

Gila County Health & Emergency Management



5515 South Apache Ave., Suite 100, Globe, AZ 85501

PHONE: (928) 402-8811 | FAX: (928) 425-8817

110 W. Main St., Suite A, Payson, AZ 85541

PHONE: (928) 474-1210 | FAX: (928) 474-7069



Date: January 18, 2021

Gila County Health & Emergency Management COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ Sheet:

Q: What vaccine is Gila County using?

A: At this time, we are being sent and administering Moderna vaccine only.

Q: What group is Gila County in for administering the COVID-19 Vaccine?

A: Gila County has officially moved into Group 1B and is working with our community partners to complete the Education & Childcare Workers and Protective Services sub-groups. Once those two groups have been completed we will begin to vaccinate the next three sub-groups of 1B that include Essential Services/Critical Industry Workers, Adults with Risk Conditions in Congregate Settings, and adults 75 and older.

Q: With the limited supply of vaccine how can you move so quickly into the next three sub-groups of 1B?

A: Last week the Gila County Health Department was notified that our vaccine allocation was being reduced to only 300 doses per week. Moving into any other category would not have been possible if the reduction of vaccine by ADHS was permanent. However, the Gila County Health Department Director made an official request to the Director of ADHS asking for an increase in allocations simply because Gila County was leading the state in the rate of vaccination and the reduction would cause tremendous harm to the residents of Gila County. The request was granted, and beginning the week of January 25th, Gila County will receive 1,400 doses per week instead of the 300 doses per week. Vaccines that are allocated to the Health Department are not received until the following week.

Q: How many vaccines are being sent to the Gila County Health Department each week?

A: Beginning the week of January 25th Gila County will receive 1,400 doses per week of vaccine. However, the amount of vaccine that is allocated to Gila County by ADHS can change weekly.

Q: How many vaccines have you received so far and where did those vaccines go?

A: To date, the Gila County Health Department has received 3000 Moderna vaccines which includes 300 received this past week. Along with our community partners, 2100 doses of that have already been administered, with plans to utilize the remaining vaccine to complete the 1B Education & Childcare Workers and Protective Services sub-groups over the next 7-10 days. We have allocated a total of 1,000 of those doses to the Northern areas of Gila County and 1,000 to our partners in Southern Gila County. The remaining 1,000

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doses remained with the Gila County Health Department to administer in both the Northern and Southern parts of Gila County.

Q: What groups or individuals received those 3,000 doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine?

A: The Gila County Health Department and community partners have almost completed administering the 1st dose of Moderna vaccine to Group 1A and the top two sub-groups of 1B which are the Education & Childcare Workers and Protective Services sub-groups. We have not officially moved into any other group at this time due to a lack of vaccine supply.

Q: What are your plans for the 1,400 vaccines you begin to receive the week of January 25th?

A: We are working with all our community partners to allocate them their portion of the vaccine. Once those organizations receive the vaccine they will begin planning clinics for the 75 and older group and will utilize a website link for those individuals to sign up for the vaccine. This will be on a first come first serve basis (there will not be walk-in appointments) and only be for the 75 and older group. While our community partners move into the 75 and older group the Gila County Health Department will use their allotment of vaccine to begin vaccinating the Essential Services/Critical Industry Workers, Adults with Risk Conditions in Congregate Settings in Group 1B.

Q: Why can't the vaccine be administered more quickly?

A: We have three limitations that do not allow us to move as quickly as we would like. First, there simply is not enough vaccine at this time. Second, the Moderna vaccine requires two doses 28-30 days apart to every individual. The Gila County Health Department, and all its community partners, must begin the process of administering the 2nd dose to all those individuals who have received their initial 1st dose the next two weeks. These 2nd dose clinics must be planned in addition to any new clinic to administer the 1st doses. This takes a tremendous amount of resources and cannot be done quickly. Our health care community partners and Gila County Health Department must still provide their primary services to the residents in addition to operating COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Third, clinics cannot be planned until receipt of the vaccine is confirmed. Only when we verify the amount of vaccine that is received can clinics be planned and that typically takes 5-7 days from receipt of vaccine to plan and open a clinic to the public. Please visit this site to gain insight into the amount of resources it takes to plan, operate, and complete a COVID-19 vaccination clinic
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/mass-clinic-activities/planning-activities.html>

Q: Was there a change in when 65 and older individuals are eligible to receive the vaccine?

A: In a press briefing on Tuesday, January 12, outgoing Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar put forward new recommendations for everyone 65 and older and people under 65 with documented chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, cancer, chronic lung disease, and heart disease. In

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addition, the Director of ADHS, Dr. Cara Christ, stated in a press release on January 13th that some counties can start vaccinating this group of individuals in 1B if they have the available vaccine. At this time, the Gila County Health Department does not have enough available vaccine to begin vaccinating this group. Due to the size of the populations in our current Group 1B focus areas, combined with the the amount of vaccine needed, the demand is far greater than the supply we are receiving. We will continue our efforts to work with our community partners to begin vaccinating the 75 and older population, those at the highest risk of complications. After we have vaccinated the 75 and older population we will begin vaccinating the 65 and older population but progress will be very slow. ADHS may require or recommend the 65 and older population to be moved into the 1B group and if that occurs Gila County Health Department will place this group under the 75 and older group.

