available next week in the Cook County suburbs and the collar counties when eligibility expands to include everyone aged 16 and up, state and county officials announced.

More than 250,000 doses are scheduled to be delivered next week to mass vaccination sites and area pharmacies across the state for the week starting Monday, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office.

"Starting Monday, every Illinoisan 16 and over, no matter where they live or where they work, will be eligible to access these life-saving COVID-19 vaccines," Pritzker said. "Weeks ago we set our sights on April 12 as the date for every county receiving vaccine from the state to open to full eligibility, and I am so proud that all 101 counties, plus suburban Cook County, have met that timeline."

As of Thursday, 73 percent of Illinois senior citizens and 42 percent of residents 16 and up have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with a quarter of the state's population aged 16 or older now fully vaccinated.

Pritzker said the increasing prevalence of COVID-19 variants made it all the more important for people to seek vaccination as soon as possible.

"We're at a point where the variants are rising. They're coming at the population so fast at every age. We need to make sure that we open this up to everybody. There are lots of different groups that have been prioritized prior, and groups that you could separate out and say we want to prioritize going forward. But we now need to get as many shots into arms as quickly as we possibly can," the governor said Thursday, speaking to reporters at a Forest Park mass vaccination site.

"We're reserving some vaccine to make sure we're targeting particularly vulnerable groups that aren't fully vaccinated yet, but right now we just want people to show up and get vaccinated as soon as possible."

There are more than 1,000 vaccination locations statewide, and more than 80 of the state's 102 counties have [already moved to Phase 2](#) of the vaccine distribution plan, with doses available for all residents old enough to receive one of the three approved jabs — Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said the pace of vaccination in the county had been increasing, although 1.2 million people pre-registered to sign up for an appointment through the suburbs were still waiting.

"Many, many people are making the decision to get vaccinated, and we know that others are waiting to see how their friends and family will tolerate it, but we want to remind everyone that this is a very personal decision. We ask you to

get the information, get the facts and rely on facts and science to make your decisions to protect yourself and your family," Rocha said.

Rocha said surveys indicate concerns about side effects were one of the biggest factors preventing some people from seeking a vaccine. He said the documented side effects are far preferable to the alternative.

"The side effects of the vaccine are far better and much more mild than having COVID — the COVID experience," he said.

Polling from AP-NORC show one in four Americans say they probably or definitely will not be vaccinated. That group tends to be younger and identify as Republican, according to the AP.

But the same poll found the number of people who want to be vaccinated has been on the rise, jumping from 67 percent in late January to 75 percent this week.

Data from the Illinois Department of Public Health shows the state's positivity rate, number of new coronavirus cases and hospitalizations are [all rising](#). The positivity rate is at a two-month high. The rate of new cases is up 50 percent over the two weeks ending Thursday. And the number of people in Illinois hospitals with confirmed cases of COVID-19 was up 60 percent over the past 14 days.

IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike was asked what might explain data that shows the state of Texas has a COVID-19 incidence rate of less than half of Illinois. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott lifted restrictions on businesses and the statewide mask mandate nearly a month ago. Illinois' mask mandate is going nowhere, the health director said.

"I don't think you can find a scientist, I don't think you can find any public health expert, I don't think you can find any physician that will refute, or try to challenge in any way the efficacy, and the import, and the usefulness of masks," Ezike said. "So I think that debate should be concluded."

As of Thursday, both states are reporting an average of about 3,000 new cases a day — but the population of Texas is about 29 million, compared to 12 million in Illinois.

"In terms of where different states are, it depends on how many susceptible people you have available to be infected," she said. "Potentially they have fewer people available to be infected because they've had more infections. So I don't know the details of Texas, managing Illinois is plenty enough."

In suburban Cook County, more than 87 percent of those 65 and older have received at least one vaccine, and more than 32 percent of residents have been fully vaccinated. That total does not include the four municipal health departments in the Cook County suburbs.

Public health officials in Chicago, which receives a separate allocation of doses from the federal government and sets its own eligibility rules, plan to [open up vaccine appointments a week after the state](#). The governor encouraged Chicagoans seeking a jab to sign up for an appointment at one of the state's 11 suburban mass vaccination sites.

"I want to make sure that people in Chicago know that they are welcome to sign up for our mass vaccination sites. Obviously you know Chicago is now aiming, as I understand it, to open up April 19th, so there'll just be a week there between April 12th and April 19th. But if people choose to come to our mass vaccination sites, they're absolutely welcome."

More than 80 Illinois counties had already opened up eligibility for COVID-19 vaccine appointments to everyone 16 and up as of Thursday.

Cook County Health is expected to open up thousands of new first-dose appointments at noon on Friday.

People interested in booking an appointment at a site in suburban Cook County can visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call 833-308-1988 on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

A multilingual statewide vaccine appointment call center is available seven days a week at 833-621-1284, from 6 a.m. to midnight.



Illinois to expand vaccination eligibility to residents over 16 starting Monday

Associated Press, Julian Crews
April 8, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/pritzker-to-issue-update-on-vaccine-distribution-in-illinois/>

FOREST PARK — Governor JB Pritzker joined Cook County leaders Thursday to announce that Illinois will be moving to the next phase of COVID-19 vaccination eligibility.

Starting Monday, April 12, Illinois resident over the age of 16 will be eligible for the vaccine.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha were among the officials who joined Pritzker at a vaccination site in Forest Park to announce the start of Phase 2 of vaccination.

Pritzker also announced the state will make 150,000 first-dose vaccination appointments available in the Chicago suburbs.

The governor said that the vaccinations will be available at 11 state-run mass vaccination sites in the suburbs and at area pharmacies.

On Thursday, state health officials announced [3,739 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus including 34 additional deaths](#).

Eligible residents are asked to register and [schedule an appointment for a vaccine](#) online or call the Illinois Department of Public Health's vaccine hotline at 833-621-1284.

More information at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>

Chicago officials have said that such universal eligibility will be expanded on April 19, meeting a goal set this week by President Joe Biden, but Pritzker said Chicago residents are "absolutely welcome" to sign up for appointments at the state-run vaccination sites.

But Pritzker also urged not to expect to get an appointment immediately.

"Even with all of these new appointments, there will not be enough vaccine in week one to get everyone that wants to be vaccinated a dose," he said.



Illinois to expand vaccination eligibility to residents over 16 starting Monday

Associated Press, Julian Crews

April 8, 2021

<https://wgnradio.com/news/illinois-to-expand-vaccination-eligibility-to-residents-over-16-starting-monday/>

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"Even with all of these new appointments, there will not be enough vaccine in week one to get everyone that wants to be vaccinated a dose," he said.



More First-Dose Appointments Friday At South Suburban College

Cook County Health is expected to open up thousands of new first-dose appointments at noon on Friday.

Yasmeen Sheikah

Apr 8, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/homewood-flossmoor/more-first-dose-appointments-friday-south-suburban-college>

Cook County Health alerted eligible Illinoisans that first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments will become available at 12 p.m. on Friday, including at South Suburban College site. The COVID-19 vaccine appointments include Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson&Johnson Janssen.

Over 250,000 doses are [scheduled to be delivered next week](#) to mass vaccination sites and area pharmacies across the state for the week starting Monday, according to Gov. J.B. Pritzker's office.

"Starting Monday, every Illinoisan 16 and over, no matter where they live or where they work, will be eligible to access these life-saving COVID-19 vaccines," Pritzker said. "Weeks ago we set our sights on April 12 as the date for every county receiving vaccine from the state to open to full eligibility, and I am so proud that all 101 counties, plus suburban Cook County, have met that timeline."

More than 80 Illinois counties had already opened up eligibility for COVID-19 vaccine appointments to everyone age 16 and up as of Thursday.

The Cook County Department of Public Health says the following locations will have open appointments:

- Forest Park Community Vaccination Center (Pfizer)
- South Suburban College (Pfizer)
- Triton College (Pfizer)
- Tinley Park (J&J Janssen)
- Tinley Park (Moderna)

The department did not specify how many appointments will be available at each location.

To improve vaccine scheduling, Cook County Health says it has implemented a virtual waiting room. Once the link is active, a limited number of people will be admitted to the booking page. The health department says those who are not admitted will be notified of their place in line, and will be admitted if the vaccine is available when their time approaches.

The department says all vaccinations are given by appointment only. Those 16 and 17 years old can only receive the Pfizer vaccine, and a parent or guardian have to be present.



Cook County Will Release 15,000 New COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Friday

April 8, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/08/cook-county-will-release-15000-new-covid-19-vaccine-appointments-friday/>

Cook County Health will release 15,000 Single and First-Dose Appointments at noon Friday for people who qualify for the shots.

The doses are for those who qualify for the vaccine under phases 1A, 1B and 1C.

The appointments are for the Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccine at the Tinley Park convention Center, and the Pfizer vaccine at the Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College.

Vaccines are available by appointment only. Those looking for an appointment should go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Cook County COVID Vaccine: 15K 1st Dose Appointments to Open Friday as Eligibility Expands

April 8, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine-cook-county-to-release-15k-1st-dose-appointments-as-eligibility-expands/2481906/>

Cook County Health officials will release approximately 15,000 single and first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments Friday, the first such release that will allow residents 16 years of age and older to book appointments as the state expands eligibility next week.

The appointments will be for the week of April 12, the same week that Illinois officials will allow any residents 16 and older to book a vaccine appointment. Vaccinations at Cook County's sites are open to all eligible Illinois residents and remain appointment only.

The appointments will be released at 12 p.m. and can be booked on the [Cook County vaccine website](#) or by calling the county's hotline at (833) 308-1988.

The appointments will include all three currently approved COVID vaccines, including the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson treatments.

According to officials, the appointments will be available at four locations:

- Forest Park (Pfizer) – Former HOBLO retail store at 7600 West Roosevelt Road
- South Suburban College (Pfizer) – 15800 State Street, South Holland
- Triton College (Pfizer) – 2000 5th Avenue, River Grove
- Tinley Park Convention Center (Moderna and Johnson & Johnson) – 18451 Convention Center Drive

The Pfizer vaccine is the only treatment of the three to be authorized for residents that are 16 or 17 years old. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are approved for individuals 18 and older.



University of Chicago Issues Stay-at-Home Order Due to 'Large Cluster' of COVID Cases

Becca Wood

April 8, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/university-of-chicago-issues-stay-at-home-order-as-covid-cases-surge/2481683/>

The University of Chicago issued a stay-at-home order Thursday, among other restrictions, in response to a "large cluster" of coronavirus cases at the school, particularly among undergraduate students.

University officials said tests in recent days detected more than 50 cases involving students, many of whom live in residence halls.

"We expect this number to increase," the school said in an alert.

These are the new mitigations in place:

- Students living in residence halls must observe a new stay-at-home period for seven days, beginning immediately and lasting through April 15
- All classes will be fully remote for at least seven days
- All on-campus dining will be on a takeout-only basis until further notice
- Any students who have recently attended a party or unmasked gathering are asked to be tested immediately for the coronavirus
- Students are urged to cooperate with the university's contact tracing team to limit any further spread of the virus
- Outdoor tents on campus will be closed for at least seven days
- Non-curricular in-person programming is suspended during the stay-at-home period

Many COVID-19 cases on the University of Chicago campus have been connected to one or more parties held at off-campus fraternities over the past week, school officials said.

According to a notice from the school, health officials are particularly concerned with the spread of the B.1.1.7 coronavirus variant, which is a more contagious variant that emerged out of the U.K. but has been spreading across Chicago.

"Unfortunately, this is the largest cluster of cases to reach our campus community since the academic year began," the school said.

Cook County health officials warned Wednesday that [if the current trend of rising coronavirus metrics continues](#), the county "will not hesitate to tighten restrictions."

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said she "is extremely concerned with the rise in new cases and increase in the positivity rate of COVID-19 in suburban Cook, and throughout the state of Illinois" and urged people to gather outside rather than inside.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now, not yet," she said.

As of Wednesday, Cook County Health officials said seven suburban communities had seen a more than 200% increase in the last two weeks. Those communities included Glencoe, Northridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey Lynwood and Berkeley.

As of Saturday, both the city of Chicago and Cook County have each recently seen more than 600 new daily cases, Rubin said. Just a few weeks prior, Rubin said approximately 250 cases were reported each day.

FOREST PARK REVIEW

Forest Park vax site has inoculated more than 30,000

Despite more doses and broader eligibility, COVID-19 cases rising, officials say

Maria Maxham

April 8, 2021

<https://www.forestparkreview.com/2021/04/08/forest-park-vax-site-has-inoculated-more-than-30000/>

More than 31,000 vaccines have been administered at the Cook County's mass vaccine site in the former HOBBO building, 7630 Roosevelt Rd., according to Israel Rocha Jr., chief executive officer for Cook County Health, at an April 8 press conference at that location.

Rocha spoke at the Forest Park Mall vaccine site along with Governor J.B. Pritzker, Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Forest Park Mayor Rory Hoskins and other officials.

At the press conference Pritzker announced that beginning April 12, vaccination eligibility will open up statewide.

"Starting Monday every Illinoisan 16 and over, no matter where they live or where they work, will be eligible to access these lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines," said Pritzker.

Pritzker said that next week, 150,000 new first-dose appointments will be available at the state's 11 state-supported mass vaccination sites, including the one in Forest Park.

"That's on top of tens of thousands of newly available appointments at hospitals and local county sites and other mass vaccination sites throughout the region," Pritzker said. "Those appointments will open in the coming days, and many more will come after that."

"The COVID-19 vaccination is one of the strongest most powerful tools we have to fight this pandemic together," Ezike said. "The three COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for use in the United States are all highly effective against preventing severe illness, hospitalization and death."

Despite the good news regarding more vaccines and broader eligibility, Ezike cautioned the public to continue to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which she said has been increasing recently in the state.

On March 12, about a month ago, Ezike said the state reported fewer than 1,100 people in the hospital from COVID-19. On April 7, she said, there were 1,800 hospitalized.

Likewise, Ezike stated that statewide, the number of cases is rising. On March 15, the state recorded 782 new cases as compared to almost 4,000 cases on April 8, according to Ezike.

"So yes, we have a vaccine, and we are elated about that. But it doesn't mean that this pandemic is completely over," Ezike said. "We do need to continue to wear our masks before we can return to what we were doing pre-pandemic in the way we did it pre-pandemic. So this resurgence is here. And until we have better herd immunity, we will continue with this layered public health measured response, both wearing mass washing your hands, careful with crowds, keeping six feet of distance, getting tested answering the call when the contact tracers call. All of that is important and of course get vaccinated as soon as you can."

Preckwinkle echoed Ezike's sentiments, reminding people that precautions, such as washing hands and wearing masks, are still crucial.

"As we talk about normalcy, we must also keep in mind that there's still much to be done to protect our residents. We must continue to wash our hands, to wear our masks, and to practice physical distancing," Preckwinkle said, while, she added, continuing to vaccinate as many people as possible.

Like Ezike, she mentioned the upward trend in COVID-19 cases and warned that steps will be taken if numbers continue in that direction.

"If we have trends in the wrong direction, we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings, indoors or outdoors," Preckwinkle said. "Our future rests upon the decisions made in this critical moment."



Cook County Health releasing 15,000 vaccine appointments Friday

Appointments begin next week for residents 16+

April 8, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-15000-first-dose-vaccine-appointments-friday/>

Cook County Health will release 15,000 first-dose and single-shot vaccine appointments Friday.

The appointments will be made available at noon for individuals eligible under Phases 1A, 1B and 1C. Illinois residents **over the age of 16 will be eligible for the vaccine** beginning Monday, April 12.

The release for appointments is for all three vaccines:

Forest Park (Pfizer)

South Suburban College (Pfizer)

Triton College (Pfizer)

Tinley Park (J&J and Moderna)

The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17-year-olds, according to health officials.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.



15,000 Vaccines Appointments Opening In Suburban Cook County

April 9, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/09/15000-vaccines-appointments-opening-in-suburban-cook-county/>

In just hours, thousands of new appointments will open up across the suburbs.

Starting Friday at noon, Cook County health officials will release approximately [15,000 single and first dose](#) appointments.

These are an addition to 150,000 appointments that became available Thursday on state run sites.

The appointments are for the [Johnson & Johnson](#) and Moderna vaccine at the Tinley Park convention Center, and the Pfizer vaccine at the Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, South Suburban College and Triton College.

Vaccines are available by appointment only. Those looking for an appointment should go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call (833) 308-1988, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The governor announced Thursday that starting this upcoming Monday, April 12, anyone in the state of Illinois will be eligible for a vaccine.

Chicago Tribune

Column: As COVID-19 cases skyrocket in some south suburbs, new restrictions may be needed

TED SLOWIK

APR 09, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/opinion/ct-sta-slowik-suburban-covid-cases-st-0411-20210409-mlmm2pbcybbsbn3zeh7hipprea-story.html>

A sharp rise in the numbers of COVID-19 cases in several south suburbs should serve as a warning that the pandemic is far from over.

Twenty new cases were reported in Lynwood over the past two weeks, a 520% increase. Other towns with significant percentage increases were Calumet Park (11 new cases, up 214%), Harvey (54 new cases, up 211%) and Robbins (11 new cases, up 200%), according to the Cook County health department.

There were 105 new cases reported during the past week in Orland Park, a 97% increase, and 96 new cases in Tinley Park, a 146% jump, according to health department data retrieved Friday.

Officials warned that if case numbers kept climbing, tighter restrictions may be needed on indoor dining and other activities.

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now. Not yet," Dr. Rachel Rubin of the Cook County Department of Public Health [told reporters the other day](#). "But if the trend continues in the wrong direction, we will not hesitate to tighten restrictions on gatherings, indoor or outdoors."

Many may feel fatigued after staying home as much as possible for more than a year. Some are tired of having to wear masks in public. Many are eager to resume "normal" activities. Businesses may be struggling to survive due to capacity limits and other measures designed to prevent the spread of the deadly disease.

However, health officials urge patience as vaccines become more available. Everyone 16 and older in suburban Cook County may receive a vaccine beginning Monday. Eligibility expands to everyone 16 and older in Chicago beginning April 19.

Authorities are concerned that many new cases involve people age 25 or younger. Young adults who gather at bars or at outdoor events may be spreading the disease. Some experts advise parents to [remain vigilant about taking precautions](#) if their children play youth sports.

Cook County's health department website features a tool that shows the percentage change in the numbers of cases recently reported in each municipality. A map looks like a mosaic of colors, depending on the percentage change.

Steger, where cases dropped 33%, and Hazel Crest, where cases were down 7%, were the only two towns in the south suburbs that showed a decline in the number of cases over the past two weeks, according to data retrieved Friday.

South suburban towns showing the biggest percentage increases in COVID-19 cases were Riverdale (20 new cases, up 189%), Glenwood (16 new cases, up 160%), Alsip, (40 new cases, up 150%), Calumet City (56 new cases, up 140%), Flossmoor (16 new cases, up 123%) Homewood (28 new cases, up 108%) and South Holland (39 new cases, up 108%).

Others with significant percentage increases were Dolton (44 new cases, up 105%), Worth (28 new cases, up 104%), Country Club Hills (23 new cases, up 100%), Evergreen Park (36 new cases, up 90%) Palos Hills (33 new cases, up 90%), Blue Island (38 new cases, up 85%), Oak Lawn (85 new cases, up 74%), Park Forest (26 new cases, up 70%), Lemont (26 new cases, up 66%) and Matteson (29 new cases, up 60%).

After significant declines in the numbers of cases during February and March, in the Chicago suburbs and nationwide, infections are once again significantly increasing. A COVID-19 variant first found in Britain is now the [most common strain spreading](#) throughout the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The disease has killed more than 556,000 Americans.

Since vaccines first became available more than four months ago, there seems to be a growing tendency to act as if the pandemic is behind us. People seem to be sharing more and more pictures of themselves with family members and friends at restaurants and other places.

A lot of pictures show people not wearing masks.

According to national health officials, about 20% of Americans are fully vaccinated, or 65 million people. Many experts have advised that herd immunity would be reached when about 70% of the population is fully vaccinated. Things won't be "normal" again for many more months.

The seven-day rolling average of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 5.2% in suburban Cook and 5.1% in Will County as of the past week, according to data retrieved Friday from the Illinois Department of Public Health website.

While numbers are showing gradual increases, they remain below an 8% threshold that would trigger additional restrictions.

Another sign of concern is the seven-day rolling average of intensive care unit beds available to treat patients with severe cases of COVID-19. The threshold number is 20%. Availability held steady above 30% through March 31 in Will County. Beginning April 1, however, the percentage steadily declined, to 22% on April 7.

Data can help inform decisions about behavior. Health officials can provide updates and advice, but it's ultimately up to individuals to decide what risks they are willing to take.

Some health experts have advised it is safe for people who are fully vaccinated to get together in small groups without a need to wear masks.

"Based on what we know about COVID-19 vaccines, people who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic," [the CDC said April 2](#).

After you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should keep taking precautions — like wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces — in public places until we know more," the CDC said.

Once fully vaccinated, it may be OK to venture out for shopping, dining and other activities, especially outdoors, now that warmer spring weather has arrived.

But COVID-19 cannot be put in the rearview mirror the way winter can. Go ahead and put away the snow shovels, boots, gloves and heavy coats. But keep the face masks handy.



New Appointments Coming for Any Resident 16 and Older: Latest Illinois Vaccine Updates

Here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state

April 9, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/new-appointments-coming-for-any-resident-16-and-older-latest-illinois-vaccine-updates/2482221/>

Thousands of new vaccine appointments will be released for four suburban mass vaccination sites, the first-such release that will allow residents 16 years of age and older to book appointments as the state expands eligibility next week.

Whether you're looking for a vaccine, waiting for your turn, hoping to help loved ones or just trying to make sense of it all, here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state.

Cook County to Release 15K 1st Dose Appointments as Eligibility Expands

Cook County Health officials will release approximately 15,000 single and first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments Friday for residents 16 years of age and older.

The appointments will be for the week of April 12 and will be released at 12 p.m. for four locations: Forest Park, South Suburban College, Triton Park and Tinley Park. Details [here](#).



Health experts say 'mutant' virus may already be in state

*Kevin Bessler The Center Square and David C.L. Bauer Journal-Courier
April 9, 2021*

<https://www.myjournalcourier.com/news/article/Health-experts-say-mutant-virus-may-already-16088162.php>

As the state gets closer to making everyone 16 or older eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, Illinois health officials are warning of a double mutation variant of the virus.

The variant was discovered in California and health officials said they could know in coming days if it is spreading around Illinois.

"Is it circulating here? Probably," Rachel Rubin of Cook County Department of Public Health said Thursday during a news conference.

Illinois Department of Public Health Director Ngozi Ezike said much about the variant is unknown.

"What we are going to be continually studying throughout this process is what are the properties of this variant? Is it more transmissible? Will it evade vaccine protections? Will it evade natural protections?" Ezike said.

On Monday, everyone 16 or older in the state will be eligible for a vaccination, although more than 80 counties have already made them eligible.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker announced Thursday that 150,000 first-dose appointments for next week would open at state-supported mass vaccination sites.

"As a reminder, even with improved vaccine shipments, patience continues to be the watchword here," Pritzker said.

Illinois has administered nearly 7 million doses of vaccine so far. The governor said as of Thursday, there are more than 1,000 vaccination locations in Illinois, including 20 National Guard operations and at Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, Jewel-Osco and others.

The expansion comes despite the state expecting to see a drop in Johnson & Johnson vaccines next week after a factory mistake ruined 15 million doses.

The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity through Thursday was up to 4.8%.



COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Open For New Trier Area Residents

Glencoe, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka residents 16 and older could briefly register online for a jab at NTHS.

Jonah Meadows

Apr 9, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/winnetka/covid-19-vaccine-appointments-open-new-trier-area-residents>

Residents of a half-dozen North Shore communities were briefly eligible to sign up to receive a coronavirus vaccine next week at New Trier High School, local officials announced.

Everyone aged 16 or older who lives in Glencoe, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette or Winnetka could register to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at New Trier's Northfield campus, 7 Happ Road.

The first dose clinic was set for Tuesday. Second doses were to be scheduled for the same time as the first dose appointment on May 4, according to village staff.

Vaccination appointments were made in the order in which people [registered online](#), officials said. No appointments by phone were made available.

But within minutes of local officials releasing the [sign-up link](#), the online portal indicated there were no appointments available.

No information about the number of doses made available at the site or the sign-up process was immediately available from a spokesperson for Cook County Health, the only organization authorized to discuss the operation, according to its [agreement with the New Trier High School District 203 board](#) for use of its gymnasium.

The New Trier site is staffed by employees from participating northern Cook County towns, with doses provided via Cook County and Jewel-Osco pharmacy.



Health Officials 'Anxious' About Rising COVID Metrics Across Chicago Area

Lexi Sutter

April 10, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/health-officials-more-anxious-about-rising-covid-metrics-across-chicago-area/2483088/>

Health officials across the Chicago area said they are "anxious" about the upward trend of COVID-19 metrics over the past several weeks and watching the numbers closely.

Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said they are following the latest coronavirus metrics and "will not hesitate to pull back" on the area's reopening plan.

"A little more worried, a little more anxious, but we are still waiting to see over the weekend how things trend," Rubin said.

The Cook County doctor said she believes vaccination shots are the only way to reduce the current surge in numbers.

According to data from the Illinois Department of Public Health, 20% of the state is fully vaccinated. As of Saturday, the state has [administered over 7 million doses of coronavirus vaccine](#) during the pandemic, while receiving 9,001,105 doses.

The state reported 175,681 vaccinations administered in the last day, according to the latest data. Friday's vaccinations brought the seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered to 122,674 doses.

"We have more vaccine available, more sites, people will come out and be vaccinated and that will help us flatten this rise in the curb and not have to clamp down more on movements and make mitigations more strict," Rubin said.

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot encouraged residents to receive the vaccine Saturday while attending a mass vaccination event, saying that's the only way to get to the other side of the pandemic.

"These vaccines are safe and they are necessary as a community to be able to go on and thrive," Lightfoot said.

On March 15, Illinois reported 782 cases of the coronavirus, according to IDPH data. On April 1, that number jumped to more than 3,500 infections and remained at 3,630 Saturday.

In Illinois, vaccine eligibility opens up to all residents ages 16 and older, with the exception of Chicago.



Cook County COVID: Officials Discuss Move to Phase 2, Latest Metrics

April 10, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-covid-officials-discuss-move-to-phase-2-latest-metrics/2483004/>

Cook County health officials will discuss Saturday morning the area's latest COVID-19 metrics, as well as the decision to move to Phase 2 of vaccine eligibility.

Dr. Kiran Joshi and Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-leads of the Cook County Department of Public Health, will meet over Zoom at 10 a.m. Saturday to discuss recent information released on the county's coronavirus pandemic response.

This week, Rubin said she "is extremely concerned with the rise in new cases and increase in the positivity rate of COVID-19 in suburban Cook, and throughout the state of Illinois" and [urged people to gather outside rather than inside.](#)

"We are considering tightening up the required mitigations again if the trend continues, but we're not taking such actions now, not yet," she said.

As of Wednesday, Cook County Health officials said seven suburban communities had seen a more than 200% increase in the last two weeks. Those communities included Glencoe, Northridge, Riverside, Robbins, Harvey Lynwood and Berkeley.

On Friday, officials released approximately 15,000 single and first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments, the first such release that will allow residents 16 years of age and older to book appointments as the state expands eligibility next week.

