



AS IT IS

Next Americans in Line for Vaccine: People over 75, Essential Workers

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U.S. health officials have identified the next Americans who should receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Among the groups are people 75 years and older, as well as **essential** workers such as firefighters, teachers and food store employees.

The guidance was issued Sunday by a group of medical experts who lead the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. The committee is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Leaders of the group take a vote to decide.

The nation's first COVID-19 vaccination effort began one week ago, when the first **doses** were sent to vaccination centers throughout the country.

The CDC committee decided earlier this month that the first shots should be given to health care workers and people living in care centers. That group is estimated to include about 24 million people.

The CDC said that, as of Sunday, about 556,000 Americans had been given vaccine shots.

The first COVID-19 vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration was developed by American drug maker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech. A second vaccine, developed by Moderna and the U.S. National Institutes of Health, was approved last week and began shipping on Sunday.

The groups the CDC committee identified as next in line for the vaccine make up an estimated 50 million people.

Those considered essential workers include firefighters and police, teachers and other school employees. It also includes individuals working in food, agriculture and manufacturing industries, as well post office and public transport workers. The groups are considered at very high risk of infection because their jobs are critical and require them to be in contact with other people.

Officials say it is not clear how long it will take to vaccinate those groups. Vaccine doses have been produced slower than earlier estimates. Some experts also note that some people in the groups may choose not to get vaccinated.

The CDC committee has also voted on the next groups it thinks should be vaccinated. Among them are people aged 65 to 74, and those aged 16 to 64 at higher risk because they have medical conditions like **obesity** and cancer.

The expert committee's recommendations will be used by U.S. states as they create their own vaccination programs.

Federal officials have said they expect vaccine doses to be limited for several months. CDC officials say up to 20 million people are predicted to start getting shots this month, another 30 million next month, and 50 million in February. That would be 100 million out of a population of more than 330 million.

Public health experts say the shots -- and others still being developed -- are the only way to stop a virus that has been spreading uncontrollably. Nationwide, more than 219,000 people per day on average test **positive** for the virus. COVID-19 has killed over 317,000 people in the United States and nearly 1.7 million worldwide.

The first doses of Moderna's vaccine left a factory in Mississippi on Sunday and the first shots were to be given on Monday. The moves came just three days after the Food and Drug Administration approved the Moderna vaccine for emergency use.

I'm Bryan Lynn.

The Associated Press reported on this story. Bryan Lynn adapted the report for VOA Learning English. Ashley Thompson was the editor.

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Words in This Story

essential – *adj.* very important and necessary

dose – *n.* the amount of a medicine or vaccine that is needed to be effective against disease

obesity – *n.* extremely fat

positive – *adj.* in a medical test, positive means the person being tested has a disease or condition
