

COVID-19 Vaccine Arrives at Coffee Regional Medical Center

The beginning of the end of the COVID-19 global pandemic began with the distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine. Following the FDA's approval of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine for emergency use, an ambitious vaccine distribution plan is unfolding. This vaccine distribution effort, known as Operation Warp Speed (OWS) will initially include the two approved vaccines and potentially others in the future. This collaborative effort and phased plan outlined by OWS will help to ensure the aggressive target of vaccinating a majority of the U.S population over the coming months.

Today, Coffee Regional Medical Center received its first doses of the Moderna vaccination. These initial doses will be part of Phase 1a of the OWS immunization plan. They will go to frontline healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities who are prioritized as the most vulnerable. Phase 1b, which will begin following Phase 1a, will include essential workers, including teachers, emergency responders, transportation, and those in the food & agriculture industry. Those adults who are high-risk or medically fragile and adults aged 65 and over will be offered the vaccination in Phase 1c. The distribution efforts are planned to continue well into 2021. We are all anxious to get to Phase 2 of the vaccine administration when the vaccine can be distributed more widely to the general population. All access to the vaccine phases will be based on supply and regulatory approval.

Both of the approved vaccines are administered in a two-dose series and will be administered at no cost to the recipient. Both are approved for recipients over the age of 18 years. The two doses must be administered 3-4 weeks apart, depending on which vaccine is received. It is important to note that the same brand vaccine must be used for both doses. Side effects of the vaccine are usually short-lived and may include fatigue, headache, low-grade fever, and mild pain around the injection site. No serious or life-threatening side effects have been reported in the extensive initial studies.

Those who receive the vaccine must continue to follow the three W's: Wear a Mask, Wash your Hands and Watch your Distance. This is because while the vaccine is 96% effective in preventing the recipient from becoming ill with the virus it may not prevent the recipient from spreading the virus to others who have not been vaccinated.

The vaccine is truly the beginning of the end of our fight with this virus, but the administration to all who need the vaccine will not be fast nor without challenges. Together we can win this fight. So let's keep working together to prevent the spread, continue to show our kindness to one another by wearing a mask, and please stay healthy!





