



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 26, 2021

Increasing Vaccine Accessibility through Collaboration

MERCED COUNTY, CA – The Central California Alliance for Health (Alliance), the Merced County Department of Public Health, and the healthcare provider community are pleased to announce the expansion of vaccine eligibility throughout the County.

Merced County continues to receive low vaccine allocation; however, the health care provider community has played a significant role in expanding vaccine efforts to specific workforce groups. As the state expands the list of vaccine-eligible individuals, this collaboration with the provider community is critical in ensuring that all residents have access.

“As the Medi-Cal managed health plan for over half of all Merced County residents, we recognize that the most vulnerable in our communities are among the hardest hit by the effects of COVID-19,” states Stephanie Sonnenshine, CEO of Central California Alliance for Health. “The Alliance applauds the efforts of the Merced County Department of Public Health to ensure these underserved populations have access to the vaccines.”

The state’s early allocation formula for vaccine is based on the number of healthcare providers in the county. The vaccine shortage in Merced County has placed the community at 2nd lowest in the state for vaccine allocation despite having the 5th overall highest death rate from COVID-19. This provider network collaboration is a significant achievement and a testament to the dedication of our providers for the residents in Merced County.

“Throughout the course of this pandemic, the ongoing commitment and dedication from our provider community has greatly contributed to broader access for vaccine; and as the County awaits a higher allocation, this partnership will be key in serving our community. Providers play a big role, perhaps the largest, in providing vaccines as part of overall patient care,” said Dr. Salvador Sandoval, County Health Officer.

The list of eligible phases is attached, and now includes frontline essential workers such as educators, childcare workers, emergency services, and food and agricultural workers. If you are currently eligible to receive the vaccine, please contact your provider to see if you are able to make an appointment. Below is information regarding the clinics being offered:

- Apex Medical Group, Los Banos, and Dos Palos locations, please contact 209-826-2222 (Los Banos) or 209-392-0022 (Dos Palos) to schedule appointments.
- Castle Family Health Center, at Buhach Colony High School, call 209-726-1235 to schedule appointments.
- Golden Valley Health Centers, open to 65 years and older only, at this time in multiple locations throughout Merced County, call 866-682-4842 to schedule appointments.
- Livingston Community Health, 600 B Street, Livingston, call 833-850-3500 to schedule appointments.

- Merced Faculty Associates, open to existing MFA patients only at this time. MFA will reach out to eligible patients to schedule appointments. If you are eligible and haven't been reached, please call your primary care provider's office.
- Merced County, pop-up clinics February 27 in Hilmar and Gustine. Eligible individuals who previously registered through the www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com website, or through the Public Health information line, will receive an email notification or be contacted by telephone with appointment options by HR Support (may come from outside the 209 area code).

“Despite low vaccine allocations from the state—our health department, healthcare providers and the Board of Supervisors are tirelessly working together to protect this community with scheduling an additional 6,000 doses of vaccine this week—that is a significant achievement. Furthermore, I cannot fail to mention the assistance we've received from our Congressman, Senator and Assemblyman,” said Chairman Daron McDaniel of the Merced County Board of Supervisors. “The ability of our local providers to step up and vaccinate our residents is nothing short of extraordinary.”

To receive e-mail notifications when additional Merced County vaccine clinics become available, register at www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com. Anyone who does not have access to a computer or internet can call the Public Health Information Line at 209-381-1180 to request notifications for future vaccine clinic appointments (on a first come, first served basis). 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 of social distance outside.

###

COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution: Phase 1

As of February 26, 2021

The supply of COVID-19 vaccine is limited, which means that the vaccine will be offered to different groups of people in different phases, starting with our healthcare workers. As more vaccines become available, it will be offered to everyone. Below is a list of groups that will be offered the vaccine in phases, according to their risk of exposure.

- Key:**
- Green circle indicates that the group has been offered the vaccine.
 - Yellow circle indicates that the group is waiting to be offered the vaccine.
 - Red circle indicates that the vaccine is not yet available at this time.

Phase 1A

Tier 1:

- Acute care, psychiatric and correctional facility hospitals
- Skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and similar settings for older or medically vulnerable individuals
- Residents in long-term care settings
- Paramedics, EMTs, and others providing emergency medical services
- Dialysis centers

Tier 2:

- Intermediate care facilities for persons who need non-continuous nursing supervision and supportive care
- Home health care and in-home supportive services
- Public Health field staff
- Primary care clinics, including federally qualified health centers, rural health centers, correctional facility clinics, and urgent care clinics
- Community health workers, including promotoras

Tier 3:

- Specialty clinics (i.e. optometry, cardiology, neurology, outpatient, surgery, physical therapy, etc.)
- Laboratory workers
- Dental and other oral health clinics
- Pharmacy staff not working in settings at higher tiers
- Veterinarians

Phase 1B

Tier 1:

- **Persons 65 years and older**
- **Frontline Essential Workers**
Sectors: education, childcare, emergency services (such as law enforcement), and food and agriculture (*see attached, Appendix A for details*)

Tier 2:

- **Frontline Essential Workers**
Sectors: transportation and logistics; industrial, commercial, residential, and sheltering facilities and services; critical manufacturing
- **Congregate settings with outbreak risk**
Incarcerated
Homeless

Phase 1C

- **Persons 50-64 years old**
- **Persons 16-49 years old with high risk health conditions**

- **Other essential workers**
Sectors: water and Wastewater, government operations, community-based essential functions, defense, energy, chemical/hazardous materials, finance services, and IT/communications

- Other sectors not included may be added to a comparable phase.

These proposed allocations are based on recommendations by the CDC and ACIP

For more information, visit www.vaccinatemercedcounty.com

Appendix A: Phase 1B, Tier 1 - Frontline Essential Workers

The list below will provide further information about Frontline Essential Worker eligibility under Phase 1B of the vaccine distribution plan. To ensure that vulnerable groups continue to be prioritized, the vaccine will be allocated as 70% for individuals 65 years and older and 30% for essential workers.

Initial vaccine supplies will be only available to a limited group of essential workers and will expand as vaccine allocations increase in Merced County. At this time, the following sectors will be considered eligible to receive the vaccine as a Frontline Essential Worker:

● Eligible for Vaccination

- Education and childcare sectors.
- Emergency Services including law enforcement, paramedics, and first responders.
- Farmers, farm and ranch workers, and agribusiness support services.
- Veterinary health, animal diagnostic and food testing laboratories.
- Workers in food manufacture and maintenance of equipment associated with infrastructure necessary to food/ agricultural production and distribution.
- Food manufacturer and supplier workers (includes poultry and livestock).
- Workers at animal care facilities that provide food, shelter, veterinary/routine care.
- Workers in sanitation of food manufacturers.

● Soon -to-be Eligible for Vaccination

- Retail store workers (groceries/convenience stores, pharmacies).
- Restaurant workers (includes carry-out and quick serve food operations).
- Workers in sanitation of operations from wholesale to retail.
- Workers in growth/distribution of plants and associated products for home gardens.
- Workers in sawmills, fiber and forest manufactures/distributors.
- Workers in cafeterias used to feed workers, particularly worker populations sheltered against COVID-19.
- Government, private, and non-governmental organizations' workers essential for food assistance programs (including school lunch programs) and government payments.
- Workers at production, storage, transport, and distribution of chemicals and medicines.
- Transporters supporting animal agricultural industries.