The appointments will be for the week of April 12, the same week that Illinois officials will allow any residents 16 and older to book a vaccine appointment. Vaccinations at Cook County's sites are open to all eligible Illinois residents and remain appointment only

The appointments will include all three currently approved COVID vaccines, including the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson treatments.

The Pfizer vaccine is the only treatment of the three to be authorized for residents that are 16 or 17 years old. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are approved for individuals 18 and older.



Phase 2 Opens Monday In Illinois Outside Chicago For Anyone 16 And Over To Get COVID-19 Vaccine, But Teens Under 18 Face Challenge

Steven Graves
April 12, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/12/illinois-covid-19-vaccine-phase-2-teens/>

In one of the biggest steps in getting more people in Illinois vaccinated against COVID-19, the state moves to [Phase 2 of its vaccination program](#) on Monday.

Under Phase 2, everyone 16 and older will be [eligible for the vaccine](#) – except in Chicago, where the date is a week later.

The state has already opened more than 150,000 appointments.

But there is always concern about supply and demand. On Sunday night, CBS 2's Steven Graves looked into one major hurdle for teenagers and their parents.

The 16- and 17-year-olds can only get the Pfizer vaccine – Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are not approved for that age range. Some challenges are already arising as local counties prepare for a big influx of interest.

[You've met 16-year-old Avi Rubin on CBS 2 before](#), as he has been helping hundreds of people book COVID-19 vaccine doses.

"Now that I have the opportunity to get the vaccine, I'm really excited," said Rubin, a Highland Park High School student.

But even though Rubin has cracked the code to find shots, getting one himself is a challenge. Again, those like him who are under 18 are only eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.

"You're kind of competing with all these adults also who are looking for a vaccine," Rubin said.

And given that eligibility is opening Monday for everyone 16 and over in Illinois – with no restrictions about who qualifies – that means a lot more people.

Chicago is not included in Phase 2 yet, but city leaders have told residents to go to the suburbs if possible.

State and county mass vaccination sites, hospital systems, and pharmacies remain the best places to go.

Rubin says Walgreens provides the best shot at Pfizer for minors.

"It's really difficult," he said. "There's nowhere that's reserving it for teenagers, really."

We checked with Cook, DuPage, Will, and Kane Counties, which have sites open to state residents. All say it is a first-come first-served basis for teenagers, but most have large Pfizer supply.

Many county websites, like [that for Kane County](#), have specific dosage information.

“We do expect to see a good spike in demand over the next couple of weeks, but I think we’re countering that with increased capacity and availability to make appointments,” said Michael Isaacson of the Kane County Health Department.

In Cook County – [where young people recently fueled a COVID case spike](#) – health leaders say vaccine expansion should help.

“We want to make sure no one is left behind. I think it remains to be seen what direction we are going to go,” said Dr. Kiran Joshi of Cook County Health. “We are seeing that there’s been a little bit of a flattening, and so I’m hoping that things stay calm.”

And for teens like Rubin, a vaccine offers a long-awaited return to normalcy – even creating excitement over possibly stepping foot back in school.

“If enough people go vaccinated, I would very happily go back in person,” he said.

Parents or guardians should be present for minors to get the shot, and they should also have a form of ID.



Cook County COVID Vaccine: 35K 1st Dose Appointments to Open Tuesday

The new appointments will mark the largest release since January, county officials said

April 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-covid-vaccine-35k-1st-dose-appointments-to-open-tuesday/2484184/>

Cook County Health officials will release approximately 35,000 single and first-dose COVID-19 vaccine appointments Tuesday, as Illinois expands eligibility across the state, outside of Chicago, to residents 16 years of age and older.

The new appointments will mark the largest release since January, county officials said.

The appointments will be released at 3 p.m. Tuesday for all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites, with anyone age 16 and older eligible to book appointments.

According to officials, the release will include all three vaccines currently approved for emergency use - Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson. The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine that can be administered to 16- and 17-year-olds, however.

The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are approved for individuals 18 and older.

Officials urged anyone under the age of 18 to only schedule appointments for a Pfizer site, noting they must also be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

County vaccinations will be by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays.

Chicago Tribune

After traveling hundreds of miles for the first COVID-19 shot, can you get the second dose closer to home? Vaccine providers are divided.

ANGIE LEVENTIS LOURGOS

APR 12, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-prem-coronavirus-vaccine-second-dose-closer-to-home-20210412-icij3kdjtbdyhnrflux2fntx4-story.html>

To get her first COVID-19 shot, Chris Galvin left her west suburban Elgin home before dawn in mid-March and drove roughly 600 miles round-trip to a Walgreens in [downstate Quincy](#), the closest spot she could find open appointments.

But for the second dose, Galvin was able to schedule another appointment on Thursday at a pharmacy about 20 minutes from her house, saving her another full day of driving.

With vaccine supply still limited in the Chicago area, many city residents and suburbanites are [traveling hundreds of miles](#) across the state to get inoculated, often finding appointments in Quincy, Danville, Springfield and other downstate cities.

If the provider uses Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the traveler only needs to make one trip to be fully vaccinated. But two-dose regimens of Pfizer or Moderna require a second journey across the state a few weeks later.

Now some Chicago-area residents are trying to reschedule that second dose closer to home, with mixed results.

In Galvin's case, a [glitch in the Walgreens scheduling system](#) had mistakenly canceled her second appointment in Quincy, a problem that affected some customers across the country; but she was grateful the drugstore was able to reschedule her second appointment at another location much closer to home. It was a relief in part because she felt fatigued and nauseous after the first dose and worried about having to drive so far if she became ill again.

"I just wanted to get this over and done with as soon as possible," said Galvin, 51. "That was my goal. And if I couldn't have switched it, I would have driven down again."

On various social media sites, posts seek guidance on the best way to cancel second doses and reschedule to a more convenient location. Some of these vaccine-seekers cite a number of hardships that make travel difficult: The long drive is tough on older patients. Employers won't allow more time off. Unexpected car problems suddenly make travel impossible.

But vaccine providers locally and across the country have different policies and philosophies about changing locations for the second dose: While some public health officials and private pharmacies say they have no problem with folks booking appointments in different locations, some counties in Illinois and providers in other states forbid the practice and turn away vaccine-seekers if they received a first dose in another location.

Illinois Department of Public Health guidance says patients should schedule an appointment to receive their second dose of vaccine at the same location where they received their first dose, to help ensure proper allocation of doses to providers.

“Many providers conduct second dose appointment scheduling on-site while patients are waiting in the observation,” said IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold. “Allocations to providers include both first and second doses. When individuals do not get the second dose of vaccine from the same provider they received the first dose from, it adversely impacts first dose and second dose allocations for all providers.”

Ethics debate

Some local county health departments say they won't provide second doses if the patient received a first dose elsewhere, because planning multiple doses of different vaccines becomes a logistic quagmire.

Galvin tried unsuccessfully to schedule a second dose with the Kane County Health Department. Under COVID-19 vaccines questions, the [agency's website](#) states: “You will need to get your second dose where you received your first dose. If it was out of town, refer to local pharmacies to obtain the second dose.”

Neighboring [DeKalb County](#) has similar stipulations.

“At this time, you must have received your first dose of vaccine from DeKalb County Health Department in order to be eligible for a second dose at our clinic,” the health department website said. “Our second dose allocation is directly tied to first dose administration.”

[DuPage County](#) says people are “highly encouraged” to get their second vaccine at the same location they received the first shot.

“Second doses are shipped to each provider so that they receive the same number of doses as the first doses they administered, with the intention that people will return to the same location for their second dose,” the health department website states.

On the Facebook site [Chicago Vaccine Hunters](#) — a group with about 93,000 members who share tips and help others book COVID-19 shots — a small debate broke out recently on the ethics of canceling existing appointments to reschedule at a more convenient location.

“I'm tired of seeing people say they have two or more appointments scheduled for themselves at different locations, and that they're going to pick whatever is more convenient for them and cancel the rest,” one member posted on the site. “This group is filled with people who can't find appointments. No one should be scheduling themselves for more than one. Plus, this HAS to be causing havoc on scheduling systems.”

Others defended the practice in some cases, and called for more compassion.

“I tend to believe most people are just doing the best they can,” one woman responded, “and we should all be a bit more kind and less judgmental of someone else's considerations going into their (appointment) we know nothing about.”

Another member on the site concurred.

“The point is you don't know everyone's story,” a local woman posted. “The communication is rough at best about getting appointments and getting second doses. Everyone's doing what they can as best they can.”

'I didn't want to chance it'

The landscape is similar in other states, where a dearth of vaccine has spurred much travel for open appointments.

Medical providers in [Colorado](#) reported an increase in calls for specifically for second doses, which can be tricky and complicated to schedule in part because the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines require the same vaccine brand for both doses. There's also the issue of timing, as second doses should be scheduled three or four weeks after the first dose, depending on the vaccine.

After driving long distances for the first dose, some in [St. Louis](#) were turned away from local providers for the second dose and instructed to return to the first location.

Yet other vaccine providers say they don't have a problem with scheduling doses at different locations.

The Cook County Department of Public Health permits residents to schedule a second dose at its vaccination sites, even if the first shot came from another provider.

"This is not an issue," said spokesman Thomas McFeeley. "For the second appointment, a person is required to bring their CDC vaccination card that shows they received their first shot."

Yet he also cautioned that "when possible people should get their second shot where they got their first shot because appointments are not guaranteed."

A CVS spokesman said patients are able to book first and second shots at different locations. Walgreens also offers second doses even if the first dose wasn't administered one of their locations.

"We are committed to honoring all appointments and providing second doses to all patients, regardless of where their first dose was administered," a Walgreens corporate spokesperson said.

Danville, in downstate Vermilion County, has been a popular vaccination site for many Chicago-area vaccine seekers. A few weeks ago, the state provided Vermilion County with [Illinois National Guard personnel](#) to aid in vaccine rollout, greatly expanding resources there.

Vermilion County Health Department Administrator Douglas Toole estimated that roughly a quarter of those inoculated at county vaccine clinics are Vermilion County residents, while the other 75% or so come from out-of-town.

Toole said he understands why some travelers might want to find a second dose closer to home. While he conjectured that this could throw off allocation and planning a bit, he believes a variety of factors might even out distribution in the end.

"It kind of remains to be seen," he said. "I'd like to think that overall it balances out a bit. If there's one person who got their first dose of Moderna here and then their second dose closer to where they live, we're going to have some snowbird who got their first dose in Florida and then comes back and gets their second dose with us."

He added that it would be helpful if patients who need to cancel appointments for any reason do so as early as possible, because providers need to plan how much vaccine to thaw prior to appointments.

"It's always been a bit challenging because once you open a vial you have to use all the doses that are in there in a short amount of time or they get wasted," he said. "We are always very conscious of that."

Some vaccine travelers decide the hunt for another dose isn't worth it, and just hit the road a second time.

Dianne Wrobel of Naperville recently traveled about 260 miles round-trip to Peoria for her first dose. When she called to try to get a second shot closer to home, she said a pharmacy advised her to cancel her appointment in Peoria and start the process again.

But she didn't want to risk losing her appointment, so she drove to Peoria second time, the two trips totaling roughly 520 miles.

"I didn't want to chance it since they had already scheduled me over the 21 days for shot two," she said. "And I take care of three elderly that are over 85. So I did the drive."

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Cook County to release 35,000 more vaccine appointments at 3 p.m. Tuesday

Appointments will be released online at 3 p.m. Tuesday and will be available to any person over 16 years old.

Sophie Sherry
Apr 12, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/12/22380818/cook-county-to-release-35000-more-vaccine-appointments-at-3-p-m-tuesday>

Cook County health officials will release 35,000 new appointments Tuesday afternoon for any individuals to receive a single dose or first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The appointments will be released online at 3 p.m. and will be available to any person 16 years old and up, according to a statement from Cook County Health.

This is the largest block of appointments released since the beginning of the vaccination rollout in January.

Residents can sign up for appointments at:

- Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park;
- Des Plaines Community Vaccination Center, 1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines;
- South Suburban College, 15800 State St., South Holland;
- Triton College, 2000 5th Ave., River Grove; and
- Forest Park Community Vaccination Center, 7640 Roosevelt Rd., Forest Park.

Appointments will be offered for all three currently approved vaccines; Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson.

Teenagers who are 16 or 17 years old are only eligible for the Pfizer vaccine, as that is the only vaccine approved for people in that age group, and must be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988 between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Saturdays.

Daily Herald

State widens vaccine eligibility today, but how fast can you get an appointment?

Jake Griffin
April 12, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210412/state-widens-vaccine-eligibility-today-but-how-fast-can-you-get-an-appointment>

Even though suburban public health officials are opening up COVID-19 vaccination to anyone 16 and older beginning today, it might take a while for those who are newly eligible to schedule an appointment.

Demand for the vaccine is expected to outpace supply for the foreseeable future, much as it did when Illinois expanded eligibility in January to more than 3 million people 65 and older and essential workers. In some cases, people in that group might still get first dibs.

"Appointment opportunities may still be prioritized for eligible individuals in earlier phases to help ensure individuals at higher risk of exposure and severe health outcomes are vaccinated," said Stephanie Calvillo, spokeswoman at the DuPage County Health Department.

Vaccine providers throughout the state are averaging about 118,000 inoculations a day, but many of those are second doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccines that require a two-dose regimen.

"Patience is still the watch word of the day," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Thursday during a news conference at a state-supported mass vaccination site in Forest Park. "We still don't have vaccine for everybody all at once. It's been a complicated endeavor for everybody."

Complicating things further is that Chicago public health officials are not opening eligibility to anyone 16 and older just yet. Pritzker urged Chicagoans to look for appointments in the suburbs.

That could make it harder for newly eligible suburban residents to find appointments, even though the state is adding 150,000 first doses at 11 state-supported mass vaccination sites in the suburbs.

Suburban public health officials urge residents to sign up for alerts on new vaccination appointments at county health department websites:

- In suburban Cook County, [visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov](https://www.visitvaccine.cookcountyil.gov).
- In DuPage County, residents can register online at dupagehealth.org/667/COVID-19-Vaccine.
- In Kane County, online vaccine registration is available at kanehealth.com/vaccine_appointments.
- In Lake County, residents can schedule vaccine appointments at allvax.lakecohealth.org.
- In McHenry County, vaccine registration is available at covidvaccination.dph.illinois.gov.
- In Will County, vaccination appointments are scheduled at willcountyhealth.org/covid-19/covid-vaccine.

"Once someone is in the system, they receive a notice based on their phase," said Caryn Stancik, a Cook County Health System spokeswoman. "But because all new appointments starting (today) are open to 16-plus, then everyone gets notice via email and/or text that appointments will be released at a certain time."

This new wave of eligibility also brings with it a new level of vaccine dose allotment complications. Only the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine is approved for 16- and 17-year-olds. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines can be used only on those who are 18 and older.

There appears to be no concerted effort at suburban health departments to reserve Pfizer vaccine doses for eligible teenagers. "DuPage County Health Department is not holding vaccine back for any populations," Calvillo said. "Rather, we continue to get vaccines into the arms of those eligible as efficiently and equitably as possible."

Several large suburban school districts, such as Indian Prairie Unit District 204 in Naperville and Aurora, and Elgin Area School District U-46 say there are no plans to host vaccinations for eligible students at the schools.

"We will work with our local health departments if they need our support," said U-46 spokeswoman Mary Fergus. "However, most of the current demand is being met through health departments, hospitals and health agencies."

Local health officials note newly eligible residents should check with their primary care physicians or register with pharmacy chains, where vaccine doses are also available.

Here are some pharmacy registration sites:

- [Walgreens, walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19](https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19)
- [Jewel-Osco, mhealthappointments.com/covidappt](https://mhealthappointments.com/covidappt)
- [Meijer, clinic.meijer.com](https://clinic.meijer.com)
- [Mariano's, kroger.com/i/coronavirus-update/vaccine](https://www.kroger.com/i/coronavirus-update/vaccine)

Illinois residents can also find vaccination sites at [the state's coronavirus.illinois.gov website](https://www.illinois.gov/coronavirus).



IL Expands Vaccine Eligibility: How To Track Down A Shot

In addition to the state's vaccine locator, here are a few more under-the-radar options for finding appointments.

J. Ryne Danielson

Apr 12, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/chicago/il-expands-vaccine-eligibility-how-track-down-shot>

As of Monday, all Illinoisans age 16 and older are eligible for the coronavirus vaccine statewide, except for the city of Chicago, which is [expected to open eligibility next week](#). Another 150,000 appointments are expected to open this week at mass vaccination sites across the state, but signing up for them could be tricky.

If you're newly eligible for the vaccine, options include signing up through a local pharmacy or hospital, or trying to get an appointment at a [mass vaccination site](#) or your [county health department](#).

Pharmacies offering the vaccine include:

- [COSTCO](#)
- [CVS](#)
- [Hy-Vee](#)
- [Jewel-Osco](#)
- [Kroger](#)
- [Mariano's](#)
- [Meijer](#)
- [Sam's Club](#)
- [Walgreens](#)
- [Walmart](#)

Anyone without internet access or who needs assistance making an appointment can call the Illinois Department of Public Health's toll-free hotline at **833-621-1284** to book an appointment.

Beyond that, the rush to find open appointments has spawned person-to-person whisper networks, makeshift online tools and even vaccine-chaser Facebook groups and Twitter accounts — some of them listed by government officials alongside the state's own resources.

Private vaccine sleuthing projects include:

- Facebook's [Find a COVID-19 Vaccine page](#)
- [Chicago Vaccine Hunters](#) (Facebook group)
- [Illinois COVID-19 Vaccine Spotter](#)
- [ILVaccine.org](#)
- [Illinois Vaccine Alert](#) (Twitter account)

Many of these resources are listed on the City of Chicago's COVID-19 website, but none are affiliated with any state or local government. That said, they seem far more user-friendly than the state's own [vaccine locator](#).

Gov. J.B. Pritzker last week stressed the importance of getting vaccinated as soon as possible.

"We're at a point where the variants are rising. They're coming at the population so fast at every age. We need to make sure that we open this up to everybody. There are lots of different groups that have been prioritized prior, and groups that you could separate out and say we want to prioritize going forward. But we now need to get as many shots into arms as quickly as we possibly can," the governor said.

Alongside the governor at a press conference on Thursday, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha asked people to seek out reliable information and "rely on facts and science to make your decisions to protect yourself and your family."

All the vaccines currently available in the United States have been through multi-phase clinical trials with more than 30,000 participants, and the FDA says they are safe. That doesn't mean there won't be any side effects — the most common being soreness at the injection site, fatigue, fever, chills and headache. But officials say the side effects are short-lived, [comparable to those experienced with the Shingles vaccine or seasonal flu shot](#).

"The side effects of the vaccine are far better and much more mild than having COVID," Rocha said.



Suburban Cook County expands COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to anyone 16 and over

*Judy Wang, WGN Web Desk, Tonya Francisco
Apr 12, 2021*

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/suburban-cook-county-expands-covid-19-vaccine-eligibility-to-anyone-16-and-over/>

CHICAGO — Eligibility for a COVID-19 vaccine appointment opened up to all individuals ages 16 and up on Monday in suburban Cook County, with the City of Chicago slated to follow on April 19.

The move comes as Illinois has seen a significant rise in vaccinations as well as a steady, sustained rise in new COVID-19 infections and hospitalizations.

State health officials currently report that 22 percent of the state's population is fully vaccinated, a number experts hope to see dramatically increase in the coming weeks as more contagious variants continue to spread in the U.S.

Max Cohnegan, 17, couldn't be more excited to get his first vaccine shot Monday.

Mass vaccination sites in the city are preparing for the opening of eligibility to all individuals ages 16 and up beginning next week, although those receiving their vaccine at a mass vaccination site in Chicago must be at least 18 years old.

"Because it meant I could go back to doing the things I love, like visiting amusement parks and Great Wolf Lodge and traveling," he said.

Illinois health officials have reported more than 130,000 vaccines administered in each of the last five days, a rate that is expected to increase as eligibility expands in the state's most populous region.



Cook County To Release 35,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Tuesday Afternoon

April 12, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/12/cook-county-covid-19-vaccine-appointments-04-13-21/>

Cook County Health will release 35,000 COVID-19 vaccine appointments on Tuesday.

The county announced the appointments will drop at 3 p.m. Tuesday. The appointments will be for dates later this week at all Cook County Health mass-vaccination sites.

On Monday, all of Illinois except the city of Chicago moved to [Phase 2](#) of the coronavirus vaccine rollout, opening eligibility to anyone 16 and older.

This release of appointments will include all three currently-approved vaccines – the two-dose mRNA vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, and the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The county noted that the Pfizer vaccine is the only one approved for 16- and 17-year-olds, and they must make appointments at a Pfizer site.

Those age 16 and 17 coming in for shots must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.



Cook County Health releasing 35,000 vaccine appointments Tuesday

Apr 12, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-35000-vaccine-appointments-tuesday/>

Cook County Health will release approximately 35,000 single and first-dose vaccine appointments, their largest to date, Tuesday afternoon.

The appointments will be available at 3 p.m. for individuals 16 and older.

The release is for appointments this week for all Cook County Health mass vaccination sites and includes all three vaccines: Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson). Locals are reminded that the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17-year-olds.

Locals age 16 and 17 must make vaccine appointments at Pfizer sites and be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.

All vaccinations are by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 10 p.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. – 10 p.m.



Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Moderna Side Effects: How Do They Compare?

Does one vaccine report more side effects than the others?

April 12, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/johnson-johnson-pfizer-and-moderna-side-effects-how-do-they-compare/2484073/>

Side effects are possible after receiving the Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer or Moderna COVID vaccines currently being administered in the U.S., but how do the potential symptoms differ between the three vaccines?

Experiencing side effects isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, it's a sign your body is responding.

"The good news on our part is that a brisk response equals an effective response," Dr. Mark Loafman, chair of family and community medicine for Cook County Health in Illinois, told NBC 5. "It tells us that the vaccine is working. Our body's forming a robust immune response and we feel that that's a positive thing. So we tend to see the vaccines that have a higher efficacy rate also have more of the so-called side effects or the symptoms because they work so well."

Does One Vaccine Report More Side Effects Than the Others?

According to Pfizer, about 3.8% of their clinical trial participants experienced fatigue as a side effect and 2% got a headache.

Moderna says 9.7% of their participants felt fatigued and 4.5% got a headache.

Like Pfizer and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccines, [the main side effects of the J&J shot](#) are pain at the injection site and flu-like fever, fatigue and headache.

But Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady has said that Johnson & Johnson trial participants reported fewer side effects.

"One thing that I've recommended is, if there are people who are very, very worried about side effects, you know, the Johnson & Johnson in the trials had a little bit less side effects," she said. "And that's, you know, that single dose, you know can be one thing there."

In addition, with the two-shot vaccines, people are also more likely to report side effects after their second dose, Arwady said, echoing reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to the CDC, side effects after your second shot "may be more intense than the ones you experienced after your first shot."

"These side effects are normal signs that your body is building protection and should go away within a few days," the CDC states.

In trials of both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, more people experienced side effects after the second dose.

But that doesn't mean that you shouldn't get your second shot if you get side effects after your first, experts say.

"When people receive that second dose, they are receiving the second booster to try and reach the maximum efficacy," said Dr. Edward Cachay, infectious disease specialist at UCSD.

The CDC also noted that both shots are needed.

"The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine both need 2 shots in order to get the most protection," the CDC states. "You should get the second shot even if you have side effects after the first shot, unless a vaccination provider or your doctor tells you not to get it."

There are also some factors that could make you more likely to experience side effects.

Chicago's top doctor said Thursday that younger people are more likely to experience side effects "because younger people have more robust immune system broadly."

And, according to Loafman, the body's immune system is what creates the symptoms.

"That's simply a reflection of the immune response, just the way we have when we get ill," he said.

Arwady also noted that women are more likely to report side effects than men.

"Some of this is because women may just be better reporters... but there probably is something real to this too because something else interesting for those who may not know as much about immunity is that autoimmune diseases? Much, more likely in women, too," Arwady said. "And even the, like, more serious like the allergic reactions, the more serious allergic reactions? More likely in women."

Why is that?

Arwady said estrogen can elevate immune responses, while testosterone can decrease it. At the same time, she noted that "a lot of your immune modulating genes" can live on an "x" chromosome, which women have two of, while men have one.

"So there's all these reasons that sort of immunity in general goes up a little bit different in women than it does in men," she said. "And so we're seeing women, a little more likely to report some of the side effects."

Data from the [CDC](#) also reported women were more likely to experience side effects than men, according monitoring from the first month of vaccinations.

From Dec. 14 through Jan. 13, more than 79 percent of side effects were reported by women, the data showed. Meanwhile, women received roughly 61.2 percent of the doses administered during that same time.

Side effects could also vary depending on whether or not you've had coronavirus.

"We have seen more likely that people will report some side effects because that is acting a little bit like a booster dose to your immune system," Arwady said. "Your immune system has already learned some of those lessons of how to protect itself, not in as long a way not as protective a way."

"That is also probably that booster effect," Arwady said.

Loafman agrees.

"If you had COVID a while ago or you've already got some immunity, it's more like a booster," he said. "And boosters for some people are completely asymptomatic, boosters for other people trigger their immune response against it so they have some inflammation with it."

But not getting side effects isn't a negative, health experts say.

"If you don't get side effects it does not mean that you are not protected," Arwady said. "I want to be really clear about that."

According to Loafman, it simply means "your body didn't react with as much of an inflammatory response.

"You're still making antibodies," he said.

According to Loafman, every person's response is unique.

"It's really just kind of a reflection of how unique each of our systems are, what other immunities we have," he said.

"You know, a lot of the antibodies cross react and we have cross reactivity so it's really a mosaic. Each of our immune systems is a mosaic composite of all that we've been through and all that we have and all we've recently been dealing with. Our individual response varies. Everybody gets gets the appropriate immune response."



Cook County Health halts Johnson & Johnson vaccine distribution after FDA calls for immediate pause

Associated Press, Sean Lewis

Apr 13, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/us-calls-for-pause-on-johnson-johnson-vaccine/>

Cook County Health has halted the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until the FDA and CDC complete their review. The decision comes after the federal organizations recommended that usage of the vaccine be paused to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.

Depending on the vaccine location, those who booked appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week will receive Moderna or Pfizer. Those who do not wish to receive either of those vaccines should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule.

Cook County's appointment release, currently scheduled for 3 p.m. Tuesday, will not include appointments for Johnson & Johnson.

Those given the Johnson & Johnson vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot are urged to contact their health care provider.

On Tuesday morning, the U.S. recommended a "pause" in administration of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.

In a joint statement Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration said they were investigating unusual clots in six women that occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. The clots occurred in veins that drain blood from the brain and occurred together with low platelets. All six cases were in women between the ages of 18 and 48.

The reports appear similar to a rare, unusual type of clotting disorder that European authorities say is possibly linked to another COVID-19 vaccine not yet cleared in the U.S., from AstraZeneca.

More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the U.S., the vast majority with no or mild side effects.

U.S. federal distribution channels, including mass vaccination sites, will pause the use of the J&J shot, and states and other providers are expected to follow. The other two authorized vaccines, from Moderna and Pfizer, make up the vast share of COVID-19 shots administered in the U.S. and are not affected by the pause.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet Wednesday to discuss the cases and the FDA has also launched an investigation into the cause of the clots and low platelet counts.

