



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Unified Government Public Health Department Prepares for COVID-19 Vaccines in Wyandotte County

Awaiting Moderna vaccines; converting former Kmart facility into a vaccine site

The Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) announced today that they are preparing for COVID-19 vaccines to arrive next week from Moderna, pending Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

This initial round of vaccines will be provided to health department workers and EMS, followed by additional healthcare-associated workers. The UGPHD has converted a portion of their COVID-19 testing site at 7836 State Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas (a former Kmart building location), for vaccine distribution.

“The arrival of the vaccine will provide a critical step in containing and ultimately defeating this pandemic, which has taken too many lives and significantly impacted our entire community. Until we have COVID-19 under control, we all must continue utilizing masks, maintain social distancing, and work to protect one another the best we can,” said Mayor/CEO David Alvey.

“It’s all hands on deck right now at the Health Department to ensure that we get the vaccination process up and running as smoothly as possible, and prepare to start rolling this out to more members of our community as additional vaccine supplies become available,” said Juliann Van Liew, Director of the UGPHD. “We are excited to be finalizing the set-up on our first vaccine distribution location at 78th and State, in the former Kmart building. We will still provide COVID-19 testing at this site, as we have been doing since October. We now have a separate section of the building set up specifically for vaccinations. The Kmart site is a more central location for the county. In addition, we are exploring options for two additional vaccine sites on the west and east sides of Wyandotte County.”

First Phase (Phase 1A)

The first phase (Phase 1A) of the vaccination distribution follows directives outlined in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s (KDHE) COVID-19 Vaccination Plan (available for download at [coronavirus.kdheks.gov](https://www.kdheks.gov/coronavirus)). According to the directives from KDHE, the vaccine allotment provided to the UGPHD will be administered in the following order:

- UGPHD and EMS staff (both public and private), including not only frontline clinical staff, but additional staff in other roles where they may be exposed to COVID-19, such as administrative or housekeeping staff.

- The broader healthcare-associated workforce. This includes those serving patients with physical, mental/behavior needs and dental health care needs.
- This also includes individuals within those settings who are not providing direct patient care but who are at risk given their job (such as registration desk staff, medical interpreters, housekeeping staff and other paraprofessionals).

As part of this initial phase, KDHE has notified the UGPHD that they will receive approximately 800 vaccines next week, pending an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the FDA for the Moderna vaccine. Additionally, local hospitals received Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines earlier this week to start providing vaccinations to the staff in their buildings. Long term healthcare facilities enrolled in and are being supported directly by the federal vaccine effort through existing direct partnerships.

Upcoming phases

In the next phase of vaccines, some people who may be eligible include essential workers, people with preexisting conditions, and people age 65 and over. More details on the eligibility criteria for this phase and future phases are still being determined by state and federal authorities. These details will be impacted by the amount of vaccine supplies available early next year.

Wyandotte County residents can learn more about COVID-19 online at wycokck.org/COVID-19 or by calling 3-1-1. To learn more about the State of Kansas' COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, visit coronavirus.kdheks.gov.

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