

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 23, 2020

MERCED COUNTY RECEIVES INITIAL COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES

MERCED COUNTY, CA – On December 17, 2020, The Merced County Department of Public Health (Department) received its first allocation of COVID-19 vaccine from the State. The first installment included 975 doses for distribution to acute care hospital facilities. The Department has adopted a phased approach which is included in the vaccine distribution matrix (attached). Merced County remains in Phase 1a of vaccine distribution.

Both Merced County hospitals have received their first allocations and are actively vaccinating essential healthcare workers and high risk personnel. Once those vaccinations have concluded and all of the acute care hospital facility personnel have received full vaccination, the Department will continue following the state’s prioritization guidelines with the limited County vaccination supply. This next group will include first responder personnel and health care workers outside of the hospital setting. The state’s current timeline projects that vaccine will become available to the general population in or around spring/summer 2021. The Department will be putting out frequent communication to keep residents advised of vaccine plans as the County moves through the different phases of distribution.

Merced County remains under a stay-at-home order as the number of cases and hospitalizations increase at rapid rates. During this Christmas season, we ask that you exercise best prevention measures and keep you and your loved ones safe. “As cases and hospitalizations rise, so do the number of deaths and this is especially true now”, says Dr. Salvador Sandoval, County Health Officer. “The vaccine is a final step in this very long road, but we will continue to heavily rely on personal and community-wide best practices to reduce rates of transmission and ask for your patience as this critical step is underway”.

As a reminder, it is still a **local and statewide mandate** to wear a cloth face covering inside of, or in line to enter any indoor public space, or when unable to maintain six feet for social distancing. Merced County health officials strongly urge all residents to exercise the following safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- ✓ Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- ✓ Practice social distancing
- ✓ Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- ✓ Use hand sanitizer with 60 percent alcohol base when handwashing is not possible
- ✓ Stay home and isolate, if you are feeling sick

For more details regarding the State’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, visit
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID-19Vaccine.aspx>

For information on COVID-19 and additional testing locations, visit the Department's website at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus. Follow us on social media for more updates:

- Facebook: Merced County Department of Public Health
- Instagram: @mercedcountypublichealth

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