"Until that process is complete, we are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution," Dr. Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the CDC, and Dr. Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, said in a joint statement.

They are recommending that people who were given the J&J vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot contact their health care provider.

U.S. health authorities cautioned doctors against using a typical clot treatment, the blood-thinner heparin. "In this setting, administration of heparin may be dangerous and alternative treatments need to be given," the FDA and CDC said.

European authorities investigating the AstraZeneca cases have concluded clots appear to be similar to a very rare abnormal immune response that sometimes strikes people treated with heparin, leading to a temporary clotting disorder.

Officials say they also want to educate vaccine providers and health professionals about the "unique treatment" required for this type of clot.

Johnson & Johnson said it was aware of the reports of "thromboembolic events," or blood clots, but that no link to its vaccine had been established.

"We are aware that thromboembolic events including those with thrombocytopenia have been reported with Covid-19 vaccines," said Johnson & Johnson in a statement. "At present, no clear causal relationship has been established between these rare events and the Janssen Covid-19 vaccine."

The J&J vaccine received emergency use authorization from the FDA in late February with great fanfare, with hopes that its single-dose and relatively simple storage requirements would speed vaccinations across the country. Yet the shot only makes up a small fraction of the doses administered in the U.S. as J&J has been plagued by production delays and manufacturing errors at the Baltimore plant of a contractor.

Last week the drugmaker took over the facility to scale up production in hopes of meeting its commitment to the U.S. government of providing about 100 million doses by the end of May.

Only about 9 million of the company's doses have been delivered to states and are awaiting administration, according to CDC data.

Until now concern about the unusual blood clots has centered on the vaccine from AstraZeneca, which has not yet received authorization in the U.S. Last week, European regulators said they found a possible link between the shots and a very rare type of blood clot that occurs together with low blood platelets, one that seems to occur more in younger people.

The European Medicines Agency stressed that the benefits of receiving the vaccine outweigh the risks for most people. But several countries have imposed limits on who can receive the vaccine; Britain recommended that people under 30 be offered alternatives.

But the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines are made with the same technology. Leading COVID-19 vaccines train the body to recognize the spike protein that coats the outer surface of the coronavirus. But the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines use a cold virus, called an adenovirus, to carry the spike gene into the body. J&J uses a human adenovirus to create its vaccine while AstraZeneca uses a chimpanzee version.

The announcement hit U.S. stock markets immediately, with Dow futures falling almost 200 points just over two hours before the opening bell. Shares of Johnson & Johnson dropped almost 3%.



Cook County to Pause Use of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Amid Federal Review

Individuals with appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week will instead receive the first dose of either Moderna or Pfizer's vaccine, depending on the vaccination site

April 13, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/national-international/cook-county-to-pause-use-of-johnson-johnson-vaccine-amid-federal-review/2484674/>

What to Know

Cook County is pausing use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine

Individuals with appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in Cook County this week will instead receive the first dose of either Moderna or Pfizer's vaccine, depending on the vaccination site

The release of 35,000 appointments slated for Tuesday afternoon will not include Johnson & Johnson

Cook County is pausing use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, county health officials said Tuesday, based on U.S. regulators' recommendation amid an investigation into reports of rare but potentially dangerous blood clots.

"Following guidance released this morning from the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cook County Health will pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until the FDA and CDC complete their review," a spokeswoman for Cook County Health said in a statement Tuesday morning.

Individuals with appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine this week will instead receive the first dose of either Moderna or Pfizer's vaccine, depending on the vaccination site, the county said. Anyone who has a scheduled appointment but does not want the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment, officials said.

The release of 35,000 appointments slated for Tuesday afternoon will not include Johnson & Johnson, according to the county.

"The Cook County Department of Public Health has asked all Johnson & Johnson partners to pause using the vaccine as well," the county said, adding that it will provide additional information "as it becomes available."

"Following CDC/FDA guidance, individuals given the J&J vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot contact their health care provider," the county added.

The county's decision came after the CDC and FDA said in a joint statement early Tuesday that the regulators recommended a "pause" in administration of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson shots.

Today FDA and [@CDCgov](#) issued a statement regarding the Johnson & Johnson [#COVID19](#) vaccine. We are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution.

— U.S. FDA (@US_FDA) [April 13, 2021](#)

The agencies said they were investigating unusual clots in six women that occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. The clots occurred in veins that drain blood from the brain and occurred together with low platelets. All six cases were in women between the ages of 18 and 48.

The reports appear similar to a rare, unusual type of clotting disorder that European authorities say is possibly linked to another COVID-19 vaccine not yet cleared in the U.S., from AstraZeneca.

More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the U.S., the vast majority with no or mild side effects.

U.S. federal distribution channels, including mass vaccination sites, will pause the use of the J&J shot, and states and other providers are expected to follow. The other two authorized vaccines, from Moderna and Pfizer, make up the vast share of COVID-19 shots administered in the U.S. and are not affected by the pause.

An advisory committee is scheduled to meet Wednesday to review the reactions and consider how to proceed.

Officials say they also want to educate vaccine providers and health professionals about the “unique treatment” required for this type of clot.



Johnson & Johnson Vaccinations Paused In Chicago, Throughout Illinois After Recommendation From Feds

A reported six women have developed blood clots out of nearly 7 million people who have gotten vaccinated with Johnson & Johnson.

Kelly Bauer
Apr 13, 2021

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2021/04/13/johnson-johnson-vaccinations-paused-in-cook-county-after-recommendation-from-feds/>

Illinois and Chicago will temporarily stop using the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine “out of an abundance of caution” following a federal recommendation.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Federal Drug Administration recommended Tuesday morning providers “pause” using the one-dose vaccine. Experts are investigating if the doses are linked to reports of extremely rare but potentially dangerous blood clots found in a small number of women.

Nearly 7 million people have gotten the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the United States, and the CDA and FDA are investigating blood clots and low platelets in six women. The pause is being done “out of an abundance of caution,” [according to the agencies](#).

None of those cases have been found in Chicago, Dr. Allison Arwady, head of the Chicago Department of Public Health, said during a Tuesday news conference.

The “pause” is only expected to last several days, FDA acting Commissioner Janet Woodcock said during a news conference.

The one-shot vaccine has been administered to more than 47,000 Chicagoans, Arwady said. About 13,000 more Johnson & Johnson shots were expected to be administered this week, though those appointments are now being delayed or other vaccines will be given.

Officials hoped that, as supply of the doses increased, it would play a significant role in getting residents vaccinated as quickly as possible. Just Monday, city officials announced the mass vaccination site at the United Center would [switch to Johnson & Johnson doses come April 20](#).

But the city’s health department said Tuesday it will follow the federal government’s recommendation to temporarily stop using Johnson & Johnson doses.

“Vaccine safety is always our top priority,” the health department said in a news release. “We are working closely with our partners at the federal and local level to determine how this impacts the city’s vaccine operations.”

Arwady said the city is waiting to hear from FEMA on what it will do about the United Center. The Chicago State University mass vaccination site, which had been using Johnson & Johnson doses, will switch to using Pfizer shots. People who had appointments there do not need to cancel them.

And the city has [halted its homebound vaccination program](#), as it had been using Johnson & Johnson shots for that.

The Chicago Department of Public Health said the reports of blood clots are “very rare,” and officials are not aware of any local cases.

The federal government’s recommendation does not affect Pfizer or Moderna vaccinations, which make up the bulk of shots administered in Chicago.

Of the more than 180 million Pfizer and Moderna doses that have been administered across the United States, none have been associated with blood clots and low platelets, Arwady said. She encouraged people who have appointments to get those shots to keep them and get vaccinated.

Federally-run mass vaccination sites will have to stop using the Johnson & Johnson shot for now, and most providers are expected to follow that move.

The Illinois Department of Public Health will pause its use of the vaccine, and it has notified its providers throughout the state to discontinue its use for now. The state health department has “strongly” advised providers to use Pfizer and Moderna vaccines so appointments don’t need to be canceled, according to a news release.

Moderna and Pfizer make up the vast majority of the doses being provided to Illinois. This week, the state received 17,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Next week, the state expects to get 483,720 doses of vaccine — of which just 5,800 will be from Johnson & Johnson.

The Cook County Health Department said it will temporarily stop using the vaccine as the FDA and CDC investigate. People who had appointments at Cook County’s mass vaccination sites will instead receive Moderna or Pfizer shots for now, according to a news release. People who had appointments at those sites but don’t want a Moderna or Pfizer shot can call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment.

The county health department has asked all its partners to halt using the vaccine, as well.

People who got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and develop a severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks should contact their health provider, according to the CDC.

The severe illness potentially linked to Johnson & Johnson appears to affect just one in 1 million people, Arwady said.

“If people already got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, there is nothing that they need to do differently at this point except to monitor in case they were to have these significant side effects,” Arwady said.

All of the currently available vaccines in the United States were approved for emergency use, with vaccine makers having to undergo months of trials and studies to show they are safe. Officials have said some people experience side effects — like fatigue or arm soreness — after getting their shots, but no serious side effects have been officially linked to vaccines here.

The vaccinations — provided for free, regardless of a person’s insurance — are the best hope for ending the COVID-19 pandemic, officials have said.



Johnson & Johnson vaccine paused in Illinois, Indiana after reports of blood clots

Anyone who received J&J vaccine experiencing blood clot symptoms asked to contact health care provider

*Jessica D'Onofrio, Craig Wall, Sarah Schulte, Evelyn Holmes, Cate Cauquiran and Alexis McAdams and ABC7 Chicago Digital Team
April 14, 2021*

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/cook-county-to-pause-use-of-johnson-and-johnson-vaccine/10511944/>

The Chicago, Illinois and Indiana health departments announced Tuesday that they will be pausing the use of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said it's allocation of Johnson and Johnson for this week was 17,000 doses. Next week, the state was set to receive an additional 5,800 Johnson and Johnson shots out of a total of 483,720 doses.

The state of Indiana also announced that it would be pausing the use of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Those with appointments for the Johnson and Johnson shots will be given either Pfizer or Moderna shots.

ATTN: [@StateHealthIN](#) is asking all IN vax clinics to pause using J&J vaccines pending additional [@US_FDA](#) review.

Current [@IMS](#) appointments will be kept using the two-dose Moderna vaccine so Hoosiers can continue to be vaccinated without interruption. <https://t.co/cfAuXPLaoM> pic.twitter.com/i4K9esGzTY

— Indiana Department of Health (@StateHealthIN) [April 13, 2021](#)

The announcements come after [new guidance from the CDC and FDA](#) warning of reports of blood clots in six women.

"It doesn't mean they are necessarily going to stop using the vaccine, we just don't know yet," said Dr. Richard Novak, UIC Infectious Disease Director.

What do Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients need to know?

Novak, who conducted UIC's J & J trials in Chicago, said the blood clots are very different and rare compared to your average blood clot. All six cases of blood clots occurred among women ages of 18 and 48, and symptoms occurred six to 13 days after vaccination.

Novak said there were no problems in their study group, which is the same for most people who take the vaccine. The 6

cases are out of 6.8 million J & J shots given, which is less than a 1 in 1 million chance of blood clots.

"Whereas being struck by lightning in any given year is a one in 700,000 risk," said Mark Pfister, Lake County Health Dept.

Faye Safi got the Johnson and Johnson vaccine in Des Plaines Tuesday morning and she said she understood the risk that can come with anything.

"There's risk even walking outside of your home," Safi said. "You know so you have to protect your family and protect the public."

As of Monday, of the over 2.8 million people fully vaccinated, 9.6% received the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Of the nearly 7.5 million doses administered in Illinois, 3.6% (270,799) have been Johnson and Johnson vaccines, according to the CDC.

"Whenever there is a pause, people get anxious or nervous, but I think the best thing to realize is the system worked," said Dr. Kathleen Mullane, UChicago Medicine Infectious Disease Specialist.

While federal regulators learn more, a "pause" is not as severe as a hold or stoppage of a vaccine. Although, doctors says a pause is important because it tells them to take notice.

"So if a patient calls and they think they have a headache or belly pain, leg pain we take it seriously, we evaluate it," Mullane said.

But, doctors also want their patients not to panic and put the news in perspective.

"What is the risk of getting COVID and dying from it versus having an adverse reaction from the vaccine," Mullane said.

Doctors call today's move by the FDA and the CDC a very cautious and transparent one that is about safety rather than liability. But, there is concern now about the potential for more vaccine hesitancy.

"The difficulty is that we're going to have to now work much harder to convince our patients to get vaccinated," said Dr. Vishnu Chundi, Chair, COVID-19 Task Force, Chicago Medical Society.

Dr. Audrey Tanksly, who practices integrative medicine at Chicago's first Black-owned fully comprehensive urgent care, and other doctors are worried about the effect the stoppage will have on communities of color which are already hesitant about the safety of any vaccine.

"I will monitor myself," said Dr. Tanksly, who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. "If I get any headaches or abdominal pain, leg swelling and any of the symptoms the CDC has identified, then I will get evaluated. But I don't think that deters me from still recommending that individuals be vaccinated."

A panel of outside experts will meet Wednesday to review the matter for the CDC while the FDA also conducts an investigation which is expected to take a matter of days.

Anyone who has received a Johnson and Johnson vaccine and is experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot should contact their health care provider.

Cook County says anyone who has appointments to get a Johnson and Johnson vaccine will instead be offered either a Moderna or a Pfizer vaccine, but new appointments may be delayed.

"See whether alternative vaccines are available, meaning the Pfizer or Moderna, and to make sure that they have enough vaccine in order not to have to cancel current appointments," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Cook County Dept. of Public Health.

Those who do not wish to get either vaccine can call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment.

In Matteson, Cook County officials showed off a new mass vaccination clinic that will open Wednesday, offering 4,000 appointments a day. They are hoping the pause in Johnson and Johnson vaccines will not have a significant impact at this and other mass vaccination sites.

Cook County is set to release an additional 35,000 appointments at 3 p.m. Tuesday. The appointments will not include appointments for Johnson and Johnson vaccines.

Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday - Friday from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. The call center will be open Sunday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

The mass vaccination site at the United Center was expected to switch to the Johnson and Johnson vaccine for all walk-in appointments next week. Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said they are waiting to hear from FEMA for an update, but appointment-making for Johnson and Johnson vaccine has been paused for now.

"This is a rare, but severe type of blood clot and I fully support the decision of the CDC and the FDA to recommend this pause while they're understanding the event," Arwady said. "We are very prepared for situations like this, team was working from when we learned about this early this morning to make contingency plans, and I'm very confident that we will be able to continue here without major disruptions."

Arwady said the Chicago State University site would be switching appointments to the Pfizer vaccine.

Appointments at vaccination events at O'Hare and Midway would be put on hold, as well as the Chicago Federation of Labor vaccinations.

Among the groups impacted is the Illinois Restaurant Association, which had to cancel and reschedule a one-day clinic in Albany Park Tuesday that would have vaccinated nearly 600 restaurant workers.

"You know, we were very disappointed. But in light of today's unforeseen announcement about the J&J vaccine, we must take every precaution to protect our team members at all times," said Sam Toia, President, Illinois Restaurant Association.

The Chicago homebound vaccine program will be paused until at least Monday.

Dr. Arwady said more than 43,000 Chicago residents have received a Johnson and Johnson vaccine.



City, state stop giving Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Chicago's health commissioner expects the move—led by the feds and coming after some rare but serious side effects—will lead to a drop in the rate of vaccinations nationwide.

A.D. QUIG and STEPHANIE GOLDBERG

April 16, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/city-state-stop-giving-johnson-johnson-vaccine>

City, county and state officials have ordered a stop to giving Johnson & Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, following U.S. health officials' call for an immediate pause in its use after six women who received it developed a rare and severe form of blood clotting. The FDA signaled the pause would last a matter of days.

The decision comes at a crucial juncture in the U.S. vaccination effort, which has been gaining speed in recent weeks at the same time that a worsening outbreak driven by coronavirus variants is gripping the upper Midwest. *See the latest vaccination figures for Illinois and Chicago in the charts below.*

The Chicago Department of Public Health has asked vaccinators to pause the use of J&J doses. Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said she expects to see a drop in the rate of vaccinations as a result—not just in Chicago, but nationwide. Some Chicago vaccination events are on hold for now, including the homebound program, a clinic for restaurant workers and sites at Chicago State University and O'Hare.

"I expect this to be a relatively short-term pause while the scientists look at the data and make some recommendations," Arwady said today. She thinks pausing is the right decision while federal teams investigate the data, noting that none of the six reported cases out of nearly 7 million doses occurred in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has notified all of the state's providers "to discontinue use of the J&J vaccine at this time. In order to keep appointments, IDPH is strongly advising providers to use Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines," the department said in a statement.

In Illinois, Moderna and Pfizer make up the vast majority of doses on hand. Next week, the state expects to get a total of 483,720 doses. Of that total, 5,800 doses were expected from J&J, the department said.

The state's allocation of J&J was 17,000 doses this week, IDPH said.

With J&J paused, the state is allocating 50,000 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna to the city of Chicago over the next seven days. As cases climb across the country, I encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

— Governor JB Pritzker (@GovPritzker) [April 13, 2021](#)

"We are working closely with our partners at the federal and local level to determine how this impacts the city's vaccine operations," the Chicago Department of Public Health said in a statement. "Federal agencies are investigating very rare reports of a severe type of blood clot with low platelets that occurred in six individuals after receiving the J&J vaccine among nearly 7 million people who have received J&J across the U.S. We are not aware of any local cases."

Cook County Health will pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until the FDA and CDC complete their review, a spokeswoman said. She did not say how many doses or appointments would be affected by the change nor comment on the impact on the pace of the ongoing vaccination campaign.

“Depending on the vaccine location, individuals with appointments for J&J this week will receive Moderna or Pfizer,” she said. People who do not want either of the other vaccines should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule. New appointments opening up for booking today will not be for J&J shots, and the county has asked all of its vaccinating partners to pause using them, as well.

Walgreens and CVS are immediately halting administration of J&J’s vaccine, spokespeople for the companies said Tuesday. The pharmacies are two of nearly two dozen chains receiving vaccines directly from the federal government in a bid to increase the number of vaccination centers. Walgreens said in a [statement](#), “We are reaching out to patients with scheduled appointments and rescheduling vaccinations from other manufacturers, as supply allows.”

J&J’s vaccine represents only a sliver of the current U.S. supply, but pausing its use could present new hurdles for an immunization campaign that needs to overcome wider vaccine hesitancy to outpace fast-spreading variants.

The sidelining of J&J, however temporary, leaves the U.S. with two other shots that already made up the bulk of its vaccination campaign. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines account for 95% of the shots allocated in the U.S. this week.

The White House on Tuesday said there’s enough vaccine to continue giving shots at their current pace. “We have plenty of supply to continue our vaccination program and hit our goals,” Jeff Zients, the White House Covid-19 response coordinator, said at a briefing.

If the pause lasts only a few days as officials suggest, cancellations and rescheduled appointments could create a similar slowdown to those from winter storms earlier in the vaccination campaign. But doubt about the safety of any of the available Covid-19 vaccines could thwart the U.S. vaccination campaign just as it hits its stride.

“This is going to scare a lot of people, and rightfully so,” said Noel Brewer, professor of health behavior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “We should all be concerned about the safety of medicines we receive. In this case, there’s not a lot of reason for concern. The actual risk is vanishingly small.”

Anthony Fauci, one of Biden’s top medical advisers, said the decision was made by scientists out of an abundance of caution.

“You want to make sure that safety is the important issue. We are totally aware that this is a very rare event; we want to get this worked out as quickly as we possibly can,” Fauci said at the news briefing. “I don’t think it was pulling the trigger too quickly.”

Though the J&J’s shot has so far been only a small fraction of the vaccines administered in the U.S., it was expected to play a growing role going forward because of the convenience of a single dose. Out of 189.7 million doses administered in the U.S. so far, only 6.86 million are J&J shots.

Pfizer and Moderna supplies will be adequate to satisfy U.S. demand, said one official who spoke on condition of anonymity, as signs emerge that the U.S. is beginning to shift from a shortage of shots to a shortage of willing recipients.

The U.S. expects to have received enough doses from Pfizer and Moderna by the end of May to fully vaccinate 200 million people. It expects enough doses from those companies by the end of July to vaccinate another 100 million.

Still, any lengthy delay in the use of one shot could fuel vaccine hesitancy and would cast doubt on some of the Biden administration’s supply pledges. The team has said repeatedly that all shots are safe and urged Americans to take whichever one they can.

President Joe Biden relied on J&J when he announced that the U.S. will have enough shots for all adults by the end of May, a pledge officials have regularly cited in recent weeks, but which Zients didn’t repeat in a statement Tuesday.

The Biden administration has also pledged to boost equity in vaccinations, which have so far disproportionately gone to White people in a pandemic that has disproportionately sickened or killed people of color. The J&J shot was being widely used in pharmacies and community health centers, which target at-risk communities, though Pfizer and Moderna still make up the vast majority of shots used in those programs.

J&J's shot, which doesn't require the same cold-storage conditions as Moderna and Pfizer, could also shrink the number of sites administering the shot if use is halted for an extended period. That would put at risk Biden's pledge to make the vaccine available within 5 miles of 90% of Americans. Biden's team has stressed the need to make vaccines easily accessible.

The U.S. vaccination effort has been gaining speed in recent weeks at the same time that a worsening outbreak driven by coronavirus variants is gripping the upper Midwest. And it is likely to heighten worry about vaccines around the world after similar issues caused delays in distribution of AstraZeneca Plc's shot.

AstraZeneca hasn't sought U.S. authorization but is already producing doses to fill a U.S. order placed last year. Biden's team hasn't said what they'll do with that stockpile, though some have urged him to donate it to other nations.

The AstraZeneca and J&J shots are the same "platform," or type, of vaccine. Pfizer and Moderna's shots are based on a different platform.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

J&J vaccine suspended statewide — but city's top doc says don't be 'severely worried' if you've already had your dose

Chicago had planned to switch to the single-dose vaccine at the United Center beginning Monday. It's now being shelved across Illinois while federal officials investigate a handful of cases of severe side effects among about 7 million recipients.

Mitch Dudek and Mitchell Armentrout

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<https://chicago.suntimes.com/coronavirus/2021/4/13/22381454/johnson-johnson-vaccine-clot-reports-cook-county-illinois-suspend-use>

Use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine came to a grinding halt across Illinois Tuesday after federal health authorities recommended a "pause" in administering it while experts investigate reports of extremely rare but potentially dangerous blood clots.

The severe side effects were found in only six people among nearly 7 million nationwide who have gotten the single-shot J&J dose, and none of those outliers occurred in Illinois.

But the temporary suspension means many appointments will be canceled and fewer shots will go into Illinois arms for at least the next few days as the Food and Drug Administration reviews the vaccine data.

Johnson & Johnson doses have accounted for less than 4% of the 7.3 million shots that have been doled out so far statewide. A total of 290,615 people — including Gov. J.B. Pritzker — have received it in Illinois, more than 47,000 in Chicago.

The more-effective Pfizer and Moderna vaccines still make up the vast majority of vaccine supply in Chicago and the rest of the state, but the "timing is bad" for the Johnson & Johnson setback, according to the city's top doctor — especially with infection rates crawling back up to troubling highs across the state.

"This is a hit, no doubt about it," Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said during an online Q&A.

All local vaccine agencies from the Illinois Department of Public Health on down are following the federal directive to shelve J&J vials for now, including Walgreens. Arwady called that "the right decision," but said it still shouldn't shake anyone's confidence in the vaccine.

"You should not be severely worried at all if you got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Again, this is very, very rare and there's nothing that you need to do differently," she said. "Up to about three weeks afterwards, if you were to get a severe headache or abdominal pain or leg pain or shortness of breath — these all could be signs of a blood clot, and we want you to seek medical care."

In a joint statement Tuesday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FDA said they were investigating clots in six women that occurred six to 13 days after vaccination. The clots were observed in the sinuses of the brain along with reduced platelet counts — making the usual treatment for blood clots, the blood thinner heparin, potentially "dangerous."

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet Wednesday to discuss the cases and the FDA has also launched an investigation into the cause of the clots and low platelet counts.

Pritzker said he felt great after receiving the J&J shot March 24.

In a tweet Tuesday, the governor said the state would send 50,000 doses of Pfizer and Moderna to Chicago over the next week in light of the Johnson & Johnson stoppage.

"As cases climb across the country, I encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible," Pritzker tweeted.

Illinois Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike noted "the blood clot cases appear to be extremely rare," and she "strongly encouraged" residents to keep getting vaccinated.

When the J&J shot received emergency use authorization in February, it was hailed as a breakthrough toward ending the pandemic since it's easier to ship and store, and only requires one dose.

Tuesday's suspension put an immediate stop on several city-run vaccination efforts including a program bringing shots to homebound residents, an O'Hare Airport clinic for transit workers and [the city's "vaccine bus."](#)

Overall, at least 13,000 Chicago appointments have to be rescheduled this week.

"We're gonna work to figure out what we can do in terms of supply to make sure people can access vaccine," Arwady said.

The city's new mass vaccination site at Chicago State University will switch to Pfizer doses, so appointments there aren't affected.

The mass vaccination site at the United Center had been scheduled to begin administering J&J shots Monday but that plan is on hold, according to a Federal Emergency Management Agency spokesman. "We are working with our state partners to assess the impact and determine a path forward," he said.

The state Department of Public Health said it was "strongly advising providers to use Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines" to keep appointments.

Cook County is substituting the Moderna vaccine at its Tinley Park mass vaccination site, but there will be no change in appointments at the site, spokesman Tom McFeeley said.

The county's two other primary vaccination sites in Des Plaines and Forest Park will not be affected because they had not been scheduled to use J&J.

About 23% of Illinois residents have been fully vaccinated so far, with 100,729 doses administered Monday.

But with the average statewide positivity rate at 4.3%, the vaccine is spreading as rapidly as it has since late January. COVID-19 hospitalizations have nearly doubled in the last month, with 2,028 beds occupied Monday night.

The state reported 3,193 new cases and 17 more deaths, including those of five Cook County residents.

Illinois death toll is up to 21,540, among about 1.3 million residents confirmed infected over the last 13 months.



State, Local Health Departments Pausing Use Of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Amid CDC, FDA Review

April 13, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/13/cook-county-indiana-johnson-and-johnson-vaccine-pause-cdc-fda-review/>

tate and local health departments have begun pausing the use of the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine until the FDA and CDC complete their review of blood clot cases, officials announced Tuesday.

The The FDA and CDC are recommending a pause in the administration of Johnson & Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.

The agencies said in a statement Tuesday [the CDC will convene a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#) on Wednesday to review six cases of "a rare & severe type of blood clot" in people who received the vaccine. The FDA will then review that analysis as it also investigates the cases.

"Until that process is complete, we are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution," Dr. Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the CDC, and Dr. Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, said in the statement.

The Illinois Department of Public Health said it is pausing the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine "out of an abundance of caution."

"IDPH has notified all Illinois COVID-19 providers throughout the state to discontinue use of the J&J vaccine at this time. In order to keep appointments, IDPH is strongly advising providers to use Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines," IDPH said in a statement. "Per the federal health authorities, people who have received the J&J vaccine who develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider. Patients with other clinical questions should contact their health care provider."

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), Cook County Health, and Indiana State Department of Health all said they also would pause use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until the CDC and FDA complete their review. CDPH said they are not aware of any local cases of blood clots after vaccinations.

