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NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: February 5, 2021

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Vaccine priority subgroup 2.3 start date scheduled in South Central Idaho

SCPHD urges residents 65 and older to continue to sign up for vaccine.

**Businesses and employers are encouraged to use the new state
pre-registration while planning for workforce COVID-19 vaccinations**

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO — This week, Idaho Health and Welfare (IDHW) announced the next priority group, 2.3 Essential Workers, will open across the state by mid-March. Because demand for the vaccine among residents already qualified for a COVID-19 vaccine remains high in this region, South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) will not open the priority group 2.3 until March 15th, 2021.

“This gives our older population time to sign up for a vaccination appointment before tens of thousands of more residents are added to the pool,” said Josh Jensen, SCPHD Program Manager. “It also gives employers in our region a chance to learn the process and help their employees sign up for a vaccine appointment when they become eligible.”

An estimated 47 percent of people 65 years and older who are currently eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine within South Central Public Health District’s (SCPHD) eight-county jurisdiction have received their first dose since February 1, 2021. Local providers report consistent interest and demand for vaccines through their offices and SCPHD is still working through a waitlist that includes several thousand residents.

“The people signed up on our waitlist will not fall to the bottom of the pile when this new priority group opens,” said Jensen. “We will work through the list in the order people signed up, just as we have always done.”

SCPHD is encouraging residents to make use of a new state [pre-registration tool](#), that will act like a state-wide waitlist and make their information available to multiple providers in their area.

Opening priority group 2.3 on March 15th

Those eligible as part of the next subgroup include frontline workers who have close and frequent contact with others as part of their regular job duties, which puts them at higher risk for exposure. Idaho National Guard Members that were not included in previous subgroups, residents of homeless shelters, ASL and other language interpreters, and cleaning and janitorial staff who work in one of the outlined industries will also be eligible under subgroup 2.3.

Frontline workers

- Food and agricultural workers
 - o Food processing workers, including USDA processing plant inspectors
 - o Grocery, convenience store, and food pantry workers
- Manufacturing workers
- Public transit workers
- U.S. Postal Services workers
- Flight crews
- Subset of essential gas, electric, water, and telecommunications utility workers, who work indoors

Other people eligible in subgroup 2.3

- Idaho National Guard (if not included in previous subgroups)
- Residents of homeless shelters
- Interpreters (ASL or other language)
- Janitorial and cleaning staff who work within any of these sectors or settings (including above)

What should those in subgroup 2.3 do now?

Individuals within the 2.3 subgroup should work with their employer on how to best access vaccine starting on March 15th.

Employers and industries within the 2.3 subgroup are encouraged to consider among the following options for employees:

- Employers may encourage their employees to seek their own individual appointments through an enrolled vaccine provider when subgroup 2.3 becomes eligible. It is preferred that people sign up on the new state [pre-registration tool](#) so they have access to as many providers as possible. Or they can make an appointment with an enrolled vaccine provider within the community they live.
- For a list of enrolled vaccine providers in Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls Counties visit <https://www.phd5.idaho.gov/Covid-vaccine/>

- As a reminder, enrolled vaccine providers will ask people to bring proof of eligibility to their vaccine appointment. This may include a pay stub or other proof of employment. Additionally, proof of Idaho residency is now required. Learn more at <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/news/state-require-proof-residency-or-work-idaho-vaccine-appointments>
- Employers may establish an agreement with an enrolled vaccine provider for an on-site/mobile/private vaccine clinic for their employees. SCPHD is willing to help facilitate a connection between interested employers and providers.
- If an employer establishes an agreement for an on-site vaccine clinic for employees, it would not prohibit employees from seeking their own vaccine appointment.

Assistance by phone

For those who do not have internet or computer access in Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls Counties, please call the SCPHD Call Center to speak to one of our representatives. If you need help determining whether you qualify for vaccine once subgroup 2.3 is opened you may visit <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/covid-19-vaccination> or call the SCPHD Call Center. The Call Center can be reached at 208-737-1138 every business day from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and on weekends from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Additional information and resources:

Governor Brad Little press release announcing the new state pre-registration tool:

<https://gov.idaho.gov/pressrelease/idaho-launches-covid-19-vaccine-appointment-pre-registration-system/>

*SCPHD will not be able to check an individual's position on the state pre-registration tool. After filling out the form, residents will receive an email when a local provider has pulled their name to schedule an appointment. *

Recommendations for vaccine prioritization in Idaho are made by the [COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee \(CVAC\)](#) and final decisions are made by Governor Brad Little.

To view CVAC's vaccine priority plan, visit either of the following links:

- o <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CURRENT-CVAC-Vaccine-Prioritization.pdf>
- o <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/covid-19-vaccination>