



Leadership

Toni Preckwinkle
President, Cook County Board of Commissioners

Israel Rocha, Jr.
Chief Executive Officer, Cook County Health

Rachel Rubin, MD, MPH, FACP
Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer

Kiran Joshi, MD, MPH
Co-Lead and Senior Medical Officer

Board of Directors

M. Hill Hammock
Chair of the Board

David Ernesto Munar
Vice Chair of the Board

Robert Currie
Hon. Dr. Dennis Deer, LCPC, CCFC
Mary Driscoll, RN, MPH
Raul Garza
Ada Mary Gugenheim

Joseph M. Harrington
Mike Koetting
Heather M. Prendergast, MD, MS, MPH
Robert G. Reiter, Jr.
Otis L. Story, Sr.

Cook County Announces COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan

COOK COUNTY, IL— Today, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Commissioner Dr. Dennis Deer, Cook County Health CEO Israel Rocha, Jr., and the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) Senior Medical Officers, Dr. Kiran Joshi and Dr. Rachel Rubin, provided details of the COVID-19 Vaccination Distribution Plans for Suburban Cook County.

CCDPH is working with partners at all levels, including hospitals, health care providers and community leaders, to develop flexible and responsive COVID-19 vaccination programs that can accommodate different vaccines.

“After a year that has presented unthinkable challenges to our residents, I am grateful that the COVID-19 vaccine will become available in the coming weeks,” President Preckwinkle said. “As we look toward 2021, it is my hope that this vaccine, and Cook County’s plan to administer the vaccine, will provide renewed hope that we are a step closer to a sense of normalcy.”

Cook County Health, which expects to receive the COVID-19 vaccines this week, has been preparing for this first phase of what will be a comprehensive plan to engage and immunize employees, patients and the community.

“When we get beyond healthcare and first responders, we are committed to a program that focuses on populations at most risk. This pandemic has been another glaring example of the inequities in our nation,” said Mr. Israel Rocha, Jr., Cook County Health Chief Executive Officer. “We have watched minority communities suffer the brunt of this virus, the rate of illness and the rate of death.”

“Our focus on vaccine distribution will ensure that we prioritize health equity,” said Mr. Rocha. “That we take the time and resources necessary to educate every individual about the safety and efficacy of this vaccine. There is nothing more important in healthcare than trust and that important principle will be at the core of every effort to vaccinate our employees, our patients and our communities.”

While CCDPH will provide some direct vaccinations, most will be administered by partners, such as hospitals, other healthcare facilities (e.g., clinics, nursing homes, etc.) and retail pharmacies with federal contracts. The department is working to identify sites and will provide updates as they become available.

“We encourage all healthcare workers, staff and residents of long-term care facilities to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is available,” said Dr. Joshi. “Although the first doses of the vaccine are here, we must all remain vigilant and continue to wear a mask, watch our distance and wash our hands – whether we have received the vaccine or not.”

Vaccination for COVID-19 in suburban Cook County will be rolled out in phases, based on national guidance. A limited supply will be available to start, as a result, vaccines will first be prioritized for:

- Healthcare workers: particularly those who treat COVID patients. Hospitals will vaccinate their own employees.
- Residents and staff at long-term care facilities: long-term care facilities are part of a federal program that will work with pharmacies to vaccinate residents and staff.

“The Cook County Department of Public Health is committed to getting vaccine into the arms of all residents of the county, especially those most vulnerable and underserved,” Dr. Rubin said.

As vaccine supply is expected to continually increase in the weeks and months ahead, CCDPH will work with partners to ensure those that are the most vulnerable have access COVID-19 vaccinations.

In the months ahead, the vaccine will be available to all suburban Cook County residents who wish to have it.

"I am grateful to CCDPH and President Preckwinkle for their proactive leadership on creating a plan to deliver the vaccine to our residents," said Cook County Commissioner Dennis Deer, who also chairs the Health and Hospital Committee. "I look forward to protecting our most vulnerable residents, like healthcare workers and the elderly, in the coming weeks and continuing to implement a vaccination plan that centers equity."

CCDPH is encouraging healthcare entities interested in administering the vaccine to their staff, to take the following steps to enroll to receive the vaccine:

- Register in I-CARE (Illinois Comprehensive Automated Immunization Registry Exchange)
- Review COVID-19 Provider Requirements on IDPH SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Planning Guide (Section 5)
- If you can meet the COVID-19 provider requirements, please use the instructions located on the I-CARE website to complete, sign and return the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement and Profile form, electronically through I-CARE.

A copy of today's presentation can be found [here](#).

For answers to frequently asked questions the latest information about COVID vaccine development and CCDPH's vaccine distribution plan, visit the Cook County Department of Public Health website at www.cookcountypublichealth.org.

###