The Cook County Department of Public Health has asked all Johnson & Johnson partners to pause using the vaccine as well.

People with appointments for Johnson & Johnson vaccines this week in Cook County instead will receive either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine. Anyone who does not want a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment.

Anyone who already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and is experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot should contact their health care provider.

The Indiana State Department of Health said it will be sending the two-dose Moderna vaccine to its mass vaccination clinic at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, to allow shots to continue without interruption. The federally run mass site in Gary is administering the Pfizer vaccine.

“The department is also working with other clinics that were scheduled to use the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the immediate future,” the department said in a statement.

As of Monday, over 6.8 million doses of the single-dose vaccine had been administered across the country.

The handful of cases the FDA and CDC are investigating occurred in women and involved a blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, which was seen alongside low levels of blood platelets, according to their statement. Symptoms were seen 6 to 13 days after vaccination in the women, who were between the ages of 18 and 48.

“Treatment of this specific type of blood clot is different from the treatment that might typically be administered. Usually, an anticoagulant drug called heparin is used to treat blood clots. In this setting, administration of heparin may be dangerous, and alternative treatments need to be given,” they said.

The agencies said the “adverse events” seem to be extremely rare, but that the pause is important so that health care providers can be made aware of the reactions and properly recognize and manage the cases, given the unique treatment required.



Illinois pauses use of Johnson & Johnson vaccine amid federal review

April 13, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/cook-county-to-pause-johnson-johnson-vaccine-distribution-after-fda-recommendation>

Illinois public health officials are following the lead of federal authorities by suspending use of the Johnson & Johnson **vaccine** for **COVID-19** while a potentially deadly side-effect is investigated.

The state Public Health Department reported Monday it has notified providers throughout the state to temporarily stop use of the vaccine upon the recommendation of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

U.S. officials **reported six cases of a severe blood clot** in people who have received the J&J vaccine. One death has been reported.

The state has a relatively small number of Johnson & Johnson doses on hand and fewer expected in next week's delivery. Chicago, with its separate delivery system, postponed until at least next week 13,000 shots of the one-dose J&J vaccine scheduled for this week. At Chicago State University's vaccination site, shots of the two-dose Pfizer vaccine would be substituted for planned J&J doses, officials said.

Gov. **J.B. Pritzker**, who suffered no side effects after receiving the J&J vaccine March 24 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds mass vaccination site, said in a tweet Tuesday that the state would send 50,000 doses of vaccines manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna to Chicago to help supply during the next week. He promised another 50,000 in several weeks when it's time for recipients to get the second of those two-shot vaccines.

"As cases climb across the country, I encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible," Pritzker tweeted a day after he opened vaccine eligibility to everyone 16 and older.

Dr. Allison Arwady, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health, urged patience amid concern about the shot stoppage at a time when vaccine reluctance is waning and some are more confident about the vaccines' safety.

"We want to fully understand these rare (adverse) events and be able to make sure that all of the recommendations that we make about vaccine are based in the best science with safety and efficacy first and foremost," Arwady said.

More than 47,000 Chicago residents have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The pause comes at a critical time in the nation's campaign against coronavirus illness. Several states, particularly in the upper Midwest, have experienced yet another surge in the number of confirmed and probable cases of the potentially deadly, flu-like illness.

Michigan's situation has become so critical, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer urged residents to scale back social interaction and she supported experts' call for Washington to deliver extra vaccine. But the CDC director said the best way to handle the state's crisis is to "close things down" like during the pandemic's early days in spring 2020.

Illinois has also experienced another uptick. Tuesday's number of newly reported infections was **3,193, with 17 additional deaths**. Overall, COVID-19 has claimed 21,540 lives in Illinois among 1.29 million cases. But in the past week,

an average 133,000 doses of vaccine have been administered daily for a total of 7.34 million shots. That number doesn't represent fully vaccinated residents.

Among the fresh cases was an unidentified member of House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch's staff. The infection was discovered Tuesday during routine testing for work in the Capitol, according to Welch spokeswoman Jaclyn Driscoll. She said quarantines have been imposed for anyone who was in contact with the staffer, a group exclusive of Welch. The Hillside Democrat contracted COVID-19 last fall but has since fully recovered.

It's yet to be seen whether the halt in Johnson & Johnson shots will effect the state's ramped-up vaccination schedule. Pritzker spokeswoman Jordan Abudayyeh said vaccine providers would substitute other vaccines or reschedule shots.

The bulk of the vaccines distributed in Illinois are the two-dose variety manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna. There were 17,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson delivered to Illinois this week. Officials expect more than 480,000 doses of vaccine next week, of which 5,800 are scheduled to be from Johnson & Johnson.

The state health department said J&J vaccine recipients who suffer headache, abdominal or leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks of receiving the shot should contact a health care provider.

Chicago Tribune

In setback to COVID-19 vaccination efforts, Illinois joins nation in pausing distribution of Johnson & Johnson doses amid blood clot concerns

PAIGE FRY, MADELINE BUCKLEY, JOE MAHR, DAN PETRELLA, GREGORY PRATT and LISA SCHENCKER
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<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-cook-county-halts-johnson-and-johnson-vaccine-20210413-jb32pfve3ferdjxlbrb2xtjoe4-story.html>

Health departments across Illinois on Tuesday paused in administering the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine following [recommendations from federal officials](#) to do so after reports of six women who experienced blood clots about two weeks after vaccination.

Pharmacies and other providers, including Walgreens, which runs the state's largest pharmacy vaccination program, also said they were temporarily halting the one-shot vaccine and are working with people to reschedule appointments.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration are reviewing data of the rare and severe [type of blood clot](#) that the women have experienced after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, according to a statement from both federal agencies.

Federal officials said the decision was made out of an abundance of caution and assured the public that the risk of having a severe reaction to a vaccine is low, noting that the blood clots have surfaced in six cases in the U.S. out of nearly 7 million Johnson & Johnson doses given.

Still, the pause is a setback in the country's vaccine rollout, as health officials race against variants to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible. Doctors also worry that the blood clot incidents will increase the number of people who are wary of the vaccine, creating a potential obstacle to achieving herd immunity.

Dr. Khalilah Gates, an assistant professor of medicine in pulmonary and critical care at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, said she is concerned about vaccine hesitancy and urged people to continue to get the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

"The stakes are really, really high now," Gates said. "You can't lump all vaccines together."

Olivia Fonseca, 31, of Yorkville, was supposed to get the Johnson & Johnson shot at her local Jewel-Osco but was among those whose appointments were canceled Tuesday.

Fonseca had specifically sought out the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine because of a fear of needles.

She said she was a little concerned when she heard about the blood clotting issue, but she still would have gotten the shot if she could have, given that six people with blood clotting seemed to her like a small number out of all those in the U.S. who have received the vaccine. But she also appreciates that the government is just trying to make sure it's safe.

"I hope, one way or another, we find out soon ... if they're going to stop giving the vaccine or going to resume," Fonseca said.

She said she'll search for Pfizer and Moderna vaccines in the meantime.

The blood clot, called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets in these cases, the federal agencies said. All six cases were among women between the ages of 18 and 48, and they all started experiencing symptoms six to 13 days after vaccination. One woman died and another is in critical condition, federal health officials said. None of the cases were in Illinois, officials said.

The blood clots reported to the CDC seem different from other blood clots, in that they were accompanied by low levels of blood platelets, Gates said. Blood platelets are fragments of cells necessary for normal blood clotting. Someone with a low level of blood platelets would have a decreased ability to stop bleeding, she said.

Often, blood clots are treated with blood thinning medication, but that wouldn't be good for someone who also has low levels of blood platelets, Gates said. In that case, a person would need a different type of treatment, the CDC said.

The federal announcement spurred a swift reaction across the state.

The Chicago Department of Public Health on Tuesday morning announced the pause while saying in a statement that officials are "working closely with our partners at the federal and local level to determine how this impacts the city's vaccine operations."

Allison Arwady, Chicago's health commissioner, said the city received 40,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson last week but expected fewer than 5,000 this week. The city is rescheduling 13,000 Johnson & Johnson doses that were slated to be administered this week.

Among facilities affected by the pause are Chicago State University, O'Hare International Airport and the Chicago Federation of Labor, which have been using Johnson & Johnson. The United Center had planned to use the vaccine there starting next week.

An event with the Illinois Restaurant Association scheduled for Tuesday is also on hold, Arwady said.

The clinic at Chicago State University will switch to Pfizer. The city is waiting to hear about what's next for the United Center vaccination site, which is being run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The city's program for vaccinating people in their homes will be paused until at least Monday.

Asked how much of a setback the pause is, Arwady said she hopes people take it as a sign of the seriousness officials have for safety.

"I am concerned because I know people will have concern when they hear this," Arwady said. "Getting Chicago past COVID, getting the U.S. past COVID means getting us vaccinated."

There has been no issue with blood clots for Pfizer and Moderna, she said.

"I would ask people to have a little bit of patience here, to trust that the reason this pause is on is because we want to fully understand these rare events," Arwady said.

According to data released by the state Tuesday, of the 7.3 million doses of vaccine administered to date, 290,000, or about 4%, have been Johnson & Johnson. That's covered a little over 2% of the state's population.

This week, the state's allocation of J&J was 17,000 doses, the state said. For the week of April 18, the expected allocation for the state is 483,720 total doses. Of that total allocation, 5,800 doses were expected to be J&J.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine March 24, said on Twitter that the state would be sending some of its vaccine doses to Chicago to boost the city's vaccination efforts in light of the Johnson & Johnson pause. The city has been receiving its own supply of vaccines from the federal government.

"With J&J paused, the state is allocating 50,000 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna to the city of Chicago over the next seven days," Pritzker wrote. "As cases climb across the country, I encourage everyone to get vaccinated as soon as possible."

The state also will provide 50,000 shots for second doses, he said.

With its single-shot formula, unlike Pfizer's and Moderna's two-shot vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine has been a key part of the city's and state's strategy to increase doses, though Pritzker has recently downplayed its importance at the current stage of the vaccination effort as the manufacturer has run into supply problems.

Cook County and most collar counties, including DuPage and Lake, said they were following state and federal guidance and pausing Johnson & Johnson shots. Those who scheduled an appointment at a Cook County Health location for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will receive Moderna or Pfizer instead, according to a statement from the county health department.

The county was set to offer 8,000 upcoming Johnson & Johnson vaccine appointments Tuesday, among a batch of 35,000 new appointments for first doses at county-run clinics. Instead, the county will offer 27,000 appointments for either Pfizer or Moderna first-dose shots.

Meanwhile, county officials said an additional 3,000 people who had already signed up to get Johnson & Johnson shots this week at a county-run site will have the option of keeping their appointments and instead getting one of the other vaccines that are available, or canceling and trying to get Johnson & Johnson at a later date.

Some counties reported minimal impact. A Will County health department spokesman said the company's vaccine accounted for less than 1% of the county's supply. Others, such as McHenry and Kane counties, canceled vaccine clinics on Tuesday that would have relied on Johnson & Johnson supply.

For those who already received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, federal officials said people who got it a month or more ago are likely at low risk for a blood clot. They advised anyone who was experiencing severe headaches, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to seek medical help.

"While these events are very rare, we are recommending a pause in order to prepare the health care system to recognize and treat patients appropriately," said Anne Schuchat, principal deputy director of the CDC.

Carolyn Minor, 41 of Rogers Park, got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine Saturday. She, her husband and two friends drove about five hours each way to Quincy to get the shots.

Despite her recent vaccination, Minor wasn't too concerned about the news of blood clots Tuesday.

"It's infinitesimal, the percentage of people who've been affected by it," Minor said.

Still, she said, she checked in Tuesday with her two friends who were also vaccinated Saturday. She said they'll continue to check in with one another and will go to the emergency room if they experience any of the problematic symptoms described by the CDC.

"Just be aware, don't spend too much time dwelling on this," she said.

Overall, doctors are urging people to continue to wear masks, practice social distancing and receive the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines until authorities have more guidance on Johnson & Johnson.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines work through different mechanisms than the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and "have stood the test of time so far," Northwestern's Gates said.

"We are up to 560,000 deaths from COVID-19, and we need to keep that in perspective," she said. "Unfortunately, COVID-19 has not gone anywhere so we still have to figure out how to maneuver and protect from COVID while we sort out what is actually going on with this Johnson & Johnson vaccine."



With Johnson & Johnson Vaccinations On Hold, State Sending 50,000 Moderna And Pfizer Doses To Chicago

April 13, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/13/illinois-sending-50000-moderna-pfizer-vaccine-doses-to-chicago-johnson-and-johnson-pause/>

Gov. JB Pritzker said the state of Illinois will send 50,000 doses of Moderna and Pfizer coronavirus vaccines to the city of Chicago, after state and local officials paused administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on the advice of federal authorities.

The CDC and FDA have recommended a “pause” in giving out Johnson & Johnson vaccines while they look into reports of six people experiencing serious blood clots several days after getting vaccinated.

The Illinois Department of Public Health, Chicago Department of Public Health, and Cook County Health all have put Johnson & Johnson vaccinations on hold as a result.

The city of Chicago also has postponed several vaccination programs, and switched others to the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine while use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is paused.

Tuesday afternoon, Pritzker announced on Twitter that the state would be allocating 50,000 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to the city of Chicago over the next week in order to help make up for the pause in Johnson & Johnson vaccinations. The state also later will send another 50,000 doses of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to the city in time for people to get their second doses.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said she was “very pleased” to see the state helping the city keep up with vaccinations while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is on hold.

“I hope that it really marks continued ongoing partnership here in terms of making sure that parts of the state that are surging, and particularly parts of the state that are relatively under-vaccinated, can get vaccine. So I was pleased to see it,” Arwady said.

Arwady said, while she expects the pause in Johnson & Johnson vaccinations to have an impact on the city’s vaccination rate, she said the impact would be reduced because there already had been a slowdown in delivery of the single-shot vaccine due to manufacturing problems. She also noted the Johnson & Johnson vaccine makes up a much smaller portion of the overall vaccine supply than the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

“We’re doubly committed with the Moderna and the Pfizer, and we’ll keep going just as quickly as we can with those,” she said.

Arwady has said the timing of the pause in Johnson & Johnson vaccines is unfortunate, particularly given that the state of Illinois on Monday expanded eligibility for the vaccine to everyone age 16 and older, and the city of Chicago is scheduled to follow suit next Monday.

“This is a hit, no doubt about it,” Arwady said.

The pause in Johnson & Johnson vaccines also comes as the city continues has seen new COVID-19 cases climbing for the past month.

The city’s test positivity rate stands at 5.7%, up from 5.1% one week ago, and Chicago is averaging 691 new COVID-19 cases per day over the past week, up 15% from one week ago, according to Arwady. The city also has seen small increases in hospitalizations and ICU admissions over the past month, but nowhere near the peak of the pandemic.

“So we’re keeping a close eye on this. We need everybody to continue to practice caution, but have been pleased to see some flattening of that case increase,” Arwady said.

While new cases in Chicago might not be increasing as quickly as they were two or three weeks ago, Arwady said the city is still in the “high risk” category, and the virus is still widespread in Chicago.

“I want to say broadly that no matter who you are, or where you are in Chicago, COVID is on the rise. We’re vaccinating people as quickly as we can, but in the meantime we need people practicing caution,” she said.

Chicago Tribune

Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccinations paused in Illinois. Here's some key information.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE STAFF

APR 13, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-johnson-and-johnson-vaccine-illinois-cb-20210413-vyea742dw5h4ljr6fwcvatbnre-story.html>

The Illinois Department of Public Health, the Cook County Department of Public Health and the Chicago Department of Public Health have [suspended distribution of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine](#) following recommendations from the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention after reports of six people experiencing [blood clots](#) about two weeks after vaccination, officials said Tuesday.

Suburban counties also are pausing Johnson & Johnson vaccine distribution because of the federal recommendations.

Here's some key information:

270,790 Johnson & Johnson doses have been administered in Illinois to 2.1% of the state's population

Six people experienced rare blood clots after receiving the J&J vaccine. None of the cases are in Illinois.

Tuesday the state notified all providers to discontinue use of the vaccine, following CDC and FDA recommendations.

The blood clot, called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis, was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets in these six cases.

All six cases were among women ages 18 to 48. They started experiencing symptoms six to 13 days after vaccination.

The state health department says if you experience severe headaches, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the J&J vaccine, contact your health care provider.

"Out of an abundance of caution," Walgreens suspended use of the J&J vaccine. Jewel-Osco will also pause giving the vaccine.

"As supply allows," Walgreens will reschedule appointments for vaccinations from other manufacturers. Jewel will add appointments as they become available.

Have an appointment at a Cook County Health location? You will receive Moderna or Pfizer instead. If you don't want those, you should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule.

Daily Herald

Officials: No known cases of serious side effects from J&J in Illinois or suburbs

Marni Pyke
April 13, 2021

<https://www.dhbusinessledger.com/news/20210413/officials-no-known-cases-of-serious-side-effects-from-jampj-in-illinois-or-suburbs>

Suspending the use of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine while U.S. authorities examine six cases of blood clots in people who received the shots should not impinge on efforts to inoculate Illinoisans amid a spike in infections, state officials said.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control called for a pause in the use of J&J's vaccine Tuesday, noting that out of more than 6.8 million doses administered, six cases of a "rare and severe type of blood clot" had occurred in women ages 18 to 48 within six to 13 days after receiving shots.

Of the total 7.3 million doses of three different vaccines administered to Illinoisans, about 4% or 290,615 were from Johnson & Johnson, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported. Among the recipients was Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

Following the CDC's recommendation, Illinois, suburban counties and key pharmacies like Walgreens suspended use of the J&J one-dose shot. Mass COVID-19 vaccination clinics scheduled in Aurora and Elgin for Tuesday were canceled, affecting hundreds.

Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady said Tuesday she "was not aware of any local cases in Chicago or Illinois" of blood clot issues.

Suburban Cook, DuPage, Lake and Will health department officials confirmed there were no serious adverse effects from Johnson & Johnson shots in their jurisdictions.

"Only a small amount of J & J has been received and used for closed clinics," Will County's Steve Brandy said.

Cook County Health officials said the J&J shots account for about 27,000 doses, or 5%, of the total vaccines to date.

Because the majority of shots thus far in Illinois have come from drugmakers Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, the vaccination push should not be disrupted, IDPH leaders said. The mass clinics will not be closed, they noted.

"The blood clot cases appear to be extremely rare and there are no reported cases associated with either the Pfizer-BioNTech or the Moderna vaccines," IDPH Director Ngozi Ezike said. "I strongly urge people to continue to get vaccinated."

Brenda Lemus, 32, of Streamwood, who received a J&J shot Thursday, said "she did feel anxious just now to think that I might be developing any of the side effects. I will follow up with my doctor if I notice any symptoms.

"I decided to get the J&J because that's what was offered to me and, well, if it was just one shot rather than two, I thought it was the better choice at the time for me," Lemus said. "But ... I feel fine. I only had a sore arm for two days and that was it."

One concern arising from Tuesday's surprise is whether the Johnson & Johnson issue will increase vaccine hesitancy even as the state combats an upward trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations and cases. Of the six women with blood clotting, one died and another was in critical condition, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration reported.

"I do think that worldwide and also locally and within the U.S. that this will add a little bit of fuel to anti-vaxxers' sentiments, as well as people on the fence about things," said Dr. Michael Bauer, medical director at Northwestern Lake Forest Hospital. "The message we have to get out is, the system works. That's why we monitor these things."

State and suburban leaders have pushed to vaccinate Black and Hispanic communities because of high rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths combined with insufficient access to health care and some vaccine skepticism.

In the Aurora area, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been well-received and the J & J vaccine was introduced only recently, said Theodia Gillespie, president of the Quad County Urban League. "Most residents are excited to be vaccinated so they can get back to some form of normalcy."

Comorbidities in the Black community such as heart disease and respiratory issues are causing tragic outcomes from COVID-19 that should hopefully outweigh concerns, Gillespie said. "Having the protection of the vaccine will help us fight off this virus."

A number of cars pulled up to an Elgin COVID-19 mass vaccination site Tuesday morning at the Eastside Recreation Center only to turn away. The event was canceled by the Kane County Health Department, but organizers expect to reopen Wednesday using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

On April 8, Rich Sawyer of South Elgin received a Johnson & Johnson shot at the Eastside site.

"I feel fine," Sawyer said. "The only issue I had was a tiny sore throat that evening. Everything's been fine since."

When he got his vaccination, "I was really excited to get it and move on. I was trying to get an appointment forever. When one came up, I jumped on it."

Asked about the national pause of J&J, Sawyer said he was "not concerned. It's such a small number out of all the people that were vaccinated, you can't judge off of that."

The CDC is advising anyone who has taken the J&J vaccine and who experiences severe headaches, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath up to three weeks after vaccination should contact a doctor or health care provider.

The symptoms are similar to a stroke, Bauer explained.

"For people who got the vaccine more than a month ago, the risk to them is very low at this time," CDC Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat said. "For people who recently got the vaccine within the last couple of weeks, they should be aware to look for any symptoms."

Dr. Emily Landon, head of the University of Chicago's infectious disease prevention and control program, said "this is an event that's literally less than one in a million, something that happens less than getting struck by lightning."

Landon said that while the clots are unusual, who it is happening to is not.

"Premenopausal women are at a higher risk of blood clots because of hormones and particularly those on birth control," she said. "There's a relationship between estrogen and blood clots, so there's a biologically plausible reason for this connection."

The decision to pause the vaccine's use is necessary, but Landon expects the vaccine will back in use with guidance on who should receive it.

The IDPH announced the J&J allocation this week was 17,000 doses out of an expected 551,590 from the federal government.

"The J&J vaccine is still a very small part of the total vaccine allocation to the state," partly because of earlier J&J manufacturing problems, said Northwestern University logistics expert Hani Mahmassani.

"So the immediate impact is limited and can be absorbed by the large quantities of Pfizer and Moderna that the state has been slow to roll out. However, come May we may not be able to sustain the pace unless J&J is cleared again as safe."

Local vaccination status

Some suburban counties had to quickly pivot on vaccination appointments without J&J shots.

- In Cook County, "individuals with appointments for J&J this week will receive Moderna or Pfizer," a Cook County Health official said. "Those who do not wish to receive the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine should call (833) 308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment."
- In Kane County, "those who were scheduled for a vaccination appointment (April 13) in Aurora and Elgin will be rescheduled for the Pfizer first dose next Tuesday, April 20. Those who wish to schedule sooner can go to [KaneVax.org](https://www.kanevax.org) for other appointments," the health department said.
- In Lake County, the health department will be using its supplies of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines for scheduled inoculations and it's not anticipated any appointments will need to be canceled, officials said.
- In Will County, a spokesman said the J&J suspension "does not in any way affect our regular clinics, who are leaning on Pfizer and Moderna."

Chicago's health department also suspended the J&J vaccine.

- Daily Herald reporters Jake Griffin and Rick West contributed to this report.



Why you should worry about Michigan's COVID surge

Exponential spread of a highly contagious variant like Michigan has seen “is absolutely possible” in Illinois—and that's worrying public health officials here.

A.D. QUIG and STEPHANIE GOLDBERG

April 13, 2021

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-care/why-you-should-worry-about-michigans-covid-surge>

Skyrocketing COVID cases in Michigan are triggering alarm bells in Illinois.

New infections in Michigan surged to 6,500 per day from 1,100 between March 1 and April 10, making it the nation's hotspot. Illinois is heading in the same direction, with case counts and hospitalizations rising again after months of decline. Like Michigan, Illinois also has seen a trend of increasing infections among younger residents.

Exponential spread like Michigan has seen “is absolutely possible” in Illinois, said Dr. Emily Landon, executive medical director for infection prevention and control at the University of Chicago Medicine. It's more isolated here, but it's already happening in certain communities, Landon said, referring to case counts rising in North Side Chicago neighborhoods and in Illinois counties like Peoria.

The seven-day rolling average of daily cases in Illinois has nearly doubled since March 1, hitting 3,305 on April 11, according to a Crain's analysis of state data. At the same time, the test positivity rate has jumped from 2.4 to 4.2 percent and hospitalizations have increased. The uptick is more drastic in Chicago, where the average daily case count has increased 114 percent to 721 during the same period. Meanwhile, the test positivity rate has gone from 2.7 to 5.7 percent, according to the city's COVID dashboard.

Neither Chicago nor Illinois have reached the peaks they hit last fall. But as states continue administering vaccines and prepare to relax mitigations, they'll look to Michigan, where the virus variant first identified in the U.K. is contributing to a surge, infecting large numbers of young people and threatening hospital capacity. Halting inoculations of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine while experts review safety data is expected to slow vaccination campaigns nationwide, putting additional pressure on states like Illinois to control virus outbreaks.

“Michigan is a big concern for me,” Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Allison Arwady said last week, noting that the state's uptick in cases—and subsequent hospitalizations and deaths—is worrisome.

Arwady said the city is broadly seeing more cases on the North Side than on the West and South sides, noting that “the North Side has been less hit by COVID overall, meaning there are more people with no natural immunity and more possibility for additional spread in that area. We know that still not enough people are vaccinated to keep up with that.”

The roughly 600 new cases per day in Chicago are broadly concentrated in younger people—partly because older Chicagoans were prioritized under the city's vaccination campaign, Arwady said recently. And on Tuesday, she said that roughly half of Chicago's new cases include a newer strain of the virus; of those, the majority are B.1.1.7, the variant first identified in the U.K. Even as increases in case rates, emergency department visits and hospitalizations slow, “the city is still in high-risk territory,” Arwady said.

Statewide, officials have identified 917 COVID cases with a variant present. Of those, 724 are the U.K. variant.

Those variants—which spread more easily, including among children, and can have more severe outcomes—should be as worrisome for unvaccinated people as catching COVID was a year ago, Landon said. “The horse is not completely out of the barn yet,” she added. “There certainly are things we can do to turn things around, but worrying trends suggest we may be headed in (Michigan’s) direction.”

Given how easily variants can spread indoors, Landon is encouraging unvaccinated people to avoid indoor gatherings—including bars, restaurants and fitness classes. Gather outdoors instead, she said, and continue to wear a well-fitting mask. Younger people—those age 30 to 50—who might have been considered low-risk for severe symptoms last March are facing more risk now, including the potential for hospitalization. In Michigan, children participating in after-school activities are catching COVID and spreading to their parents, Landon said.

To prepare for a possible surge, Cook County Health is increasing staffing and available beds at its hospitals, as well as evaluating personal protective equipment and ventilators, CEO Israel Rocha said during a Tuesday press briefing. “All these steps are being taken out of an abundance of caution and are taken to make sure we can respond,” he said.

Hospitalizations have fluctuated during the pandemic, with Nov. 20 marking a grim milestone: 6,175 hospital beds were in use by COVID patients. Prior to the fall wave, hospitalizations peaked on April 28, 2020, with 5,037 hospital beds in use by COVID patients. The number of hospital beds in use by COVID patients across Illinois has increased nearly 87 percent to 2,019 since March 12. (As of April 12, just 27 percent of the 32,350 total hospital beds in the state are open.)

Michigan and Illinois have largely followed the same COVID-19 hospitalization trajectory, with spikes last April and November, and now again this month. But with roughly 2 million fewer residents than Illinois, Michigan’s hospitalization numbers have always been lower—until now.

