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Gov. Evers and Department of Health Services Call on Federal Government to Distribute More COVID-19 Vaccine

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) are today calling on the federal government to increase the amount of COVID-19 vaccine doses in the state’s weekly allocations. In just nearly three weeks of vaccine allocation and distribution, Wisconsin built up 1,098 vaccine provider locations that stand ready to give vaccinations throughout the state in order to finish Phase 1A and begin vaccinating more Wisconsinites.

“Our vaccine team is working across the state on vaccine distribution, and so many Wisconsinites are ready to get vaccinated and get back to our Wisconsin way of life,” said Gov. Evers. “In a state where our statewide mitigation strategies have been struck down and challenged time and time again, it is absolutely critical that Wisconsin get additional doses of vaccine to meet demand and box in the virus.”

This week, Wisconsin needs more than 10,000 additional doses to fulfill requests from vaccinating entities across the state. Wisconsin’s allocation has varied weekly, however, this week marks the first time Wisconsin’s demand will exceed our supply. There are an estimated 550,000 Wisconsinites who qualify under Phase 1A and millions more Wisconsinites that will need the vaccine in later phases. The State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (SDMAC) proposed populations for Phase 1B will be released for public comment starting Wednesday. Many health systems have worked through a portion of their staff and have begun vaccinating unaffiliated healthcare providers such as dentists, Emergency Medical Responders, and public health workers who are eligible in 1A.

The governor has repeatedly asked the federal government for additional vaccine, including a [letter](#) sent by a coalition of Midwest governors last week. Additionally, DHS officials have repeatedly asked Operation Warp Speed for additional doses and better forecasting of weekly allocations to be able to plan and project.

“We started with frontline healthcare workers and our most vulnerable since they have been on the frontlines of this pandemic,” said DHS Secretary-designee Andrea Palm. “We are eager to open up eligibility to more Wisconsinites but need the federal government in order to do that. We stand ready to vaccinate more and more folks every week but we need more vaccine.”

So far Wisconsin has administered 151,502 doses of vaccine throughout the state of Wisconsin. Following recommendations from the federal [Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#) and the [SDMAC](#), Wisconsin prioritized frontline healthcare workers and vulnerable residents in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

As part of the [Pharmacy Partnership Program](#) for long-term care, Wisconsin distributed 56,900 doses to start vaccinating nursing home residents and staff on Dec. 28, 2020, and expects to complete vaccinating that population by the end of January. Additionally, 50,000 doses have been reserved to begin on-site vaccinations at assisted living facilities starting Jan. 25, 2021. Wisconsin has one of the highest assisted

living populations per capita in the country and will need a total of 140,000 vaccine doses for this program, including the staff at these facilities. Since federal vaccine allocations are dependent on each state's overall population, and not the number of people in assisted living facilities, Wisconsin took longer than other states to meet the federal program's requirement that mandates the program cannot be activated until the state has banked 50 percent of the total vaccine doses needed to complete the program.

Wisconsin's vaccine team has been ramping up the state's vaccine infrastructure, registering and training new vaccine providers, and implementing plans to fill any gaps in vaccine accessibility, but without increased federal allocations, the state is constrained in its efforts to ensure the quick and equitable distribution of this critical resource. For up-to-date information, resources, and data on Wisconsin's vaccination program, please visit our [DHS vaccine webpage](#).

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