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**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Date: December 14, 2020**

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## **Vaccine Distribution in South Central Idaho**

**SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO** – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) is preparing for the region’s first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine to arrive in the next few days. The vaccine, created by Pfizer and BioNTech, was determined both safe and effective by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Today, Idaho Health and Welfare announced they would begin shipping out vaccine doses to local health districts for distribution.

Idaho’s vaccine rollout plans instruct local health districts to prioritize vaccine for local hospital staff and outpatient clinic staff who are providing care for COVID-19 patients. After those facilities have been offered the vaccine, remaining doses will be offered to additional groups following [Idaho’s COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee’s \(CVAC\) recommendations](#).

The first vaccine shipment sent to South Central Public Health District is expected to contain 975 doses and will arrive sometime this week.

“This is not enough vaccine to offer to every one of our frontline workers, but it’s a good start,” said Josh Jensen, SCPHD public health program manager. “We are hopeful additional vaccine shipments will arrive in the coming weeks, but for now, we are doing everything we can to make this first shipment of vaccine cover as much of our district as possible.”

SCPHD has been coordinating with local hospitals to schedule vaccine clinics for their staff. Because this vaccine requires unusually complex conditions to stay viable, the health district will not ship doses to hospitals until they are prepared to handle the vaccine.

SCPHD is also working directly with healthcare partners in the priority groups to prepare for vaccine distribution in future shipments. If you fit within the priority group in phase 1 and you would like to provide vaccine through your facility, please contact the [Idaho Immunization Program](#) for enrollment information. If you are a member of the general public seeking vaccine,

SCPHD will release regular updates informing residents when vaccine will be available. Please do not contact the health district directly to arrange for a vaccine.

The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses. Because the timing of future shipments are unknown, SCPHD will hold back half of the provided vaccine doses until another shipment is confirmed. This will ensure everyone vaccinated has access to a second dose.

“We are thrilled people will have protection through this vaccine, but it’s important to remember that we won’t have enough doses for most of our residents until this spring or summer at the earliest,” said Jensen. “Please keep your guard up. Keep taking precautions. We have many more months to go and many people we still need to protect.”

Common side effects of vaccines include fever, body aches, injection site pain, redness at the injection site, and headaches. These are all safe side-effects and signs your body’s immune system is responding and building protection. Some will not experience any noticeable side effects.

The FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourage the public to report possible side effects (called adverse events) to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#). This national system collects these data to look for adverse events that are unexpected, appear to happen more often than expected, or have unusual patterns of occurrence. Learn about the [difference between a vaccine side effect and an adverse event](#). Reports to VAERS help CDC monitor the safety of vaccines.

South Central Public Health District will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. The CVAC meetings are open to the public to view online and the information from the meetings can be found on their webpage: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/idaho-covid-19-vaccine-advisory-committee/>

#### Resources:

SCPHD is running two COVID-19 informational hotlines, one in English at (208) 737-1138, and one in Spanish at (208) 737-5965. These hotlines are currently running from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays.

Idaho Health and Welfare is also running a hotline for people feeling overwhelmed, isolated, or distressed because of COVID-19. That hotline is available 24/7 at 888-330-3010.

Please refer to <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus> for the latest local numbers and guidance. Refer to <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/> for statewide information.