In Michigan, the number of COVID patients occupying hospital beds has surpassed the fall surge, straining hospital capacity less than six months after the last virus surge, [Crain's Detroit Business reports](#). At Southfield-based Beaumont Health, there are 854 COVID-positive patients across eight hospitals, compared with a fall peak of 700 patients at one time, Dr. Nick Gilpin, medical director of infection prevention and epidemiology, told Crain's Detroit. The limiting factor isn't hospital beds. It's nurses, doctors and support staff suffering from burnout during third virus surge in just over one year.

At a press conference today, Gov. JB Pritzker said that he has spoken to Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and that the state is "seeing very, very challenging times." But he also suggested that Illinois is on a less dangerous trajectory.

"We are seeing upward movement of our cases and hospitalizations, obviously, but we have seen a beginning of maybe a lessening of the rise of cases," he said. "I don't want to predict anything, because this virus is unpredictable, but in the short term, that seems to be good news."

Illinois can learn from Michigan’s experience, and surge vaccines to areas that might be at risk of combining with Michigan’s COVID conflagration. But it takes most people six weeks to become fully vaccinated on a Pfizer or Moderna schedule, and Johnson & Johnson’s pause makes quick immunization more difficult.

The goal is to stop the spread among people who are not yet vaccinated by using other mitigation measures, and by working to vaccinate as many people as possible—as quickly as possible, Landon said.

It's as if the hare is the variants and the tortoise is the vaccine, she said. "The tortoise will win, but a lot of people will get taken down in the process."



New Large-Scale COVID Vaccination Site to Open in Southern Cook County This Week

April 13, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/new-large-scale-covid-vaccination-site-to-open-in-southern-cook-county-this-week/2485180/>

A new large-scale community COVID vaccination site is launching in southern Cook County Wednesday for all residents ages 16 and older.

The new site in Matteson, located at 4647 Promenade Way, and will be run through Cook County Health with assistance from the Illinois National Guard.

The Matteson vaccination site will open Wednesday at 1 p.m. to all Illinois residents ages 16 and older after Illinois moved to Phase 2 of vaccine eligibility on Monday.

In a press conference Tuesday, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said the site should be able to administer nearly 4,000 vaccines each day.

"We're committed to the equitable distribution of the vaccine and we know some areas of the community have been harder hit than others. And we're especially grateful to have this site in the southland where we know communities were heavily impacted," Preckwinkle said.

Although Chicago remains in Phase 1C of vaccinations, officials encouraged residents to visit suburban mass vaccination sites to receive a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.



Johnson & Johnson Pause Impacting Vaccination Sites Across Illinois

Mugo Odigwe

April 14, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/14/johnson-and-johnson-vaccines-illinois/>

An emergency meeting Wednesday will discuss whether it's safe to continue giving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, after it was linked to blood clots and paused by the CDC.

This comes after six cases of rare, but severe blood clots appeared. One woman has died, and another woman is in critical condition.

The White House does not believe pausing the Johnson & Johnson shots will slow down vaccines too much, since 95% of the country's supply has come from Pfizer and Moderna.

The pause on the vaccine is impacting vaccination sites all over Chicago.

The mass vaccination site at Chicago State University just opened last week and was exclusively giving out the Johnson & Johnson vaccines. Starting Wednesday, it will be switching to Pfizer vaccines.

All homebound vaccinations programs and vaccine bus programs, which rely on Johnson & Johnson are also on hiatus.

Employer based vaccinations at O'Hare and Midway have also been postponed.

This pause is not just affecting sites in Chicago.

Cook County said vaccinations at its Tinley Park mass vaccination site were halted.

In the meantime, Gov. JB Pritzker said the state will send 50,000 doses of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to Chicago over the next week to help make up for the pause.

Mass Vaccination Site to Open in Cook County.

April 14, 2021

<https://chicago defender.com/mass-vaccination-site-to-open-in-cook-county/>

To further expand the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, Governor JB Pritzker today announced an additional state mass vaccination site in Cook County and that will open to all eligible Illinois residents on Thursday, April 15. As of April 12, all Illinois residents age 16 and older are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine with nearly 19,000 residents receiving vaccinations at state mass vaccination sites in the first 24 hours of universal vaccine eligibility. With the state's seven-day test positivity rate and hospitalizations on the rise, local and state health officials are urging Illinois residents to seek out a vaccination location near them in order to protect themselves and their families from COVID-19.

"I'm proud to deploy Illinois National Guard teams and additional state resources to Cook County to ensure residents can receive their vaccines as efficiently and equitably as possible," said Governor JB Pritzker. "The brave men and women of the Guard have already administered over one million vaccine doses to Illinoisans across the state, and as the federal government prepares to increase Illinois' deliveries to over 100,000 a day in the coming weeks, 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."

Opening on April 15, the former Target location in Matteson is the 12th mass vaccination site located in Cook and the collar counties and is the state's 21st mass vaccination site open to all eligible Illinois residents. The new site will provide Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The State of Illinois is committed to improving healthcare access and equity in underserved communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

"In March, we saw COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations increase at an alarming rate," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "There is no doubt that we need to continue to vaccinate as many people as our vaccine supply will allow. I encourage all those who are able to get vaccinated to do so to get us on the other side of this pandemic, allowing us to return to normalcy."

"I am very excited to have this mass vaccination site in the Village of Matteson," said State Rep. Debbie Meyers-Martin (D-Matteson). "It is important for our community to have this resource to fight COVID-19."

Since the vaccine was first made available in Illinois last December, the state has administered nearly 7.5 million doses, with 30% of the population fully vaccinated. Furthermore, 76% of individuals age 65 and over have received at least their first dose of the vaccine.

These successes have been made possible thanks to the tireless efforts of our local health departments and the continuous efforts of the Illinois National Guard. To date, there are nearly 1,500 troops assigned to COVID-19 operations in 43 different locations throughout the state.

In addition to the state-supported mass vaccination sites, the men and women of the Illinois National Guard are running additional vaccination missions across the state, furthering the state's ability to assist specific regions and populations, with more assignments in the coming weeks:

1. Equity-focused mobile vaccination teams are partnering with local health departments to reach underserved communities in Cook, Lake, DeKalb, McHenry, St. Clair, Jackson, Sangamon, Madison, Winnebago, Rock Island, McLean, Grundy, Vermilion, and the Southern Seven Health Department Counties.

2. Illinois National Guard troops are working directly with local health departments to improve local vaccination rates and meet the public demand for safe and effective vaccines in DeKalb, Lake, McHenry, McLean, Rock Island, and Vermilion.

How to Make an Appointment

Information regarding vaccination locations as well as details on how to book an appointment to receive the vaccine can be found at the state's COVID website, coronavirus.illinois.gov. 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 6am to midnight with agents available in English and Spanish.

The state-supported vaccination sites listed below are open to all eligible Illinois residents, regardless of where they live, unless otherwise noted. All state-supported vaccination sites require appointments. Residents must meet the state's current [eligibility requirements](#) to book an appointment. As a reminder, currently only the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for those ages 16 and 17.



Global suicide rates did not increase at the beginning of the pandemic, study finds

“The collective feeling of ‘We’re all in this together’ might have been beneficial,” the authors wrote, adding that vigilance is necessary going forward.

April 14, 2021

Elizabeth Chuck

Global suicide rates did not increase during the first few months of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*, despite evidence that depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts were all [heightened](#).

The [study](#) of 21 countries, including the United States, examined suicide trends from April 1-July 31, 2020. In most places, including many areas of the U.S., suicide rates were flat or even declined.

While these findings are hopeful, lead study author Jane Pirkis, director of the Centre for Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, Australia, and her co-authors warned, the “picture is neither complete nor final, but serves as the best available evidence on the pandemic’s effects on suicide so far.”

Their findings are consistent with [preliminary data](#) published last month that indicates that from 2019 to 2020, U.S. suicides declined by 5.6 percent, even as suicidal ideation [increased](#).

Such numbers are encouraging, experts said. But they cautioned that they do not necessarily reflect mental health and how the pandemic has affected it.

“We shouldn’t take the numbers and say, ‘Oh, fewer people killed themselves in the early part of the pandemic. Things must have been good,” said Jonathan Singer, president of the American Association of Suicidology and an associate professor of social work at Loyola University Chicago. “Depressive symptoms, eating disorders, all those things have gone up. But it doesn’t mean that because you are suffering, you are going to kill yourself.”

The numbers do not show how particular groups of people fared. While the aggregate number of suicides was largely unchanged or down, Singer, who was not involved in the study, said, the *Lancet* study did not break down the numbers by age or race. It also excluded low-income and lower-middle-income countries.

Still, the fact that overall suicide rates were lower than what would be expected based on prior years showed the pandemic appeared to offer some protective factors against suicides, at least at the start.

“The collective feeling of ‘We’re all in this together’ might have been beneficial,” the study authors wrote, adding that for some people, getting to spend more time with their household might have strengthened their relationships, and certain everyday stressors may have been reduced during stay-at-home periods. Many countries also implemented financial safety nets, such as eviction moratoriums, that may have helped, as well.

The authors pointed out that suicide rates can rise during economic recessions and said “it is possible that the pandemic’s potential suicide-related effects are yet to occur.”

Jill Harkavy-Friedman, vice president of research at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, said she hoped the U.S. suicide rate — which had been on the rise until 2019, when it [declined](#) for the first time in more than a decade — could continue to decrease, even as the full mental health effects of the pandemic are felt.

“My main takeaway from the study is there are things we can do to prevent suicide on a population level, as well as an individual level,” she said. “We have to remain vigilant with providing access to mental health care.”

The Lancet study found that in 12 countries or areas, including California, parts of Texas and in Cook County, Illinois, there was a decrease in suicide rates, compared to what would be expected based on numbers from prior years.

New Jersey and Puerto Rico, meanwhile, showed statistical evidence of an increase in suicides. The study did not offer any explanation for the increase.

Harkavy-Friedman pointed out that because this data was only for the first few months of the pandemic, it does not offer a full trajectory of suicide rates. But she called the study “promising and informative.”

“My hope is that we keep paying attention to mental health and other factors that contribute to suicide,” she said.



Rising Number of COVID-19 Cases Illustrates Ongoing Need for Contact Tracers

Kristen Thometz

April 14, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/14/rising-number-covid-19-cases-illustrates-ongoing-need-contact-tracers>

More than 1.5 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in suburban Cook County, according to the latest [Illinois Department of Public Health data](#). That's nearly 25% of the area population.

While the pace of vaccinations is ramping up, so too are the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations.

The seven-day test positivity rate for suburban Cook County is 5.6%, up from 5.2% a week ago, according to [IDPH regional data](#). A test positivity of 5% or greater means COVID-19 is spreading unchecked, according to officials.

The trend doesn't stop with infections: The area has seen virus-related hospitalizations increase for 10 consecutive days; and for two straight days, the availability of intensive care unit beds has dipped below 20%, according to IDPH data.

All of those metrics are key to reopening Illinois, according to the [governor's phased approach](#).

Rising infection rates—even as vaccine eligibility expands—demonstrates the need for contact tracers, according to Dr. Rachel Rubin, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

"We're always going to need contact tracers. Once people are vaccinated, there are still going to be hospitalizations in areas where (people) have chosen not to be vaccinated or breakthrough cases where people get COVID even though they're vaccinated," Rubin said.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the Cook County Department of Public Health had about 15 contact tracers to investigate routine outbreaks of illnesses such as the mumps or measles.

Last June, the county received a [\\$41 million grant to scale up its contact tracing program](#) and hire up to 400 contact tracers and case investigators who interview people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 and collect information about their close contacts to pass on to contact tracers.

To date, the county has hired more than 300 full-time case investigators and contact tracers, according to officials. But that expanded workforce is struggling to meet the surge in new cases.

"We're now dealing with 500 new cases a day, or even 600, and that makes it extremely difficult to catch all of them," Rubin said.

The surge in cases has kept case investigators like Allison Howe busy. "The last two to three weeks we've been seeing a significant spike," Howe said.

Each day Howe handles 10-12 cases—more than double the number of cases she handled when the infection rate was relatively low two months ago.

“I love what I do but it is very emotionally taxing,” Howe said.

Workers are doing their best to reach at least 90% of people with newly diagnosed cases of COVID-19 within 24 hours of their test results, according to Sheila Giovanni, who supervises a team of 10 case investigators and more than 40 contact tracers—some of whom work overtime and on Saturdays to reach as many people as possible.

The county is now taking a more targeted approach to contact tracing, focusing its efforts on cases in schools and those involving new variants of the coronavirus, according to Rubin.

To date, the state has reported more than 1,000 cases of more transmissible variants, including nearly 800 cases since Jan. 15 of a COVID-19 variant discovered in the United Kingdom, [according to IDPH data](#).

Howe has not personally worked on cases related to COVID-19 variants but said she’s handled cases in which partially vaccinated individuals—and even a few who were fully vaccinated—contracted COVID-19.

“It’s a little scary seeing more (cases) pop up and see folks who receive the vaccine still get sick, but their cases are more mild,” Howe said.

The Cook County Department of Public Health is reviewing the numbers collected by contact tracers to get a better understanding of these so-called breakthrough cases, according to a spokesperson.

Giovanni says infections among people who have received their full or partial vaccine dose emphasize the importance that everyone continue to follow public health guidance by wearing masks, social distancing, washing their hands and isolating if they test positive for COVID-19.

Even with a small number of breakthrough cases, the vaccine is essential “because it helps protect yourself, family and community against the spread and transmission of COVID,” Howe said.

Informing people about the vaccines has become part of everyone’s workflow, Giovanni said.

“People are really interested in them,” she said. “Even though there have been wonderful efforts around the vaccines, we still have a population more so in Black and brown communities that are hesitant and have not received the vaccine. We need to make sure they are educated about them.”

As case investigators and contact tracers race to reach people, Giovanni hopes those on the receiving end of the calls show some empathy.

“It’s very important for people to understand that we’re human as well, and we’re in their shoes going through a pandemic as they are,” she said. “I have team members who have been personally impacted by COVID-19 as well. Some have lost relatives.”

Funding for the contact tracing program runs through the end of the year, according to Rubin, who says officials plan to budget for an expanded contact tracing program as well as to seek additional grant funding.

“We need to contact trace around this disease ... even as we get it under more control,” Rubin said. “It’s something we’ll be need to be doing long into the future.”

While the county may not need a contact tracing workforce that’s 300-plus strong once the pandemic ends, “We’re always going to need contact tracers,” Rubin said. “Contact tracing is something that’s bread and butter for public health.”

Chicago Tribune

Coronavirus in Illinois updates: Here's what happened April 15 with COVID-19 in the Chicago area

CHICAGO TRIBUNE STAFF

APR 15, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-aud-covid-19-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20210415-hrw6l6prmfalrb3phifonsmpve-story.html>

An additional 129,755 coronavirus vaccine doses were administered in Illinois on Wednesday, [bringing the statewide total to 7,612,405](#), public health officials reported Thursday.

The number of residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required shots, or Johnson & Johnson's single shot — reached 3,093,820, or [24.28% of the total population](#).

Meanwhile, following the [statewide pause](#) in administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Wednesday he shares “the desire to act with an abundance of caution.”

“I’m 20 days from having the Johnson & Johnson vaccine injected into me, and I feel great,” he said at an unrelated event. “I think this goes to show you that the current CDC and FDA are really doing a very good job of surveilling the country to see if there are any challenges that have come from these vaccines.”

Later Wednesday, government health advisers declared that the J&J vaccine [will remain in limbo](#), saying they need more evidence to decide if a handful of unusual blood clots were linked to the shot.

Meanwhile, coronavirus cases and hospitalizations are spiking in Michigan more than anywhere else in the country. Officials are reporting more than 7,000 new infections each day, a sevenfold increase from late February. [Here's what we know](#) about the outbreak so far.

How to try to [get a COVID-19 vaccine in Chicago](#)

Illinois COVID-19 vaccine tracker: [Here's where the state stands](#)

COVID-19 in Illinois by the numbers: [Here's a daily update on key metrics in your area](#)

Illinois coronavirus graphs: [The latest data on deaths, confirmed cases, tests and more](#)

COVID-19 cases in Illinois by ZIP code: [Search for your neighborhood](#)

Join our [Facebook group](#) to get the latest COVID-19 information from Tribune reporters and editors

Here's what's happening Thursday with COVID-19 in the Chicago area:

1:57 p.m.: An additional 129,755 COVID-19 shots given in Illinois, while ICU bed availability in suburban Cook County stays below 20% for third straight day

An additional 129,755 coronavirus vaccine doses were administered in Illinois on Wednesday, bringing the statewide total to 7,612,405, public health officials reported Thursday.

The number of residents who have been fully vaccinated — receiving both of the required shots, or Johnson & Johnson's single shot — reached 3,093,820, or 24.28% of the total population.

As of Thursday, 47.15% of residents 16 and older have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Over the last seven days, a daily average of 129,317 vaccinations have been administered.

[Read more here.](#) —*Jenny Whidden*

1:13 p.m.: CPS reaches tentative deal with teachers union to reopen high schools Monday

Chicago Public Schools has announced that it has reached a tentative deal with the Chicago Teachers Union to reopen high schools on Monday for the first time in more than a year.

The pending agreement was announced following a work action by the union where high school staff members refused to report for in-person work Wednesday and Thursday, despite the union reporting significant progress toward a deal.

[Read more here.](#) —*Katherine Rosenberg-Douglas*

12:16 p.m.: 3,581 new confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases and 40 additional deaths reported

Illinois health officials on Thursday announced 3,581 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 and 40 additional fatalities, bringing the total number of known infections in Illinois to 1,292,515 and the statewide death toll to 21,609 since the start of the pandemic.

Officials also reported 105,661 new tests in the last 24 hours. The statewide positivity rate for cases is 4.2%.

The 7-day daily average of administered vaccine doses is 129,317, with 129,755 doses given on Wednesday. Officials also say a total of 7,612,405 vaccines have now been administered.

—*Chicago Tribune staff*

6 a.m.: CTA, Metra, Uber and Lyft say riders are coming back. But who needs a ride if you're working from home?

Chicago's transportation providers say they're seeing more customers as COVID-19 vaccinations ramp up and people venture out, but a return to old habits seems unlikely.

About 76% of CTA riders and 80% of Metra and Pace users who stopped riding during the pandemic said they would return to public transportation, according to a survey released Thursday by the Regional Transportation Authority.

But the transportation agencies expect riding habits to be different. The survey found many riders said they expect to spend more days telecommuting than they did before the pandemic.

The survey, conducted in November and January, comes as ride-share companies say they are seeing more customers nationally. Uber reported the highest monthly companywide ride bookings in its history in March, and Lyft said in early March it had its biggest week for rider volume since the pandemic began.

In Chicago, the largest increases in Uber rides have been during commuting hours and on weekends, spokesman Bobby Kellman said. Rides across all services in February, though, remained far below their pre-pandemic levels, city data shows.

[Read more here.](#) —*Sarah Freishtat*

6 a.m.: Former Target store in Matteson opens as COVID-19 vaccination site

Rachelle Boone was the first person through the doors Wednesday when a new mass vaccination site opened in Matteson, but admits she's among the last in her family to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Markham resident said her mom, two sisters and aunts and uncles all have at least one dose, but she had held off, mainly out of fear of the vaccine.

"I was afraid about getting the vaccine," she said after getting her first shot at the new site, Cook County Health's sixth large-scale vaccination location. "I hadn't gotten sick and I thought I would be OK."

The Matteson center, operated by the Illinois National Guard, is in a vacant Target store off Cicero Avenue and south of U.S. 30. The 126,000-square-foot store closed in early 2018. When fully operational it will be able to administer almost 4,000 doses daily, according to the county.

It is using the Pfizer vaccine and the opening comes as the county this week shifted into phase two of vaccine eligibility, opening the door to all Illinois residents 16 and older. It also opened just as Cook County Health stopped giving the one-dose vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson, following guidance from federal officials after reports of six women who experienced blood clots about two weeks after vaccination.

Cook County said it had booked 3,000 appointments this week for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and those people would instead get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

[Read more here.](#) —Mike Nolan, *Daily Southtown*



Sixth Mass Vaccination Site Opens In Matteson

Cook County Health opened its sixth large community vaccination site in Matteson on Wednesday.

Yasmeen Sheikah

Apr 14, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/oakforest/sixth-mass-vaccination-site-opens-matteson>

The Cook County Department of Public Health opened another mass vaccination site in Matteson on Tuesday. The site is located at 4647 Promenade Way, and opened on Wednesday at 1 p.m.

All Illinois residents age 16 and older are eligible for the vaccine at this location, after Illinois moved to Phase 2 on Monday.

Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller (D-6th) joined County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, Major David Sanford of the Illinois National Guard, Mayor Sheila Chalmers-Currin, and other elected officials to announce the Matteson community vaccination site opening on Tuesday.

"The Matteson community vaccination site is active evidence of the County's commitment to the equitable distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine and a testament to the leadership at all levels of government and our dedication here in Cook County and Illinois to this principle," Miller said. "Matteson is an ideal location for a community vaccination site, and is critically important in the Southland, which has some of the longest commute times in the county, for accessing healthcare."

When fully operationalized and depending on vaccine supply, the Matteson vaccination is hoping to administer nearly 4,000 vaccines each day, according to Miller.

"We must ensure as many people get vaccinated as soon as possible so we can reach herd immunity, but also to help prevent the virus from mutating so quickly. I encourage everyone to get vaccinated when it's their turn," Miller said.

Shots at the Matteson site and other Cook County Health sites are provided by appointment only, and can be scheduled at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Those who don't have internet access or who need assistance scheduling can call (833) 308-1988 (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m to 10 p.m.).



New Cook County COVID Vaccination Site Opens in Suburban Matteson

The new COVID vaccine site is located at 4647 Promenade Way in Matteson

April 14, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/new-cook-county-covid-vaccination-site-opens-in-suburban-matteson/2486490/>

A new large-scale community COVID vaccination site, located at 4647 Promenade Way in southern Cook County, launched Wednesday for all residents ages 16 and older.

The Matteson site will be run through Cook County Health with assistance from the Illinois National Guard.

The new vaccination site opened Wednesday at 1 p.m. to all Illinois residents ages 16 and older after Illinois moved to Phase 2 of vaccine eligibility on Monday.

In a press conference Tuesday, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said the site should be able to administer nearly 4,000 vaccines each day.

"We're committed to the equitable distribution of the vaccine and we know some areas of the community have been harder hit than others. And we're especially grateful to have this site in the southland where we know communities were heavily impacted," Preckwinkle said.

Although Chicago remains in Phase 1C of vaccinations, officials encouraged residents to visit suburban mass vaccination sites to receive a dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

DAILY Southtown

Former Target store in Matteson opens as COVID-19 vaccination site

MIKE NOLAN

APR 15, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/ct-sta-matteson-vaccination-site-st-0416-20210415-f4jtg6lvbqgzmsiix25pisade-story.html>

Rachelle Boone was the first person through the doors Wednesday when a new mass vaccination site opened in Matteson, but admits she's among the last in her family to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Markham resident said her mom, two sisters and aunts and uncles all have at least one dose, but she had held off, mainly out of fear of the vaccine.

"I was afraid about getting the vaccine," she said after getting her first shot at the new site, Cook County Health's sixth large-scale vaccination location. "I hadn't gotten sick and I thought I would be OK."

"My mom was like 'Why wouldn't you get it?'" Boone said.

As she sat in a chair in an observation area after getting her shot, Boone said the experience "was better than I expected."

The Matteson center, operated by the Illinois National Guard, is in a vacant Target store off Cicero Avenue and south of U.S. 30. The 126,000-square-foot store closed in early 2018.

When fully operational it will be able to administer almost 4,000 doses daily, according to the county.

It is using the Pfizer vaccine and the opening comes as the county this week shifted into phase two of vaccine eligibility, opening the door to all Illinois residents 16 and older. It also opened just as Cook County Health stopped giving the one-dose vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson, following guidance from federal officials after reports of six women who experienced blood clots about two weeks after vaccination.

Cook County said it had booked 3,000 appointments this week for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and those people would instead get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

County health officials, during a news conference Tuesday at the new Matteson vaccination site, stressed that the occurrence of the clotting has been very rare, noting that nearly 7 million Johnson & Johnson doses have been given in the U.S.

While Boone was the first person in the door when the Matteson facility opened at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Valerie George, of Cicero, received the inaugural shot due to a delay in getting Boone processed.

Even though they knew they were getting the Pfizer vaccine, the 51-year-old George and 50-year-old Boone said that they were aware of the pause in administering the Johnson & Johnson shot.

Boone said the news "kind of played a part of being afraid" of getting the vaccine, while George was eager to get her first dose.

"I couldn't wait to get here," she said.

George said reactions can happen with any type of medication, and that the Johnson & Johnson issue “didn’t discourage me from doing this.”

Cook County also has mass vaccination sites at the Tinley Park Convention Center and at South Suburban College in South Holland.

Vaccinations are by appointment only and can be scheduled at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988.

The county said it is offering appointment slots based on supplies of vaccine on hand and has been adding appointment times as new shipments arrive.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: New Cook County Vaccine Site, Regions Near Metrics for Mitigations

April 15, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-new-cook-county-mass-vaccination-site-regions-near-metrics-for-new-mitigations/2486866/>

Cook County launched a new large-scale community COVID vaccination site in suburban Matteson on Wednesday for all Illinois residents ages 16 and older.

Meanwhile, as coronavirus cases continue to rise, several of the state's health care regions are nearing metrics thresholds that could potentially cause them to tighten COVID restrictions in coming days.

And more than 1,000 cases of four COVID variants currently circulating in the U.S. have been identified in Illinois, health officials say, though that number is likely underreporting the true presence of variants in the state.

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

Several Illinois Regions Could be Nearing Additional COVID Mitigations

As coronavirus cases continue to rise in the state of Illinois, several of the state's health care regions are nearing metrics thresholds that could cause them to tighten COVID restrictions in coming days.

According to the latest figures from the Illinois Department of Public Health, at least four regions, including Regions 2, 7, 8 and 9, could potentially qualify for increased mitigations due to increases in positivity rates and hospitalizations.

In Region 2, located in western Illinois, the positivity rate is now up to 7.3%, increasing on seven of the preceding 10 days. The region's ICU bed availability has been below 20% for six consecutive days, and hospitalizations have increased each of the last 10 days.

In Region 7, comprised of Will and Kankakee counties, the positivity rate is at 6.1%, but has increased eight of the last 10 days. Hospitalizations have also increased eight of the last 10 days.

In Region 8, comprised of Kane and DuPage counties, the positivity rate is now at 7.4%, increasing seven of the last 10 days, with hospitalizations increasing each of the last 10 days.

In Region 9, comprised of McHenry and Lake counties, the positivity rate stands at 4.7%, but has increased eight of the last 10 days. Hospitalizations have also increased eight of the last 10 days.

Read more [here](#).

New Cook County COVID Vaccination Site Opens in Suburban Matteson

A new large-scale community COVID vaccination site, located at 4647 Promenade Way in southern Cook County, launched Wednesday for all residents ages 16 and older.

The Matteson site will be run through Cook County Health with assistance from the Illinois National Guard.

The new vaccination site opened Wednesday at 1 p.m. to all Illinois residents ages 16 and older after Illinois moved to Phase 2 of vaccine eligibility on Monday.

Read more [here](#).



