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Coconino County and partners collaborate on Phase 1 COVID-19 vaccinations

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — On the morning of Monday, Jan. 4, County public health staff vaccinated the first person against COVID-19 at the Fort Tuthill County Park vaccination site and was fully booked for vaccination appointments throughout the day. As part of the vaccine roll out in Coconino County, Phase 1 partners Banner Health Page Hospital, North Country HealthCare (NCHC) and Northern Arizona Healthcare (NAH) began immunizing their frontline healthcare staff in late December. CVS and Walgreens are vaccinating long-term care facility residents and staff directly through a CDC program, Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care. The vaccinations administered at Fort Tuthill and through partner organizations marks a major milestone in Coconino County's effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I am immensely proud of the Coconino County team for its vaccination site and for the long road of planning and preparation it took to get here. Coconino County stood up the first COVID-19 testing site in the entire state of Arizona and it has taken an equally innovative approach with the distribution of this vaccine with a focus on partnership, efficiency and equity," said Chairwoman Liz Archuleta.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) determined that vaccine will be provided to specific defined groups in Phases. The first phase (Phase 1) has three components (a, b, c). Phase 1a, the first group of individuals vaccinated, includes healthcare personnel and long-term care facility residents and staff. The prioritization is intended to protect those who are most at risk for exposure and severe outcomes due to COVID-19, such as hospitalization and death, and to reduce strain on Arizona's hospitals.

Coconino County is providing Phase 1a vaccine eligibility information and vaccination registration information directly to employers in the defined groups. During Phase 1a, the Coconino County vaccination site is not open to the public. Employees identified in Phase 1a are receiving information and instructions regarding vaccination registration through their employers. Employers with qualifying Phase 1a employees can email covidvaccination@coconino.az.gov with questions.

"Our team has been actively partnering with hospitals and medical providers to help them understand how to order, store and administer the vaccine. They have also been working to educate the community on its safety and efficacy, with a specific focus on reaching communities of color which may have experienced trauma in previous medical interactions and therefore have a greater hesitancy to take this vaccine. I encourage all members of the Coconino County community to consider their part in conquering COVID-19 and taking the vaccine when it becomes available to them," said Chairwoman Liz Archuleta.

Coconino County and partners will begin Phase 1b vaccinations following the completion of Phase 1a priority group first and second doses. Specific timelines for this are currently unavailable as vaccine allocation information continues to evolve. For additional information on the COVID-19 vaccine in Coconino County and the phases of vaccine distribution, please visit coconino.az.gov/covid19vaccine.

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