Elk Grove Village summer events, concerts will take place without COVID restrictions, mayor says

Alexis McAdams
April 15, 2021

<https://abc7chicago.com/community-events/elk-grove-village-summer-events-will-take-place-with-no-covid-restrictions-mayor-says/10517858/>

The mayor of Elk Grove Village doubled down on his plans to host large summer events.

The village said people will not have to wear masks or socially distance.

Elk Grove Village geared up for a series of large summer events and prepared to host big crowds during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"For those people ready to move, safely, we are going to do it," said Mayor Craig Johnson, Elk Grove Village.

Last year, the village canceled Rotary Fest and the summer concert series due to COVID-19 restrictions. This year, however, Mayor Craig Johnson is ready for the return of those events.

"We feel that with the guidelines and the vaccination rate right now in our community that we feel we can step away from the masks and bring the community back to normal," Mayor Johnson said.

Masks will not be required at the events. Also, there will not be capacity limits or social distancing requirements in place, according to the mayor. The relaxing of the COVID-19 protocols start in June.

The events pull in thousands of people each year.

"We are still a few months away. We are firm but flexible," Mayor Johnson said.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even people who have been fully vaccinated should avoid medium or large gatherings.

Officials said they are closely monitoring the COVID-19 positivity rate, the number of residents vaccinated and the hospitalization numbers.

"If they do not feel comfortable, they do not have to come. This is not mandatory, but again, we have to move on to normalcy and by July, we feel comfortable," Mayor Johnson said.

As COVID-19 cases climb and new variants appear, the mayor said the plans could change.

"The Cook County Department of Public will investigate this and provide the appropriate guidance based on current required mitigation. Because this concert series is planned for June, it is too soon to be definitive about guidance other than masks will certainly be required," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, Senior Public Health Medical Officer and Co-Lead, Cook County Department of Public Health.



Cook County Health releases 10,000 vaccine appointments Friday

Apr 15, 2021

<https://wqntv.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-health-releasing-10000-vaccine-appointments-friday/>

Cook County Health will release 10,000 first-dose appointments on noon Friday.

Vaccine appointments are for Moderna and Pfizer. [Distribution of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine](#) was paused by the FDA following reports of dangerous blood clots.

Following the expansion of eligibility on April 12, appointments will be available for individuals 16 years or older.

Locals age 16 and 17 are reminded they must make vaccine appointments at Pfizer sites and be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.



Cook County Health to Release 10,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Friday

More vaccine appointments are set to be released on Friday across Cook county

April 15, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-health-to-release-10000-covid-19-vaccine-appointments-friday/2487713/>

The Cook County Health department announced it will release approximately 10,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccination appointments on Friday.

According to a press release, the appointments will be made available to the public at 12 p.m. on Friday.

County vaccinations will be by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccine will be offered during these appointments and officials strongly encouraged those aged 16 and 17 to sign up for Pfizer sites only.

“Following the expansion of eligibility on April 12, appointments will be available for individuals 16 years or older. The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for 16 and 17 year olds. As such, it is important for these individuals to schedule at a Pfizer site,” the release reads.

Individuals age 16 and 17 must be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.

On Thursday, [Illinois health officials reported 3,581 new confirmed and probable coronavirus cases](#) and 40 additional deaths in the last day, along with more than 129,000 vaccinations administered.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, Thursday's new cases brought the state to 1,292,515 since the pandemic began last year. The number of new cases has continued to rise over recent weeks in Illinois, with some officials fearing that a new surge could be taking place.

Thursday's 40 additional deaths brought the state to 21,609 confirmed COVID fatalities during the pandemic.

Daily Herald

High demand for COVID-19 shots continues despite Johnson & Johnson setback

Marni Pyke
April 16, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210415/high-demand-for-covid-19-shots-continues-despite-johnson--johnson-setback>

Despite the federal government's pause on the use of Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine as authorities study side effects, thousands of residents are eager to sign up for shots, suburban health departments said Thursday.

"Demand still exceeds supply of vaccine," Kane County Health Department public information officer Susan Stack said.

In Will County, "appointments are still filling at all of our sites," health department spokesman Steve Brandy said.

Federal experts are scrutinizing six rare cases of blood clots that occurred in women who received J&J's one-dose COVID-19 vaccine, which caused Illinois on Tuesday to suspend its distribution. The state is continuing to use two-dose vaccines from manufacturers Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

"We continue to book all our appointment slots and remain hopeful that the increasing vaccine supply we have seen in recent weeks continues," Cook County Health spokeswoman Elizabeth Pedersen said.

Despite fears about increased hesitancy stemming from the J&J developments, demand for vaccination remains high locally.

"Tuesday and Wednesday were our highest vaccine dates yet," Pedersen said, noting all sites are at capacity with more than 13,000 shots administered Tuesday and more than 14,000 Wednesday.

Lake County Health Department Executive Director Mark Pfister also reported high demand. "Slots are not filling as quickly -- as we believe individuals are shopping for their most convenient option -- but slots are still filling," he said.

Averages for new COVID-19 infections went down for the second day in a row at the same time averages for daily inoculations dipped, Illinois Department of Public Health data showed.

On Wednesday, 129,755 more COVID-19 shots were administered. The seven-day average for vaccinations is 129,317, a decrease compared to tallies announced Monday through Wednesday, when inoculation averages were in the 132,000-plus range.

"The seven-day average includes the weekend when we typically see lower numbers, and daily numbers do fluctuate," IDPH spokeswoman Melaney Arnold said.

The latest health metrics come in a week when the state expanded vaccine eligibility to all Illinoisans age 16 and older, which was expected to cause a surge in demand.

New cases of COVID-19 totaled 3,581 Thursday with 40 more deaths from the respiratory disease. The death toll announced Thursday was the highest since March 11, when 55 fatalities were reported. However, deaths are averaging 21 a day in April compared to nearly 26 in March.

Eleven of the deaths reported Thursday were in Cook County, two in DuPage, one in Lake, one in McHenry and four in Will counties. The 21 others were spread among 19 downstate counties.

Fourteen who died were in their 80s, nine in their 90s, seven in their 70s, seven in their 60s, two in their 50s and one in her 40s.

The seven-day average of new cases was 3,331.

Illinois hospitals were treating 2,043 COVID-19 patients Wednesday night, higher than the seven-day average of 1,945.

The federal government has delivered 9,636,355 doses of vaccine to Illinois since distribution began in mid-December, and 7,612,405 shots had been administered as of midnight Wednesday.

So far, 3,093,820 people -- nearly 25% of Illinois' 12.7 million residents -- have been fully vaccinated. Vaccines manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna require two doses several weeks apart.

The state's seven-day average case positivity rate sits at 4.2%.

Total cases statewide stand at 1,292,515, and 21,609 Illinoisans have died since the pandemic began.

Labs processed 105,661 virus tests in the last 24 hours.



10,000 COVID-19 vaccines will be available Friday

April 15, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/10000-covid-19-vaccines-will-be-available-friday>

Cook County Health will release 10,000 first-dose **COVID-19 vaccines** Friday.

The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines will be available through appointment at noon Friday, according to Cook County Health.

Appointments will be available for anyone 16 years old and older, the agency said.

Sixteen and 17-year-olds must register at a Pfizer location and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, health officials said. The Pfizer vaccine is the only dose approved for anyone under 18.

Appointments can be scheduled at 833-308-1988 or vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

Daily Herald

10,000 more Cook County vaccine appointments open up

Marni Pyke

April 16, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210415/10000-more-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-open-up>

About 10,000 first-dose appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations at Cook County locations opened up at noon today.

Shots will be for Moderna or Pfizer vaccines and available to all Illinoisans age 16 and older, Cook County Health officials said.

To make an appointment, go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. If you are having problems online, call (888) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday.

Cook County health officials noted that the only vaccine approved for people ages 16 and 17 is the one manufactured by Pfizer. Teens ages 16 and 17 must be accompanied to appointments by a parent or guardian.



COOK COUNTY HEALTH, ADVOCATE AURORA MAKE THE 500K CLUB

*Jon Asplund
April 16, 2021*

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/health-pulse/uchicago-train-army-docs-trauma-care-ij-pause-wont-disrupt-chicago-appointments>

Both Cook County Health and Advocate Aurora Health both announced that they had administered their 500,000th vaccine dose on Thursday.

Cook County Health also recorded its two biggest days in administering the vaccines, with 13,592 doses given on Tuesday and 14,910 on Wednesday.

“To be able to hit this milestone in a four-month period is a true testament to the hard work and dedication from county and state staff, as well as the Illinois National Guard,” Israel Rocha Jr., CEO for Cook County Health said in a statement.

Oak Street Health, the primary care network that focuses on adults on Medicare, said it’s administered 150,000 doses, the company said in a statement. Meanwhile, Rush University System for Health plans to celebrate its 100,000 dose administered sometime today.



Illinois Coronavirus Updates: Cook County Vaccine Appointments, CPS and CTU Reach Deal

April 16, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/illinois-coronavirus-updates-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-cps-and-ctu-reach-deal-on-high-schools/2488047/>

Cook County will release approximately 10,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccination appointments on Friday.

Meanwhile, Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Teachers Union leadership have reached a tentative agreement to return to in-person instruction for high schoolers starting Monday.

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

Chicago Revamps COVID Vaccination Rollout After Pausing Use of Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

Chicago officials announced updated plans for the city's COVID-19 vaccination rollout after pausing the use of Johnson & Johnson vaccines following federal recommendations.

Chicago ordered a temporarily halt of the single-dose vaccine based on guidance [from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) as they investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.

Here are the latest updates to the city's vaccination plan:

The Chicago State University mass vaccination site switched to Pfizer vaccine beginning Wednesday

The Protect Chicago Homebound program will switch to Pfizer vaccine with appointments resuming Friday

Events scheduled with Walgreens as part of the Faith Month initiative this weekend will use the Pfizer vaccine

Chicago Federation of Labor vaccination site will switch to Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, but limited to 1,200 doses per week. Appointments resume on Monday

Events with the Illinois Restaurant Association are on hold until the week of April 26

The O'Hare vaccination site previously using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will close. Anyone with a scheduled appointment will be invited to receive a vaccination at Wright College or the United Center

The Chicago Department of Public Health-Chicago Transit Authority vaccination bus remains on pause

All other vaccination locations in Chicago using Pfizer or Moderna vaccine will operate as normal

Read more [here](#).

Chicago to Host Vaccination Clinic at Loretto Hospital After Pausing Doses During Controversy

Weeks after Chicago first cut off vaccine supply to the West Side's Loretto Hospital, the city has announced a new vaccination event at the facility for area residents.

The Chicago Department of Public Health said it will open a city-managed vaccination clinic at Loretto Hospital beginning April 21 for residents of the Austin neighborhood.

"Located onsite at the hospital, the new clinic will increase vaccine access on the West Side while ensuring all vaccination guidelines are stringently followed," the department said in a release.

Previously, the city paused vaccine shipments to the facility after reports surfaced that the hospital hosted a series of COVID vaccination events involving alleged favoritism, [including one in which ineligible Trump Tower workers were vaccinated](#).

Read more [here](#).

Coronavirus in Illinois: 3,866 New COVID Cases, 21 Deaths, 166K Vaccinations

Illinois health officials reported 3,866 new confirmed and probable coronavirus cases and 21 additional deaths in the last day, along with nearly 167,000 vaccinations administered.

In the last 24 hours, 93,602 coronavirus test specimens were returned to state laboratories, with more than 21.5 million now conducted during the pandemic.

The statewide positivity remained the same Friday, with 4.2% of all tests returning positive results. The positivity rate for individuals tested in the last seven days also remained at 4.9%, according to IDPH data.

As of Friday, the state has administered over 7.7 million doses of coronavirus vaccine during the pandemic, while receiving 9,777,825 doses.

Read more [here](#).

Cook County Health to Release 10,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Friday

The Cook County Health department announced it will release approximately 10,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccination appointments on Friday.

According to a press release, the appointments will be made available to the public at 12 p.m. on Friday.

County vaccinations will be by appointment only. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays.

Read more [here](#).

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

10,000 COVID-19 vaccines will be available Friday

Cook County Health will release the appointments at noon Friday.

Cindy Hernandez

Apr 15, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/4/15/22386628/covid-19-vaccine-appointments-available-friday-cook-county-moderna-pfizer>

Cook County Health will release 10,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccines Friday.

The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines will be available through appointment at noon Friday, according to Cook County Health.

Appointments will be available for anyone 16 years old and older, the agency said.

Sixteen and 17-year-olds must register at a Pfizer location and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, health officials said. The Pfizer vaccine is the only dose approved for anyone under 18.

Appointments can be scheduled at 833-308-1988 or vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.



Cook County Appointments, College Vaccination Days: Latest Illinois Vaccine Updates

Here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state

April 16, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-appointments-college-vaccination-days-latest-illinois-vaccine-updates/2488218/>

Cook County will release a new block of vaccination appointments as Illinois focuses on getting younger populations vaccinated as cases rise.

Whether you're looking for a vaccine, waiting for your turn, hoping to help loved ones or just trying to make sense of it all, here's a breakdown of the latest vaccine news from across the state.

(Note: If you can't find a place near you in the updates below, click [here](#) for a complete guide of where you can sign up for the COVID vaccine in Illinois)

Chicago to Host Vaccination Clinic at Loretto Hospital After Pausing Doses During Controversy

Weeks after Chicago first cut off vaccine supply to the West Side's Loretto Hospital, the city has announced a new vaccination event at the facility for area residents.

The Chicago Department of Public Health said it will open a city-managed vaccination clinic at Loretto Hospital beginning April 21 for residents of the Austin neighborhood. Read more [here](#).

Illinois to Host Vaccination Days for College Students

With young people driving the increase in COVID-19 cases in Illinois, the state plans to host "College Vaccination Days" to "encourage all community college and public and private university students across Illinois to get vaccinated at mass vaccination sites." The events start this weekend and continue through next week at state-supported mass vaccination sites where appointments will be available for college and university students.

The following mass vaccination sites will have appointments available specifically for college and university students on the following days. Colleges and universities will have the links where students can register for an appointment.

Cook County Health to Release 10,000 COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Friday

The Cook County Health department announced it will release approximately 10,000 first-dose COVID-19 vaccination appointments on Friday.

According to a press release, the appointments will be made available to the public at 12 p.m. on Friday. Appointments can be made at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays. [Read more here](#).

Daily Herald

10,000 more Cook County vaccine appointments open up

Marni Pyke
April 16, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210415/10000-more-cook-county-vaccine-appointments-open-up>

About 10,000 first-dose appointments for COVID-19 vaccinations at Cook County locations opened up at noon today.

Shots will be for Moderna or Pfizer vaccines and available to all Illinoisans age 16 and older, Cook County Health officials said.

To make an appointment, go to vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. If you are having problems online, call (888) 308-1988 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday or from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday.

Cook County health officials noted that the only vaccine approved for people ages 16 and 17 is the one manufactured by Pfizer. Teens ages 16 and 17 must be accompanied to appointments by a parent or guardian.



Are the College Vaccination Days Coming to Illinois Over the Weekend

April 16, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/these-are-the-college-vaccination-days-coming-to-illinois-over-the-weekend/2488764/>

Illinois officials announced Friday new "college vaccination days" to encourage students at universities across the state to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

With several events happening this weekend and next week, the Illinois Department of Public Health is partnering with various colleges to bring the vaccine directly to students.

These are the events happening this weekend:

SATURDAY

Adams County: Oakley Linsey Center
300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy

SUNDAY

Kane County: Former Carson Pirie Scott
970 North Lake St., Aurora

Kane County: Elgin Eastside Recreation Center
1800 E. Chicago St., Elgin

Kane County: Former Sam's Club
501 N. Randall Rd., Batavia

Madison County: Gateway Convention Center
1 Gateway Dr., Collinsville

Sagamon County: Orr Building State Fairgrounds
801 E. Sagamon Ave., Springfield

St. Clair County: Belle-Clair Fairgrounds
200 S. Belt, East Belleville

Winnebago County: Former K-Mart
1321 Sandy Hollow Rd., Rockford

MONDAY

Cook County: Arlington Heights Health Center
3250 N. Arlington Heights Rd., Arlington Heights

Cook County: Former K-Mart
1155 E. Oakton St., Des Plaines

Cook County: Former Target
4647 Promenade Way, Matteson

Cook County: South Suburban College
15800 State St., South Holland

Cook County: Tinley Park Convention Center
18451 Convention Center Dr., Tinley Park

Cook County: Triton College
2000 5th Ave., River Grove

Matteson site is Cook County's sixth large community vaccination location

April 17, 2021

<https://www.hfchronicle.com/article/2021/apr/17/matteson-site-cook-countys-sixth-large-community-vaccination-location>

County officials announced on Tuesday the opening of a new mass vaccination site in Matteson, which opened Wednesday, April 14.

The site located at 4647 Promenade Way is open to all residents aged 16 and older.

Vaccinations at the Matteson site and other Cook County Health sites will be provided by appointment and can be scheduled at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. Individuals without internet access or who need assistance scheduling can call 833-308-1988 (Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Saturday, 8 am. to 10 p.m.

Cook County Health will only offer appointment slots based on the amount of vaccine on hand and will add appointments as new vaccine shipments arrive.

“The Matteson community vaccination site is active evidence of the County’s commitment to the equitable distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine and a testament to the leadership at all levels of government and our dedication here in Cook County and Illinois to this principle,” said Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller (D-6th). “Matteson is an ideal location for a community vaccination site and is critically important in the Southland, which has some of the longest commute times in the county for accessing healthcare.”

When fully operationalized and depending on vaccine supply, the Matteson vaccination site will be able to administer nearly 4,000 vaccines each day. 33

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. A complete listing of these sites can be found at www.cookcountypublichealth.org.

“We must ensure as many people get vaccinated as soon as possible so we can reach herd immunity, but also to help prevent the virus from mutating so quickly. I encourage everyone to get vaccinated when it’s their turn,” said Miller.

Miller was joined at the news conference announcing the site by County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, Illinois National Guard Major David Sanford and Matteson Mayor Sheila Chalmers-Currin.



Cook County Administers 1,000 Shots At Mobile COVID-19 Vaccination Event In Morton Grove

April 17, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/17/cook-county-administers-1000-shots-at-mobile-covid-19-vaccination-event-in-morton-grove/>

The Cook County Department of Public Health takes to the road again, offering mobile COVID-19 vaccinations.

On Saturday, County Board President Toni Preckwinkle led a group to the Muslim Community Center in Morton Grove.

She explained vaccination equity is a priority for the county, and there's more.

"Equity also means meeting people where they are. That's why we're here to provide vaccine directly to residents in the community at a location that's convenient to them," she said.

One thousand people were vaccinated at the Muslim Community Center on Saturday, one of the largest one-day mobile events to date.

Preckwinkle said there were two other milestones to celebrate this past week.

The county has now administered 500,000 doses of vaccine, and all residents 16 and older are now eligible for vaccinations.



Morton Grove's Muslim Community Center hosts Cook County COVID vaccination clinic; nearly 2K receive first dose during Ramadan

*Evelyn Holmes
April 17, 2021*

<https://abc7chicago.com/covid-vaccine-covid-19-muslim-community-center-ramadan/10523207/>

With his parents urging, it's vaccination day for 16-year-old Shayan Frahim.

"Both actually wanted me to get the shot as soon as possible. I'm just happy we got it," said Frahim.

The high schooler is one of 2,000 suburban Cook County residents who received their shot on Saturday at the Muslim Community Center in Morton Grove.

"I think what today represents is something I've been advocating for the last three or four months and that is to get into the more local level especially for the senior population," said Mayor Dan DiMaria, Morton Grove.

The vaccination clinic is happening during the holy month of Ramadan.

"We'd actually reached out to our community and let it be known that the permissibility of taking a vaccine is not a problem," said Ishaq Lat of the Muslim Community Center.

All Illinois residents age 16 or older are now eligible for the vaccine.

Officials estimate that some of them make up the roughly 2.5 million residents of suburban Cook County that need to be vaccinated.

"We've identified a number of obstacles over time, whether it be cultural sensitivity issues, language barriers, trust," said Omar Khan with the Muslim Community Center.

The day-long effort is the result of a partnership between the MCC and the Cook County Department of Public Health's Mobile Vaccination Program.

On Thursday, the county administered 500,000th dose.

"We will continue to focus on distributing our supply equitably ensuring it goes to residents with the greatest need," said President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board.

Residents at Saturday's inoculation received the two-dose Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

It was administered by Jewel-Osco pharmacy personnel as the push continues to provide vaccine access to diverse communities.

"Partnering with individuals who are trusted individuals who can help educate and bring down the barriers against vaccine hesitancy," said Dr. Israel Rocha, CEO, Cook County Health.

Cook County plans on holding 37 more vaccination events at nearly 200 sites.



More Pop-Up Vaccine Clinics Added as Illinois Focuses on Vaccinating Young People

Jen DeSalvo
April 17, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/more-pop-up-vaccine-clinics-added-as-illinois-focuses-on-vaccinating-young-people/2489098/>

As vaccine supply and the number of administered doses have increased in recent weeks, also has the rate of pop-up vaccination clinics in the Chicago area.

On Saturday, the Cook County Department of Public Health put on its 145th pop-up vaccination clinic, which took place at the Muslim Education Center in Morton Grove.

Approximately 1,000 residents of all ages received their first dose at the event.

"It's not easy for seniors to get in a car and drive 40 miles away from here to get the vaccine and then go back two or three weeks later to get the second vaccine," said Morton Grove Mayor Dan DiMaria.

Cook County health officials have made vaccinating seniors a top priority as 91% of adults over 65 years old have received doses.

Despite a large percentage of vaccinations in that age group, doctors say a worrisome number of new cases is popping up locally. However, the surge in cases is being fueled by young adults.

"We're very concerned," said Kiran Joshi, co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health. "We've seen week over week rises in case rates, case positivity and most concerning - rehospitalizations."

As a result, the Illinois Department of Public Health has shifted focus to vaccinating young people, and as a result has announced [designated "College Vaccination Days" at state-supported mass vaccination sites.](#)

The events, which got underway this weekend, are specifically catered to students at community colleges as well as private and public universities.

Daily Herald

As cases rise, health authorities urge younger people to get vaccinated

Charles Keeshan

April 18, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210417/as-cases-rise-health-authorities-urge-younger-people-to-get-vaccinated>

With everyone 16 and older now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine, Cook County leaders on Saturday urged younger people to sign up for a shot as soon as possible.

Dr. Kiran Joshi, senior medical officer and co-lead of the Cook County Department of Public Health, said infections among young adults are driving the recent uptick in cases across the region.

"We're at a critical time in this pandemic," he said. "COVID-19 cases have continued to increase over the last month and we're very concerned about the potential for another surge."

"This rise in cases has been fueled by individuals who are in their 20s, 30s and 40s," Joshi added. "So I do urge young people in particular to go out and get vaccinated."

Joshi's remarks came as he, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and other leaders visited a vaccination event hosted by the Muslim Community Center in Morton Grove. About 1,000 people were expected to receive their first shot of vaccine during the one-day event.

The event took place as the Illinois Department of Public Health reported another 3,194 new confirmed and probable cases of the coronavirus Saturday, along with 23 additional deaths attributed to COVID-19. It's the fifth consecutive day of more than 3,000 new cases, a mark reached just once in all of March.

Among those dead are 12 Cook County residents, along with one each in DuPage, Kane and Will counties.

Hospitalizations also remain high. As of Friday night, 2,160 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized in Illinois. The previous week's daily average was 1,452 patients in the hospital with the coronavirus.

Of 2,160 hospitalized Friday, 496 were in intensive care and 217 were on ventilators.

Despite the rising number of cases, vaccinations continue at a rapid pace. On Friday, state officials said, 160,014 more doses of COVID-19 vaccine were given, well above the seven-day rolling average of 127,425 shots. According to IDPH data, 3,269,153 Illinois residents -- more than a quarter of the state's population -- is now fully vaccinated, including about 1.28 million people over the age of 65.

Officials hope to accelerate the pace even further with more events like the one held Saturday in Morton Grove.

"What today represents is something I've been advocating for three or four months, and that is to get it to a local level, especially for the senior population," said Morton Grove Village President Dan DiMaria. "It's not so easy to get in a car and drive 40 miles away to get a shot, and then go back on two or three weeks and do it again."

DAILY Southtown

Speak Out reader opinion: Tinley Park vaccination site lauded for continued professionalism

APR 19, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/daily-southtown/opinion/ct-sta-speak-out-st-0420-20210419-cdmznnwdvncarkhtpnqn734stu-story.html>

What's Speak Out?

Speak Out allows readers to comment on the issues of the day. Email Speak Out at speakout@southtownstar.com or call 312-222-2427. Please limit comments to 30 seconds or about 120 words and give your first name and your hometown.

Many thanks to the Illinois National Guard, nurses at Cook County Health and the Tinley Park police for their efficiency and courtesy at the Tinley Park Convention Center COVID-19 vaccination site. The high degree of professionalism made getting vaccinated twice a positive experience.

Cassandra, Tinley Park

MORTON GROVE CHAMPION

Morton Grove vaccination clinic at Muslim Education Center draws top elected officials, residents eager for jobs

DANIEL I. DORFMAN

APR 19, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/morton-grove/ct-mgc-vaccinate-mec-tl-0422-20210419-ci7ii4ykqbb15zmijschovvy-story.html>

A mixture of determination and relief was palpable Saturday morning as people lined up at Morton Grove's Muslim Community Center to receive the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

With a group of elected officials including Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, U.S. Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky and Morton Grove Mayor Dan DiMaria in attendance, Jewel-Osco medical professionals administered 1,153 doses of the Pfizer vaccine in the center's gymnasium.

The vaccination event was organized by the Village of Morton Grove and the Muslim Community Center. They communicated news of the event to Morton Grove residents, though it was open to all who qualified under Cook County guidelines.

Village officials noted the village reserved some vaccines specifically for senior citizens in addition to setting up a call center assisting seniors to register. Special accommodations were made, including four seniors being vaccinated in their cars, after staff received inquiries from people who wanted to get vaccinated but encountered mobility or transportation issues.

"What today represents is something that I have been advocating for the last three months," DiMaria said. "This is to get to a more local level, especially for the senior population. It's not easy for seniors to get in a car and drive 40 miles away from here to get the vaccine and then go back two or three weeks later to get the second vaccine."

For Dr. Kiran Joshi of the Cook County Department of Public Health, the additional vaccination opportunities were important because there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases in the past month. That includes greater numbers of cases in people in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

He urged those at the event to take the familiar safety precautions of washing hands, wearing masks and maintaining social distance, and he emphasized the importance of vaccines.

"It's the right thing to do for humanity, but it is also the right thing to do for good public health," Joshi said. "Anytime anybody is vulnerable to COVID-19, we are all vulnerable as a society."

Morton Grove Deputy Village Clerk Saba Koya said one of the benefits of having the event at the Muslim Community Center was that, for those participants who were Muslim, a private space was available. Muslim women are required to dress modestly and be covered in public.

In addition, the event took place during Ramadan, the month in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk.

Directing her comments to those participants who are Muslim, Koya said, "If you are not feeling well, it is permissible to not complete your fast for the day. For people who are sick, they are not required to fast, and you can make it up another time," Koya said.

Ishaq Lat, a co-chairman of the center's health and awareness committee added, "We reached out to the community and let it be known that permissibility of getting a vaccine is not a problem during the month of Ramadan. Because it is coming from a trusted community partner, we had a high level of trust and engagement in our community."

After receiving the vaccines, individuals were asked to wait for a short observation period in case of an adverse reaction.

Najia Ali, a medical student from Skokie, spoke of why she got the vaccine.

"As a future medical professional, I think it is important that I get the vaccine and show people that I believe it is safe and it is the responsible thing to do, not only for myself but for protection for others," Ali said.

Richard Waxler, who said he has lived in Morton Grove for more than 30 years, was happy to get the vaccine.

"It's been difficult to be home for a year, literally," he said.

Then there was the case of Chicago high school student Shayan Frahim, whose family often comes to the center.

"We might have an out-of-country trip coming up soon, so of course I wanted to get vaccinated as quickly as possible," Frahim said.

He also pointed to the April 19 re-opening of high schools within the Chicago Public School system to in-person learning.

"With school opening up again, we all need to be safe. The faster we get vaccinated, the faster we can be safer and get back to normal," Frahim said.

The second doses were expected to be administered on May 8, again at the center.

Taking a look at the overall fight against COVID-19, Preckwinkle noted that progress is being made. On April 15, Cook County administered its 500,000th dose.

"Finally at the end of such a long and difficult time period, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel," Preckwinkle said.



Hospital en Humboldt Park y centros del condado Cook ofrecen vacunas sin cita previa

April 21, 2021

<https://www.telemundochicago.com/noticias/local/condado-cook-ofrece-vacunas-sin-cita-previa-en-centros-de-tinley-park-y-matteson/2168546/>

El condado de Cook anunció el miércoles que estarán ofreciendo vacunas contra COVID-19 sin cita previa en los megacentros de Tinley Park y Matteson, todo como parte de un nuevo programa piloto del estado para expandir y agilizar la distribución de las vacunas.

Cualquier persona interesada en recibir la vacuna solo deberá de ir persona hasta estos dos centros de miércoles a sábado de 8:30 a.m. a 5:30 p.m. y no necesitarán registrarse de antemano.

"Aquellos interesados en recibir la vacuna simplemente deben presentarse con una identificación con foto y registrarse en el lugar", dijo el departamento de salud en un comunicado. "No se le pedirá a las personas información del seguro médico, estatus migratorio, ni pagar por obtener la vacuna".

El centro de vacunación masiva de Tinley Park, ubicado en el 18451 Convention Center Dr., estará ofreciendo la vacuna Moderna y el centro de Matteson, ubicado en 4647 Promenade Way, la de Pfizer, dijeron funcionarios.

Además, señalaron que jóvenes de 16 y 17 años solamente podrán vacunarse en el centro de Matteson, ya que la vacuna Pfizer es la única aprobada para esas edades.

Aquellos que deseen hacer una cita aún pueden hacerlo a través del sitio web vaccine.cookcountyil.gov o llamando al (833) 308-1988.

CHICAGO SUN★TIMES

Cook County offering walk-in COVID-19 vaccinations at 2 sites

The shots are available at the Matteson and Tinley Park locations.

Stefano Esposito

Apr 21, 2021

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2021/4/21/22395945/covid-vaccinations-cook-county-offering-walk-in-tinley-park-matteson-coronavirus-vaccine>

Cook County will offer vaccinations without appointments at two of its mass vaccination sites as part of a pilot program running through Saturday.

Vaccinations were previously available by appointment only at the Matteson and Tinley Park sites.

“Nearly 40% of eligible Cook County residents have received at least one shot. We are proud of all we have accomplished so far and will not rest until we ensure that all residents have had the opportunity to get vaccinated,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said in a written statement.

“We all know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color and those groups are also most hesitant to get the vaccine. It is critical that we remove any and all barriers to vaccination.”

The two sites are open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday for walk-ins and for those with appointments, county officials said. A photo ID is required. Those younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult. People can make appointments online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988.

The Tinley Park site at 18451 Convention Center Drive has a supply of Moderna vaccine. The Matteson site at 4647 Promenade Way has a supply of Pfizer vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine is the only one approved for 16 and 17 year olds.



Illinois COVID Vaccine Update: Cook County mass vaccination sites in Matteson, Tinley Park now taking walk-ins

*Michelle Gallardo and Eric Horng
April 21, 2021*

<https://abc7chicago.com/health/2-cook-co-mass-vaccination-sites-now-taking-walk-ins/10535043/>

Now that COVID-19 vaccine supply isn't as big of an issue, opening up a handful of sites to walk-ins is just one step that local health officials are taking to try and improve access, especially for those still-underserved minority populations.

Just walk in and get your shot. It's that simple. No phone calls. No endless hours hitting refresh online. As of Wednesday, two of Suburban Cook County's mass vaccination sites, Matteson and Tinley Park, are open to anyone, appointment or not, as the county enters the next phase of trying to reach herd immunity.

"We're at 50% and we know that this next 50% we need to get to becomes harder," said Israel Rocha, CEO, Cook County Health. "We're going to have to change hearts and minds to be vaccinated. We're going to have to encourage them to come forward."

In addition to overcoming vaccine hesitancy, health officials continue to look for ways to improve equity. While an initial push to focus on minority communities was met with some level of success, Black and brown populations in the city and suburban Cook County continue to lag behind their white counterparts.

Access to in-neighborhood clinics still lags in some of the hardest-hit areas, where getting to a mass vaccination site is not an option.

"There's not Walgreens and CVS in every low-income, minority community right? And if you're already in a place where transportation access is an issue then, I see what we really need to do is continue pushing efforts to vaccinate people where they work, congregate and live," said Dr. Marina Del Rios, University of Illinois Hospital.

And while officials continue to address those issues, they're also calling on the recently vaccinated, like 16-year-old Makayla Freeman, to help spread the word as they go back into their communities.

"Hopefully get to go back to school for my senior year and you know, get to go to prom and all that," Freeman said. "I hope to have fun this year because it was messed up last year."

For now, only the Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites will be open to walk-ins. The county said they hope to expand that to others as supply increases, while also looking to expand hours for those who are unable to get away during traditional business hours.

It comes as the state increases doses to the Chicago area, and as online demand for appointments has fallen.

"The period where we were seeing a lot of surge in demand with the early adopters, in the same way that you would see people lining up to buy that iPhone when it first launches, it's changing now," said Dr. Kiran Joshi, Cook County Dept. of Public Health.

Within minutes of hearing the news, Lisa Harrell of Flossmoor brought her 17-year-old daughter to get her first Pfizer dose.

"I called my daughter, told her to stop studying, got into the car and got here in about five minutes," she said.

"I didn't believe it. I was like, no, you need an appointment. We were walking in. Mom was like, no, you can just walk in. I'm like, no you can't. And so we did and then got my shot, and I feel good," Aria Harrell said.

That falling demand is being seen in other counties as well. In DuPage, weekly appointment bookings are down 35 to 50 % from the peak.

"Now our efforts are either on people who are willing to get vaccinated, but it's got to be convenient. It's got to be easily accessible," said Karen Ayala, executive director, DuPage County Health Dept.

Walk-ins for a second dose of Pfizer are also welcome, as long as it's on schedule and the first was administered in Illinois.

Chicago Tribune

Matteson, Tinley Park mass COVID-19 vaccination sites start accepting walk-in appointments as racial equity numbers lag

ALICE YIN

APR 21, 2021

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/vaccine/ct-matteson-tinley-park-mass-vaccination-sites-walk-ins-20210421-qlvn3xx6wfhtppqlxnn7pvfti-story.html>

Two south suburban Cook County mass COVID-19 vaccination sites started accepting walk-in appointments Wednesday as demand for shots dwindles and racial disparities remain, officials said.

The change comes as demand for vaccine, which has been acute in suburban Cook County during the first few months of its rollout, has wound down and more of the eligible population — about 1 in 2 — has gotten at least a first dose, Rocha said. Tuesday's release of appointments at the county's mass vaccination sites took a few hours to fill up versus a few minutes, which was how long it took a week earlier, Rocha said.

"Our work now from this point forward, it gets harder," Rocha said. "We need to pivot and have some strategies. It won't be as easy as just putting in a website and having people come. We're going to have to change hearts and minds."

The Tinley Park site provides Moderna vaccine, while Matteson has Pfizer, which is the only one approved for 16- and 17-year-olds. Those who want to simply show up to either site this week should arrive with a photo ID.

Cook County Health runs a total of six mass vaccination sites that in total inoculated more than 13,000 people per day over the past five days, and if the latest pilot proves successful, the county may expand walk-in access at other locations, Rocha said. He added that next on his to-do list is to expand hours at the vaccination sites for people who cannot take time off during the workday.

Only 27.6% of the total population in suburban Cook has been fully vaccinated, according to the latest Illinois Department of Public Health data. Moreover, racial disparities persist despite what county officials described as a multi-pronged effort to make vaccine accessible in hard-hit areas. As of this week, about 33% of the region's white residents have gotten fully vaccinated, while that number was 17% for Black residents and 15% for Hispanic residents.

"There is a lot of work to be done here, we are very clear about that," Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead of Cook County's Department of Public Health, said when asked about the statistics. "We need to be more intentional. We need to work harder, and we need to be out into the community getting the vaccine to the people."

To combat the inequities, county officials last month identified 32 communities, mostly in the south and west suburbs, that face heightened poverty and barriers to health care, among other risk factors for COVID-19. Those areas were blanketed with mobile and pop-up clinics, fixed vaccination sites, homebound appointments and media campaigns.

As of Tuesday, the 32 towns have seen gains in percentage of the population with any dose, though the results are uneven. Dixmoor, for example, only went up from 4.7% to 9.7% in the past month, while McCook jumped from 4.4% to 43.4%.

Rocha said there is promise for the future as vaccine supply and demand has begun to “get to that equilibrium point,” which he said also was a reason to launch the walk-in pilot at Matteson and Tinley Park. He likened the next challenge, however, to when a new cellphone comes out and excitement spikes, then dries up. Suburban Cook County is heading toward a waning demand, he said.

“We need to close the gap,” Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said while presenting the map of the 32 communities. “You will notice upon looking at this map that this is the same map you’ve seen dozens of times. We’re talking about life expectancy, food insecurity, opioid addiction and gun violence. The root of all of it of course is poverty. Until we end poverty in America. I’m afraid we’ll only be able to nibble around the edges of our challenges here in Cook County.”

Also on Wednesday, CCDPH co-lead Dr. Rachel Rubin hinted that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, on pause throughout Illinois as federal authorities are reviewing its continued use given extremely rare cases of blood clots among users, likely will return to suburban Cook County soon.

Rubin said federal regulatory bodies are slated to make a decision this week, albeit with “some restrictions and certainly a warning” about the potential side effects. This follows earlier [remarks](#) from Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government’s top infectious diseases expert, that the resumption of J&J will come Friday.

“Many people are asking for the Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine,” Rubin said. “We will continue to offer it once it is approved for use again.”



Cook County Offering Walk-Ins at Tinley Park, Matteson Mass Vaccination Sites

Anyone interested in getting a vaccine who doesn't already have an appointment will be allowed to register onsite at two mass vaccination locations, the health department said

April 21, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/cook-county-offering-walk-ins-at-tinley-park-matteson-mass-vaccination-sites/2491982/>

Cook County is now offering walk-in availability for COVID vaccines at its Tinley Park and Matteson sites as part of a new pilot program aimed at combating a "plateau in demand," the county's health department announced Wednesday.

Anyone interested in getting a vaccine who doesn't already have an appointment will be allowed to register onsite Wednesday through Saturday at the two mass vaccination locations, the department said.

The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday for walk-ins and those with appointments.

"Individuals or groups who are interested in getting a vaccine can simply show up with photo ID and register onsite," the health department said in a release. "People will not be asked for their insurance information, immigration status or to pay."

The Tinley Park site, located at 18451 Convention Center Dr., currently has a supply of the Moderna vaccine and the Matteson site, at 4647 Promenade Way, is offering a supply of Pfizer vaccine, officials said, noting that 16 and 17-year-olds will only be eligible at the Matteson location as the Pfizer vaccine is the only option currently approved for emergency use in that age group. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

"Cook County Health is vaccinating between 13,000 and 14,000 people every day. We have spent the last several months standing up vaccination sites, big and small, permanent and pop-up, and have done a great job getting those who knew they wanted the shot vaccinated," Israel Rocha, CEO of Cook County Health, said in a statement. "While we have seen a significant increase in our supply of vaccine, we have also projected to see a plateau in demand. Our walk-in effort is the latest strategy to enhance access to vaccination. We must meet people where they are whether geographically or psychologically, to create equitable access to vaccination."

Those who would like to can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling (833) 308-1988.



Matteson, Tinley Park Now Have Walk-In COVID Vaccine Sites, Open Through Saturday

April 21, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/21/walk-in-covid-sites-tinley-park-matteson/>

Having no luck booking a COVID shot appointment? You can now go to one of two pilot walk-in sites.

A pilot program in Cook County is allowing walk-in COVID shot appointments at two existing mass vaccination sites in Matteson and Tinley Park.

Cook County Health said walk ins can start getting their shots on Wednesday through Saturday.

The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, April 24 for both walk-ins and people with appointments.

The Tinley Park location is at 18451 Convention Center Drive. It has a supply of the Moderna vaccine. The Matteson location is at 4647 Promenade Way. It will have a supply of Pfizer vaccine.

According to Cook County Health, individuals or groups who walk into the Matteson or Tinley Park site can show up with photo ID and register onsite. They will not be asked for their insurance information, immigration status or to pay.

Right now, the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine approved for 16 and 17 year olds. Cook County Health added “as such, it is important for these individuals to walk-in to Matteson or make an appointment at another Pfizer site.”

People age 16 and 17 must be accompanied to their appointment by a parent or guardian.

“Cook County Health is vaccinating between 13,000 and 14,000 people every day. We have spent the last several months standing up vaccination sites, big and small, permanent and pop-up, and have done a great job getting those who knew they wanted the shot vaccinated,” said Israel Rocha, CEO of Cook County Health.

Individuals can still make appointments at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7:00 a.m. through 10:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. through 10:00 p.m.

“Nearly 40 percent of eligible Cook County residents have received at least one shot. We are proud of all we have accomplished so far and will not rest until we ensure that all residents have had the opportunity to get vaccinated,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “We all know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color and those groups are also most hesitant to get the vaccine. It is critical that we remove any and all barriers to vaccination.”



Suburban Cook County Testing Walk-In Vaccine Appointments

April 21, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/21/suburban-cook-county-testing-walk-vaccine-appointments>

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine in suburban Cook County just got a little easier. Mass vaccination sites in Tinley Park and Matteson will accept walk-in appointments through Saturday in an effort to remove barriers to vaccination, according to officials.

Previously, people had to sign up online or call a hotline in order to schedule an appointment.

Providing walk-in appointments removes technology barriers that may have hindered people's ability to get vaccinated, according to Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha.

"Come on down. We'll register you. We'll give you the information. We'll educate you," Rocha said during a news conference Wednesday. "We'll still have scheduled appointments and we'll have a process for those scheduled appointments to be seen. It'll be a little bit longer to be a walk-up ... because we'll have to get your information and get you registered."

Officials are now able to test walk-in appointments because more than half of all eligible suburban Cook County residents have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

An increased supply of vaccine and reduced demand for appointments allow the county to provide walk-in appointments, according to Rocha.

During earlier phases of the vaccine rollout, slots for appointments would be filled in 5-10 minutes, according to Rocha, who said it took one to two hours for slots to be booked on Tuesday.

Officials say they'll be able to balance walk-in appointments with scheduled appointments by monitoring vaccine supplies hourly. People who don't have an appointment will be told upon arrival whether or not they'll be able to get a shot that day, "So no one has to wait around needlessly," Rocha said.

Officials will assess the program's success and hope to announce the expansion of walk-in appointments to other sites by early next week, Rocha said.

In addition, officials plan to expand hours at vaccination sites soon.

"We know that people sometimes cannot take time off work between the hours of 8 (a.m.) and 5 (p.m.) to be able to come in and be vaccinated," Rocha said.

For information about suburban Cook County COVID-19 vaccinations, including how to register for an appointment, visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or call 833-308-1988, which operates 7 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday.



Suburban Cook County announces walk-in vaccination appointments

April 21, 2021

<https://www.fox32chicago.com/news/suburban-cook-county-announces-walk-in-vaccination-appointments>

Cook County Health officials announced a pilot program Wednesday for walk-in coronavirus vaccinations at two south suburban sites, allowing residents to receive a vaccination without an appointment.

The mass vaccination sites — located in Tinley Park at 18451 Convention Center Dr. and in Matteson at 4647 Promenade Way — will be open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday, health officials said. Those with appointments will also still be able to get their shots.

"We all know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color and those groups are also most hesitant to get the vaccine. It is critical that we remove any and all barriers to vaccination," Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said.

The Matteson site will be doling out Pfizer vaccines, while those going to Tinley Park for their shot will receive the Moderna product, health officials said.

"Matteson and Tinley are near areas that we want to close the gaps even further," said Bill Lowry Cook County Commissioner of the 3rd district. "Areas that have greater equity closing opportunities, so that we can get more individuals."

While Cook County has expanded eligibility to anyone over the age of 16, only the Pfizer vaccine has been approved for teenagers, so 16 and 17 year olds will have to sign up at the Matteson site and be accompanied by a parent or guardian, health officials said.

Anyone else can walk up to either site with a photo ID and register in person for a free vaccine, without having to show proof of insurance or immigration status, health officials said.

Meanwhile, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced 2,765 more cases of the coronavirus, along with 28 more deaths. That brings the total number of cases in the state up to 1,309,552 since the start of the pandemic, including 21,722 deaths.

The statewide positivity rate remained the same at 3.8%, health officials said. On Tuesday, 140,712 vaccinations were administered in the state.

The expansion of access comes as President Joe Biden urges employers to give their workers paid leave to get their shots.

"I'm calling on every employer, large and small, in every state to give employees the time off they need with pay to get vaccinated," said President Joe Biden. "Anytime they need with pay to recover if they're feeling under the weather after the shot."

The White House says that 25% of Americans who do not currently plan to get vaccinated; would change their minds if they got paid leave, gift cards, or cash bonuses.



DePaul University Will Require COVID-19 Vaccines For Any Students Who Will Be On Campus In Fall

April 21, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/21/depaul-university-covid-19-vaccine-requirement/>

DePaul University announced Wednesday that it will require students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 if they plan to be on campus in the fall.

This goes for all undergraduate, graduate, and professional students who plan to be on campus for any length of time starting in the fall 2021 quarter.

Programs who intend to be on campus for any period of time starting in the fall 2021 quarter.

“Why is DePaul requiring students to be vaccinated? Simply put: safety, mutual care and social responsibility,” Dr. A. Gabriel Esteban, president of DePaul, wrote in an email to the university community. “The health and safety of our community, and the communities in which our students, faculty and staff live, have driven DePaul’s decision-making throughout the pandemic.”

There will still be mitigations in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as the university emphasized that COVID-19 will not completely disappear by the fall.

“We also know that the COVID-19 vaccines have been proven effective at greatly reducing the spread of the virus, as well as preventing serious illness and death from COVID-19. When used in combination with other COVID-19 prevention measures, vaccines provide protection against the virus,” Esteban wrote by email.

Some other universities across the country have issued the same requirement – among the first was Rutgers University in New Jersey. In March, one doctor told CBS 2’s Tara Molina that people should prepare for a vaccination requirement to become the norm soon.

“In general, we require people coming to public schools or even private schools to be vaccinated against risky conditions, so this is really no different,” said Dr. Mark Loafman, head of Family and Community Medicine for Cook County Health.



Tinley Park Convention Center Is A Pilot Walk-In Vaccine Site

From now through Saturday, Apr. 24. If successful, Cook County Health will extend the pilot for a longer period of time.

April 21, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/tinleypark/tinley-park-convention-center-pilot-walk-vaccine-site>

The Tinley Park Convention Center COVID-19 vaccination site is one of two locations being used as a pilot walk-in strategy site, which began Wednesday.

The pilot is being overseen by Cook County Health (CCH), in collaboration with the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) for the Tinley Park location — administering the Moderna vaccine — and Matteson — administering the Pfizer vaccine.

The walk-in pilot is in place through Saturday, April 24. Those interested in getting a vaccine just have to show up with a photo ID and register onsite. If this strategy works, CCH will extend it for a longer period of time.

Next week, CCH will be piloting evening walk-in hours at some of its sites to accommodate workers who are unable to get to a daytime slot.

The Tinley Park site is located at 18451 Convention Center Dr. and the Matteson site, which recently opened, is located at 4647 Promenade Way. Both walk-in sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For those who already have appointments, you will also still be able to get your shot at your sign-up time.

On Wednesday, CCDPH outlined its strategies to achieve vaccine equity in suburban Cook County. Some of these strategies include mobile vaccination programs and priority vaccination sites intended for those who live and work within the 32 priority communities identified by the county last month. CCDPH released its Vaccine Equity Report to outline the tactics it is currently using and considering to reach traditionally underserved communities in its vaccine program.

"Equity is front and center in our vaccination strategies, and now that all residents of Cook County age 16 and older are eligible to be vaccinated against COVID, we must ensure that all communities are not only included but prioritized as we roll out our strategies," said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. "This is the very definition of public health, and we will meet the challenge."

According to the department, so far over 1.2 million doses have been administered to residents in CCDPH's jurisdiction, including 508,249 individuals who have completed the vaccine series.



Newly Released Suburban Cook County Data Shows Who's Getting Vaccinated

Kristen Thometz

April 21, 2021

<https://news.wttw.com/2021/04/21/newly-released-suburban-cook-county-data-shows-who-s-getting-vaccinated>

Residents of suburban Cook County who are white or Asian are outpacing their Black and Latino counterparts in getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

Approximately 23% of white residents and 25% of Asian residents have been fully vaccinated, according to newly released data from the Cook County Department of Public Health. That's compared to only 14.8% of Black residents and 10.4% of Latinos, even though they are more likely to contract the virus and experience severe illness or die from it.

The disparity in vaccinations is even more pronounced when comparing the rate of vaccinations to the proportion of the overall suburban Cook County population.

While white residents make up roughly 57% of the population, Asians account for just 6.5% — far less than Black residents (16%) and Latinos (19.3%).

While Black and Latino residents make up a smaller portion of those vaccinated, progress has been made.

As recently as March 21, only 12% of Black residents and 8% of Latinos had received at least one dose of the vaccine, compared to 20% of whites, according to Cook County data. At that time, the county was only vaccinating essential workers and residents ages 65 and older.

To combat inequities in vaccine distribution, officials announced last month they would focus their efforts on 32 municipalities that are predominately communities of color and have been hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

These communities are the most vulnerable in suburban Cook County, according to Dr. Kiran Joshi, co-lead for the Cook County Department of Public Health.

"Ensuring the residents of our most vulnerable communities, particularly our Black and brown communities, are vaccinated is the right thing to do, but it's also good public health because it ensures that everyone in suburban Cook County is protected," Joshi said at a Wednesday news conference.

Joshi said the racial disparity in vaccination rates relative to population figures is an issue, but officials "are prepared to respond."

To ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine, officials have launched a mobile vaccination program, hosted pop-up events in the 32 communities disproportionately impacted by the virus and reserved appointments at mass vaccination sites for community groups to register their clients and patients.

Those efforts have paid off. In west suburban Berkeley, only 8.3% of residents were fully vaccinated as of March 21. That's increased to 23.9% of residents as of Tuesday.

In neighboring Melrose Park, the percentage of fully vaccinated residents rose from 8.7% as of March 21 to 23.8% as of Tuesday, according to county data.

On Wednesday, officials began testing walk-in appointments at the Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites and plan to expand hours at vaccination sites to accommodate people who can't take time off work.

Of all eligible suburban Cook County residents – those ages 16 and older — more than 51% have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to officials.

But even with that progress, officials acknowledged there's work to do, especially in terms of encouraging individuals to get vaccinated.

"We're going to have to change hearts and minds to be vaccinated. We're going to have to encourage them to come forward," said Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, who called on residents to share their vaccination experiences with those who may be hesitant.

"It's going to take all of us working in coordination and in concert to read the science, to understand the data and to make that decision for them and their family to get vaccinated," he said. "Each one of us has the ability to save a life or save the life of many, depending how much want to discuss publicly the true facts about the vaccine and COVID."

Daily Herald

Cook County opens up two walk-in mass vaccination sites

Marni Pyke
April 21, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210421/cook-county-opens-up-two-walk-in-mass-vaccination-sites>

Cook County opened up two COVID-19 mass vaccination sites for walk-ins without appointments Wednesday as part of a pilot project to accelerate inoculations, particularly for underserved groups, health department officials said at a briefing.

The two sites are at the Tinley Park Convention Center and in Matteson.

"Come on down," Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha said. "You can actually come in, walk in. We welcome you. Join us. Come get vaccinated, and if that works we are hoping very quickly to continue to our other sites."

Officials also said they anticipate Johnson & Johnson's vaccine will return soon after federal experts complete a review, but it will come with guidance to prevent adverse side effects in vulnerable populations.

The J&J vaccine was put on pause April 13 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration after six cases of serious blood clots in women, including one fatality.

"We anticipate hearing from the CDC and the FDA later this week that the vaccine will be put back into use but probably with some restrictions and certainly a warning about the potential, very rare complication of blood clots," said Dr. Rachel Rubin, colead of the Cook County Department of Public Health.

"Many people are asking for the J&J one-dose vaccine, and we will continue to offer it once it is approved for use again," she said.

The two other vaccines, by Moderna and Pfizer, require two doses weeks apart, which makes the J&J version easier to administer.

Getting more shots into arms, especially in minority communities, is crucial, Cook health experts said. The county has identified 32 communities that raise concerns about high rates of COVID-19 and low rates of vaccinations.

Berkeley, Franklin Park, Harwood Heights, Norridge and Northlake are among those on the list.

"Black and Latinx residents have gotten sick and succumbed to COVID-19 at alarming, alarming rates, much higher rates than our white residents," Preckwinkle said.

To rectify the gap, the county is proposing more mobile vaccination programs and efforts such as the pilot program offering walk-in shots. The walk-in shots are available to every Illinoisan 16 or older.

Asked about logistics at Matteson and Tinley Park, Rocha said all current appointments will be kept and the staff will be pacing walk-in traffic.

"We'll have controls to be sure we do it safely and have the vaccine on hand. If we run out or run short, we'll let you know," Rocha said. "We don't want people waiting needlessly."

The county picked Tinley Park, which opened in January, because it's the oldest mass vaccination site and residents have had opportunities to access shots there. The Matteson location at 4647 Promenade Way opened April 14 and is not dealing with second doses yet, so it can accommodate more traffic, officials said.



2 Cook County COVID-19 vaccination sites now accepting walk-ins

April 21, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/2-cook-county-covid-19-vaccination-sites-now-accepting-walk-ins/>

Cook County Health will welcome walk-ins at the Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites through Saturday, the department announced today.

The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. through Saturday for walk-ins and those with appointments. The Tinley Park site, located at 18451 Convention Center Drive, supplies the Moderna vaccine. The Matteson site, located at 4647 Promenade Way, supplies the Pfizer vaccine.

Individuals age 16 and 17, eligible to only receive the Pfizer vaccine, must still be accompanied to their walk-in/appointment by a parent or guardian.

No insurance information, immigration status or pay will be required, health officials added.

“Nearly 40 percent of eligible Cook County residents have received at least one shot. We are proud of all we have accomplished so far and will not rest until we ensure that all residents have had the opportunity to get vaccinated,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle in a statement. “We all know that the pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color and those groups are also most hesitant to get the vaccine. It is critical that we remove any and all barriers to vaccination.”

Click here for more information.



3 Cook County, all Chicago COVID-19 vaccination sites accepting walk-ins

Dana Rebik
April 22, 2021

<https://wgntv.com/news/coronavirus/3-cook-county-all-chicago-covid-19-vaccination-sites-accepting-walk-ins/>

Cook County Health will welcome walk-ins at Tinley Park, Matteson and Summit mass vaccination sites through Saturday, the department announced this week.

The announcement comes as Chicago's Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady on Thursday said all city mass vaccination sites will accept walk-in appointments starting Friday, according to the Chicago Tribune.

The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. through Saturday for walk-ins and those with appointments. The Tinley Park site, located at 18451 Convention Center Drive, supplies the Moderna vaccine. The Matteson site, located at 4647 Promenade Way, supplies the Pfizer vaccine.

The Summit vaccination site, located at 5700 S. Archer Rd., also supplies the Pfizer vaccine. Walk-ins will be open for residents from Summit, McCook, Hodgkins, Justice, Bridgeview and Chicago Ridge.

Individuals or groups who are interested in getting a vaccine can simply show up with photo ID and register onsite. People will not be asked for their insurance information, immigration status or to pay.

Individuals age 16 and 17, eligible to only receive the Pfizer vaccine, must still be accompanied to their walk-in/appointment by a parent or guardian.

"My dad was going to do the Pfizer vaccine we were looking it up we came in for his appointment when we walked in they offered for me to get an appointment as well :45 I really liked I didn't think that was a think right now

Dr. Nimmi Rajagopal, Cook County Health Associate Chair of Family and Community Medicine, says the walk-in option helps those who have experienced difficulty obtaining a vaccine appointment.

"We did these mass vaccination sites that were great in getting people in and starting with those who really wanted the vaccine," she said. "Now we need this walk-in component to address people who were kind of on the fence weren't sure wanted to wait and see how others did."



All City-Run Mass Vaccination Sites In Chicago To Open For Walk-Ins Starting Friday As Supply Catches Up To Demand

April 22, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/22/chicago-walk-in-vaccines-open-mass-vaccination-sites-united-center-dr-allison-arwady/>

With Chicago's supply of COVID-19 vaccines exceeding demand for the first time during the pandemic, all city-operated vaccination sites will open to walk-ins starting on Friday.

During a question-and-answer session on Facebook on Thursday, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady said the city is finally receiving an ample supply of vaccines, after months of not being able to meet demand for shots.

"Our supply has just not been up to our demand month after month after month, and I know how frustrating that has been for many people, but as of now, we have enough vaccine," Arwady said. "If you want a vaccine in Chicago, you can absolutely get one. You can get one today. No excuses."

As a result, starting Friday, every city-run vaccination site in Chicago, including the United Center mass vaccination site, will accept walk-ins in addition to scheduled appointments.

"We still encourage people to make an appointment. That's going to be the best way. Go on zocdoc, or call the call center. If you make an appointment, you won't need to be standing in long lines, you'll know for sure you have an appointment," she said. "But we know that a lot of people are still having challenges getting appointments, and we know there's digital divides, and we know there's people who maybe, spur of the moment, might say, 'Let's get a vaccine.'"

In addition, all city-run vaccination sites will be open anyone 16 and older, because all city clinics are currently offering the Pfizer vaccine, which is the only inoculation approved for 16- and 17-year-olds. Anyone under age 18 must have a parent or guardian with them to get a vaccination.

Appointments at city-run vaccination sites are available online at zocdoc.com/vaccine or by calling 312-746-4835.

Arwady said the increase in vaccine supply comes as Chicago appears to be turning the corner on the latest surge, with the city's test positivity rate now at 5.4%, down from 5.8% one week ago. The city is also averaging 631 new COVID-19 cases per day, down 13% from one week ago.

"Those case rates are still higher than we'd like them to be. Ideally, we want to get that back down under 400, and eventually back down under 200. We want to get that positivity back down under 5%, but continued progress in the right direction is what is going to let us move toward reopening ... even more reopening," Arwady said.

Cook County Health also has started offering walk-in vaccinations at two suburban mass vaccination sites, in Tinley Park and Matteson, as part of a pilot program that will operate through Saturday.

The Tinley Park mass vaccination site is administering the Moderna vaccine, which requires a second dose four weeks after your first. The Matteson mass vaccination site is giving out the Pfizer vaccine, which requires a second dose after three weeks.

Both sites are open for walk-in vaccinations from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. You'll need a photo ID to register on-site.

You can still make appointments for a vaccine at any suburban Cook County site online at vaccine.cookcountyil.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7AM – 10PM and Saturday from 8AM – 10PM.

Vaccines without appointment available at Tinley Park, Matteson centers

April 22, 2021

<https://www.hfchronicle.com/public/2021/apr/22/vaccines-without-appointment>

Starting Wednesday, COVID-19 vaccines will be available from two nearby mass vaccination sites without an appointment through Saturday, April 24, according to Cook County Health (CCH).

Walk-in vaccination will be available at the Tinley Park Convention Center, 18451 Convention Center Drive, for anyone 18 and older. The site delivers the Moderna vaccine.

Walk-ins will also be welcome at the Matteson Community vaccination site at 4647 Promenade Way for anyone 16 and older. The site provides the Pfizer vaccine.

Anyone wishing to receive a shot should bring a photo ID. Both facilities are open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. for walk-ins.

"The distribution of COVID-19 vaccination will be done in a phased approach as vaccine supply is available and using guidance from local, state and national public health authorities," according to the CCH website.

The pilot project is being conducted in collaboration with the Cook County Department of Public Health.

Next week, CCH will pilot evening walk-in hours at some of its sites to accommodate workers unable to get to a daytime appointment. More details to follow.

Next week, CCH will pilot evening walk-in hours at some of its sites to accommodate workers unable to get to a daytime appointment. More details about this will be announced later this week.



Mass Vaccination Site Walk-In Set For April 22-23

Locations will permit people to walk in to the vaccination site without a prior appointment.

April 22, 2021

<https://patch.com/illinois/palos/mass-vaccination-site-walk-set-april-22-23>

Press release from the City of Palos Hills:

Cook County Health in collaboration with Cook County Department of Public Health is launching a new pilot strategy initiative at two (2) vaccination locations which will permit people to "walk-in" to the vaccination site without a prior appointment. The initiative will be tested Thursday, April 22 and Friday, April 23 from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.

1. Tinley Park Convention Center
 - 18451 Convention Center Dr, Tinley Park, IL 60477
 - MODERNA Vaccine
 - Ages 18 and up
2. Matteson at the former Target Store
 - 4647 Promenade Way, Matteson, IL 60443
 - PFIZER Vaccine
 - Ages 16 and up

You can always get more information on the Covid-19 Vaccination program at www.vaccine.cookcountyil.gov. You can also call 1-833- 308-1988 and our call center reps can help you with an appointment.



Cook County Anticipates Hearing From Feds on Johnson & Johnson Vaccine This Week

April 22, 2021

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/coronavirus/cook-county-anticipates-hearing-from-feds-on-johnson-johnson-vaccine-this-week/2492763/>

Cook County health officials said Wednesday that use of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine, currently paused for a federal review, could soon resume.

Cook County, Chicago and Illinois all paused use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine last week following a recommendation from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration after the agencies said they were investigating six cases of rare blood clots in women who had received the vaccine.

"We anticipate hearing from the CDC and the FDA later this week that the vaccine will be put back into use but probably with some restrictions and certainly a warning about the potential for the very rare complication of blood clots," Cook County Department of Public Health Senior Medical Officer Dr. Rachel Rubin said during a news conference Wednesday.

"Many people are asking for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, one-dose vaccine, and we will continue to offer it once it is approved for use again," she added.

"Our new case numbers are continuing to be high but it looks like we are leveling off with the daily numbers and our positivity rate," Rubin continued. "So that's good news but we need to remain vigilant and having all three vaccines available allows greater numbers of people to be vaccinated."

Illinois has received 760,300 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, of which 290,615 doses have been administered. Cook County's vaccine supply comes through the state's allocation, while Chicago is separate.

Chicago has received 91,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, less than 5% of the more than 1.9 million doses of all three available vaccines that the city has received from the federal government thus far.

The FDA and CDC recommended a nationwide pause on the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as it investigates unusual clots in six women that occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. The clots occurred in veins that drain blood from the brain and occurred together with low platelets. All six cases were in women between the ages of 18 and 48.

The reports appear similar to a rare, unusual type of clotting disorder that European authorities say is possibly linked to another COVID-19 vaccine not yet cleared in the U.S., from AstraZeneca.

More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the U.S., the vast majority with no or mild side effects.

U.S. federal distribution channels, including mass vaccination sites, paused the use of the J&J shot, and states and other providers followed suit. The other two authorized vaccines, from Moderna and Pfizer, make up the vast share of COVID-19 shots administered in the U.S. and are not affected by the pause.

Officials say they also want to educate vaccine providers and health professionals about the “unique treatment” required for this type of clot.

Officials are recommending that people who were given the J&J vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot contact their health care provider.



Cook County Health Offers Walk-In COVID Vaccines At Tinley Park, Matteson Mass Vaccination Sites Through Saturday

Mugo Odigwe

April 22, 2021

<https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2021/04/22/cook-county-health-offers-walk-in-covid-vaccines-at-tinley-park-matteson-mass-vaccination-sites-through-saturday/>

If you've been trying and failing to get an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine, Cook County Health is now accepting walk-ins at its Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites.

CBS 2's Mugo Odigwe tells you what you need to know.

You have until Saturday evening to take advantage of this pilot program.

It means you can walk through the doors at the Tinley Park site at 18451 Convention Center Drive, or the Matteson site at 4647 Promenade Way – no appointments necessary – and get a vaccine.

"It's just a huge hassle trying to look for appointments. I spent about an hour looking for appointments until I said, 'You know what? I'll spend that hour driving instead,'" said Katarzyna Gamaj, who drove from Gurnee to Tinley Park on Thursday to get her shot.

She said getting a COVID vaccine is that important.

"We just want this to be over. If we can get our shots as quickly as possible, that's our best bet. That's what we're going to go for," she said.

It's now easy, too, thanks to Cook County Health's walk-in pilot program

"It is real convenient. This way I don't have to walk around an appointment schedule or anything like that," Jerry Roma said.

For those who are hesitant about getting the vaccine, Rosetta Perkins said, "it is really a good deal for us, because to make the appointment you've got to sit and think, 'Should I make the appointment? Because I don't want to cancel.'"

The Tinley Park mass vaccination site is administering the Moderna vaccine, which requires a second dose four weeks after your first. The Matteson mass vaccination site is giving out the Pfizer vaccine, which requires a second dose after three weeks.

Both sites are open for walk-in vaccinations from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. You'll need a photo ID to register on-site.

Anyone who is 16 or 17 years old who wants to get the vaccine will have to go to the Matteson mass vaccination site, as only the Pfizer vaccine is approved for 16- and 17-year-olds. Those young people must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to get a shot.

Gamaj, who was one of the first people in line on Thursday in Tinley Park, sees the vaccine as one giant step to normalcy.

“I think everybody should get vaccinated. We can turn this just into a regular flu if everybody takes it seriously,” she said.

Again, this is just a pilot program. It ends this Saturday. Cook County Health said it might extend the program, depending on how the next few days go.

You can still make appointments for a vaccine online at vaccine.cookcountyl.gov or by calling 833-308-1988, Monday – Friday from 7AM – 10PM and Saturday from 8AM – 10PM.

yahoo!news

Cook County Offers Walk-In Vaccines In Tinley Park, Matteson

April 22, 2021

<https://news.yahoo.com/cook-county-offers-walk-vaccines-161900738.html>

If you've been trying and failing to get an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine, Cook County Health is now accepting walk-ins at its Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites. CBS 2's Mugo Odigwe tells you what you need to know.

Video Transcript

RYAN BAKER: If you've been trying and failing to get a COVID-19 vaccine appointment, well here's another option for you. Cook County Health is now accepting walk-ins at its Tinley Park and Matteson vaccination sites. CBS 2's Mugo Odigwe tells you what you need to know.

MUGO ODIGWE: OK, so you have until this Saturday to take advantage of this pilot program that barely started yesterday. It means you can walk in through these doors, no appointments necessary, and get a Moderna vaccine shot.

- No appointment? Got your ID? Come on in.

MUGO ODIGWE: No appointment, no problem.

KATARZYNA GAMAJ: It's just a huge hassle, trying to look for appointments. I spent about an hour looking for appointments until I said, you know what, I'll spend that hour driving instead.

MUGO ODIGWE: Yes, an hour. Katarzyna Gamaj drove all the way from Gurnee to Tinley Park. She says getting a COVID-19 shot is that important.

KATARZYNA GAMAJ: And we just want all this to be over. If we can get our shots as quickly as possible, that's our best bet. That's what we're going to go for.

KATARZYNA GAMAJ: It's now easy too, thanks to Cook County Health's walk-in pilot program.

JERRY ROMA: It's real convenient. This way I don't have to work around appointment schedule or anything like that.

MUGO ODIGWE: And for those who are hesitant about getting the vaccine,

ROSETTA PERKINS: That really is a good deal for us. Yeah because to make the appointment, you got to sit and think, should I make the appointment, because I don't want to cancel.

MUGO ODIGWE: If you walk into the Tinley Park location, you'll get a Moderna vaccine. If you go to the one at Matteson, you get the Pfizer vaccine. Both sides are open from 8:30 AM to 5:30 in the evening from now through Saturday. You'll need a photo ID to register on-site.

Remember the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine currently approved for anyone 16 or 17 years of age. Those people will need to go to the Matteson location and must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Gamaj, who was one of the first people in line today, sees this as one giant step to normalcy.

KATARZYNA GAMAJ: I think everybody should get vaccinated. We can turn this just into a regular flu, if everybody takes it seriously.

MUGO ODIGWE: Again, this is just a pilot program. It ends this Saturday. Cook County Health says it might extend it depending on how the next few days go.

Also you can still register for a vaccine appointment online. That link is vaccine.cookcountyil.gov.

In Tinley Park, Mugo Odigwe, CBS 2 News.

Daily Herald

Has supply caught up with COVID-19 vaccine demand?

Jake Griffin

April 23, 2021

<https://www.dailyherald.com/news/20210422/has-supply-caught-up-with-covid-19-vaccine-demand>

Ryan Johnson was never in any rush to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

But when Cook County Health opened up two South suburban mass vaccination sites this week to allow walk-ins without appointments, the Crestwood man figured the time was right to get his shot.

He expected long lines and a long wait. He got neither.

"I thought I was going to be waiting in line for an hour or two, but I'm leaving about 35 minutes after I walked through the door," Johnson said Thursday outside the Tinley Park Convention Center mass vaccination site. "This was easy."

Walk-ins outpaced those with appointments at the convention center Thursday, but it was definitely more of a trickle than a steady stream. The site can handle 2,160 vaccinations a day, but at lunchtime there were far more workers than patients.

"We have projected to see a plateau in demand and we are just starting to see that, just like the rest of the country," said Iliana Mora, chief operating officer at Cook County Health, which oversees operation of the vaccination process at the walk-in sites. "This is an exciting new opportunity to further reduce barriers to vaccination, such as technology. We have seen good results so far, with today being the first full day of accepting walk-ins."

The program is offering walk-in vaccinations from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Saturday at the Tinley Park site at 8451 Convention Center Drive as well as the former Matteson Target at 4647 Promenade Way. Walk-ins need only bring a photo ID and will not be asked for insurance, payment or immigration status, health officials said.

The Matteson site is using the Pfizer vaccine, which has been approved for anyone 16 and older. However, 16- and 17-year-olds need to be accompanied by their parent or guardian when getting vaccinated, officials said.

Many walk-ins Thursday in Tinley Park said they were grateful for the new process because they were either unable to access appointments before or grew frustrated by the registration process.

"We don't have a computer, so we couldn't ever make an appointment," Diane Kowalczyk of Palos Heights said after getting her first dose of the Moderna vaccine with her husband, LeRoy, Thursday in Tinley Park. "We wanted to be vaccinated because I think more and more people were getting uncomfortable with us not having had the vaccine."

While some are worried interest in the vaccine might be waning, state health officials reported Thursday that 131,411 more doses were administered the previous day.

That brings the total number of doses administered statewide to 8,473,953, according to Illinois Department of Public Health figures. Nearly 30% of the state's population is now considered fully vaccinated, which is two weeks removed from receiving their final dose of the vaccine.

Meanwhile, IDPH officials also announced 33 more COVID-19 deaths, along with 3,170 new cases.

Since the outbreak began, 21,755 Illinois residents have died from the virus, while 1,312,722 have been infected, according to IDPH figures.

Hospitals statewide are treating 2,147 COVID-19 patients, 511 of whom are in intensive care, IDPH officials also reported.

The state's seven-day case positivity rate is at 3.8%, where it has been for the past three days.

Vaccinations have been cited by local and state public health officials as the reason a recent surge of cases has plateaued.

Getting more people vaccinated will drive the state's caseload down even more, but health officials believe they might have to resort to more nontraditional methods of inoculating the public, like opening the process to walk-ins.

"This is one of several strategies we have to meet people where they are at and make it as simple as possible to get vaccinated," Mora said.

Tinley Park resident Carmen Smith said the walk-in process was much smoother than she expected. She recommended it for anyone hesitant about getting the vaccine and said she felt fine after her shot.

"Look, I tried to go online a couple times and couldn't make an appointment, and this was really quick and easy," she said. "I walked in and walked out; and I'm hungry as always, so I know I'm fine."

Social Media Dashboard



Insights and Activity Report

March 23, 2021 – April 23, 2021



COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Social Media Summary

March – April Activity

During March 23 – April 23, 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 – **32** posts

<https://www.facebook.com/Cookcountyhhs/>

Instagram – **19** posts (*does NOT include stories*)

<https://www.instagram.com/cookcountyhealth/>

Twitter – **35** (*includes retweets*)

<https://twitter.com/CookCtyHealth>

LinkedIn – **7** posts

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cook-county-health/>

Social Media Insights

As of April 23

Twitter (28-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **83.4K** (up **68%**)
- Profile visits: **3,744**
- Mentions: **133**
- Followers: **4,011** (up **113**)

LinkedIn (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **17.1K**
- Unique visitors: **457**
- Followers: **6,546** (up **144**)

Facebook (28-Day Summary)

- Post reach: **676.0K** (up **48%**)
- Post engagement: **24.2K** (up **122%**)
- Page views: **2,158**
- Page likes: **5,357** (up **139**)
- Page followers: **6,341** (up **141**)

Instagram (30-Day Summary)

- Impressions: **12,077**
- Reach: **1,520**
- Profile visits: **582**
- Followers: **2,379** (up **35**)

Top Social Media Posts

March 23 – April 23

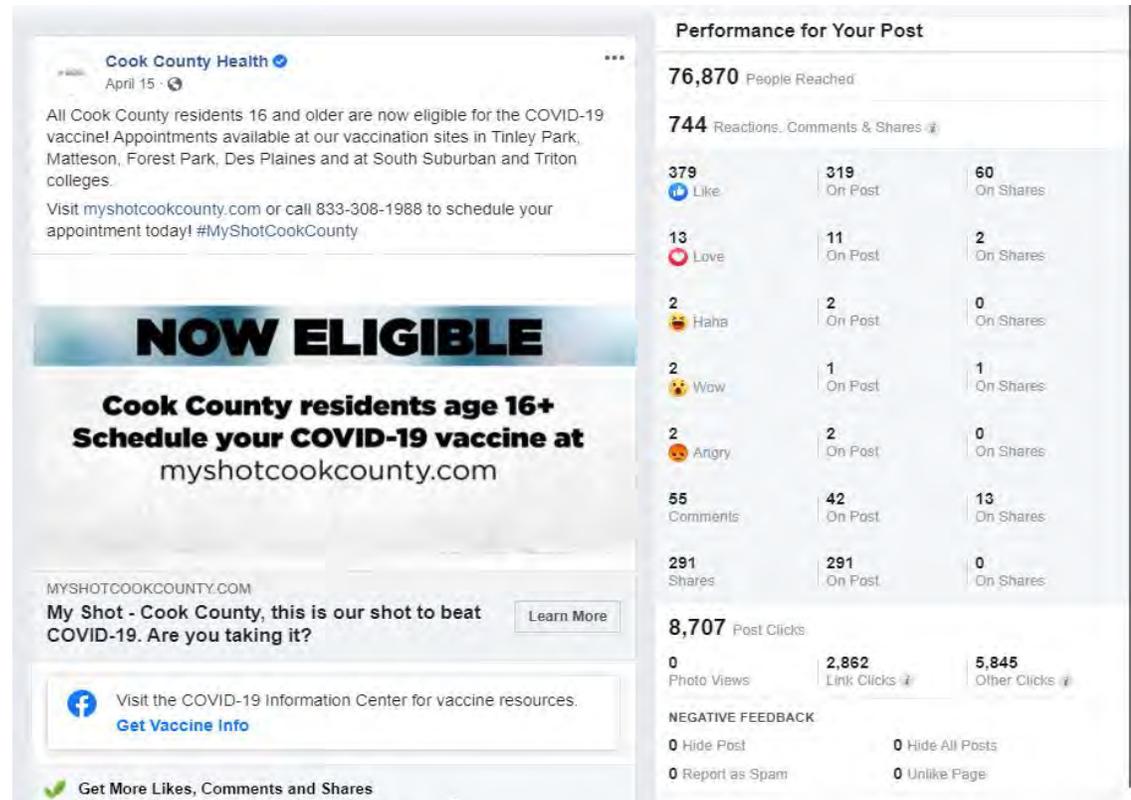


COOK COUNTY
HEALTH

Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **76.9K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **744**



Top Social Media Posts: Facebook

Post Performance

- Reach: **1.1K**
- Reactions, comments and shares: **43**

Cook County Health ✓
April 16 · 🌐

Today, Cook County Health reached another milestone in our vaccination efforts. Our Des Plaines site recorded its 100,00th dose administered! Every person who is vaccinated takes us one step closer to ending this pandemic. Call 833-308-1988 or visit vaccine.cookcountyil.gov for information about the COVID-19 vaccine. #MyShotCookCounty

Performance for Your Post

1,086 People Reached

43 Reactions, Comments & Shares

33 Like	23 On Post	10 On Shares
2 Love	1 On Post	1 On Shares
3 Comments	1 On Post	2 On Shares
5 Shares	5 On Post	0 On Shares

26 Post Clicks

3 Photo Views	2 Link Clicks	21 Other Clicks
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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

[Visit the COVID-19 Information Center for vaccine resources.](#)
[Get Vaccine Info](#)

Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

- Impressions: **850**
- Reach: **764**
- Profile visits from post: **9**

Statement from Cook County Health Regarding the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

Following guidance released this morning from the US Food and Drug Administration and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cook County Health will pause the use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine until the FDA and CDC complete their review.

Depending on the vaccine location, individuals with appointments for J&J this week will receive Moderna or Pfizer. Those who do not wish to receive the Moderna or the Pfizer vaccine should call 833-308-1988 to cancel or reschedule their appointment.

Today's appointment release, currently scheduled for 3PM, will not include appointments for Johnson & Johnson.

The Cook County Department of Public Health has asked all Johnson & Johnson partners to pause using the vaccine as well.

Cook County Health will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Following CDC/FDA guidance, individuals given the J&J vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot contact their health care provider.



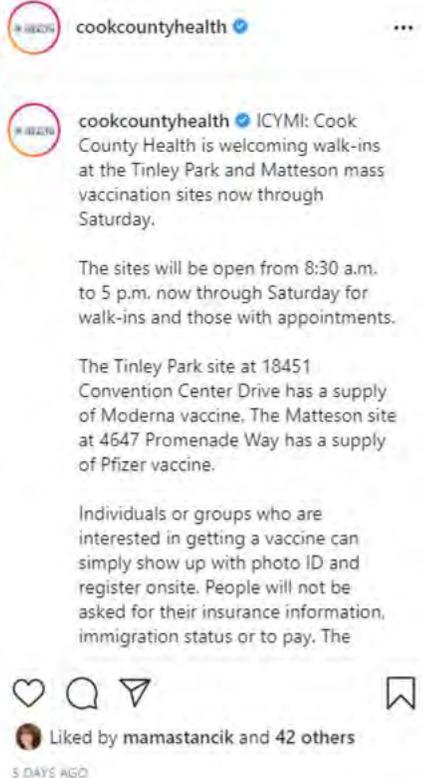
Top Social Media Posts: Instagram

Post Performance

- Impressions: **876**
- Reach: **711**
- Profile visits from post: **10**



The poster features a dark blue background with white and light blue text. At the top, it includes logos for 'COVID-19 COMMUNITY VACCINATION PROGRAM', 'COOK COUNTY HEALTH', 'COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT', and 'Cook County Public Health'. The main headline reads 'COVID-19 VACCINATIONS WALK-INS WELCOME'. Below this, the dates 'WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21 - SATURDAY, APRIL 24' and times '8:30AM - 5:00PM' are listed. Two columns of information are provided: the left column for 'AGE 18+' at the 'TINLEY PARK CONVENTION CENTER' (18451 CONVENTION CENTER DR., TINLEY PARK, IL) with a Moderna logo; and the right column for 'AGE 16+' at the 'MATTESON COMMUNITY VACCINATION SITE (FORMER TARGET STORE)' (4647 PROMENADE WAY, MATTESON, IL) with a Pfizer logo. A note at the bottom states 'NO APPOINTMENT IS NEEDED. VACCINATIONS ARE FREE, REGARDLESS OF INSURANCE OR IMMIGRATION STATUS.' and a disclaimer: '* 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLDS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN TO THEIR APPOINTMENT.'



The screenshot shows an Instagram post from the account 'cookcountyhealth'. The caption reads: 'ICYMI: Cook County Health is welcoming walk-ins at the Tinley Park and Matteson mass vaccination sites now through Saturday. The sites will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. now through Saturday for walk-ins and those with appointments. The Tinley Park site at 18451 Convention Center Drive has a supply of Moderna vaccine. The Matteson site at 4647 Promenade Way has a supply of Pfizer vaccine. Individuals or groups who are interested in getting a vaccine can simply show up with photo ID and register onsite. People will not be asked for their insurance information, immigration status or to pay. The' The post shows engagement icons for likes, comments, shares, and a bookmark, along with the text 'Liked by mamastancik and 42 others' and '5 DAYS AGO'.

Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **17,167**
- Total engagements: **307**



Top Social Media Posts: Twitter

Post Performance

- Impressions: **4,775**
- Total engagements: **36**



Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **3,466**
- Clicks: **93**
- Reactions: **66**

Cook County Health 6,547 followers
1mo • Edited •

Congratulations to our 2020 ICARE (Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect, Excellence) Employees of the Year who were recognized at our Board of Directors meeting this morning with a special presentation by Cook County Health Foundation Chairman Joseph Flanagan (pictured). The Cook County Health 2020 ICARE Employees of the Year are:

Integrity: Denise Colletti (pictured)
Collaboration: Blessing Onuorah
Accountability: Thomas Liss
Respect: Addie Francher (pictured)
Excellence: Jessica Rico (pictured)



66 • 11 comments

Top Social Media Posts: LinkedIn

Post Performance

- Impressions: **4,175**
- Clicks: **430**
- Reactions: **94**