Q: Is there a phone number or website we can use to sign up for the vaccine or be put on a waiting list?

A: Not at this time. Up to this point our vaccine distribution in Group 1A and 1B have been completed through closed Point of Distribution sites (POD's), closed meaning that the individuals getting vaccinated were known to the Gila County Health Department and contact was made with these groups through email and phone calls months prior to the vaccine being released. Currently, there is no phone number or website to use to sign up for the vaccine. However, as we move into the 75 and older population our community partners will provide information on how to sign up for the vaccine which we will share with the residents of Gila County. Please keep in mind that clinics for the 75 and older population are currently being planned and approximately 7-10 days away from being announced to the residents and can only start once the vaccine is delivered. In the beginning we were working with Group 1A, the large hospitals and health networks. However, there were small dental, dialysis, and primary care offices that needed a way to contact us to let us know how many individuals at each organization were eligible to receive the vaccine as part of Group 1A. We created a number and email for those small groups. As we moved into Group 1B, we continued to accept phone and email registrations with our emergency management staff so that the smaller schools, fire districts, and other 1B organizations could get registered. At that time the 75 and older group and the essential services group began calling and we did not have, and never expected to have, the capacity to use our call center for these groups as they are far too large for our departments limited staff. The state has a registration portal for these much larger groups when we notify them that we have moved into the 75 and older group. As we finish the smaller groups and those that made the waitlist we will keep our phone and email registration closed because our local providers as well as the Health Department POD's will have a more efficient registration system for the future open enrollments.

Q: How will I know what group Gila County is in for administering COVID-19 vaccine?

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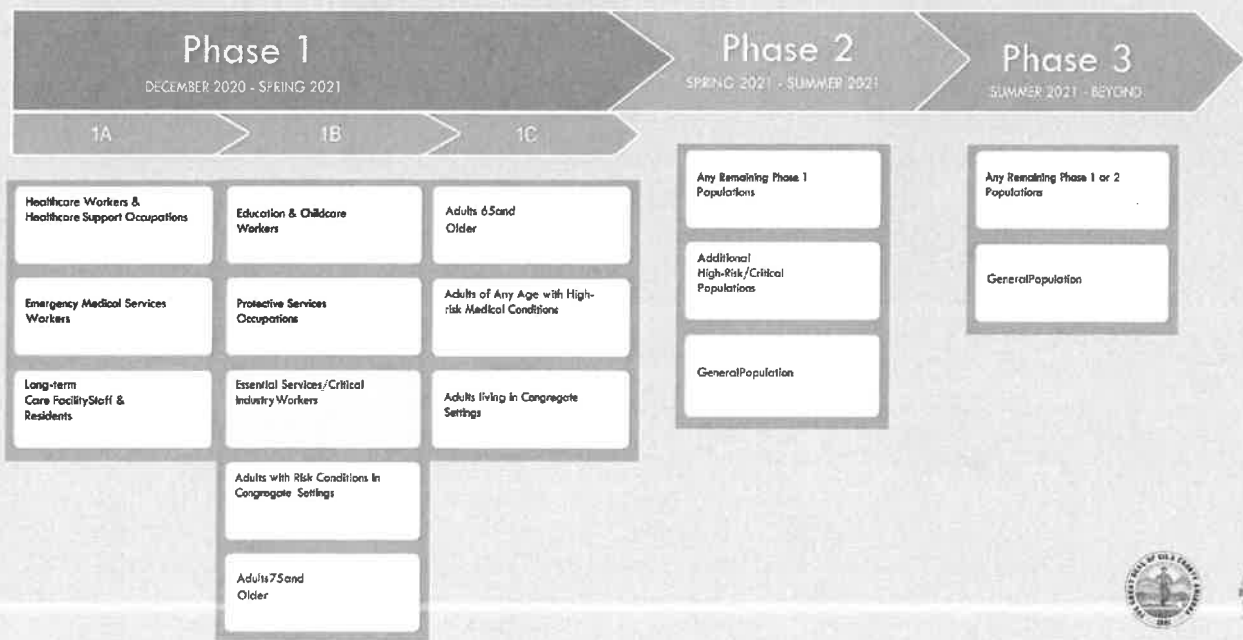


A: The Gila County Health Department utilizes Facebook postings, County website updates, and press releases to notify the residents. Information will be posted and periodically updated on our Gila County Health & Emergency Management and Gila County Facebook page as well as on www.Readygila.com

Q: Are the staff and residents of long-term care and skilled nursing facilities being vaccinated?

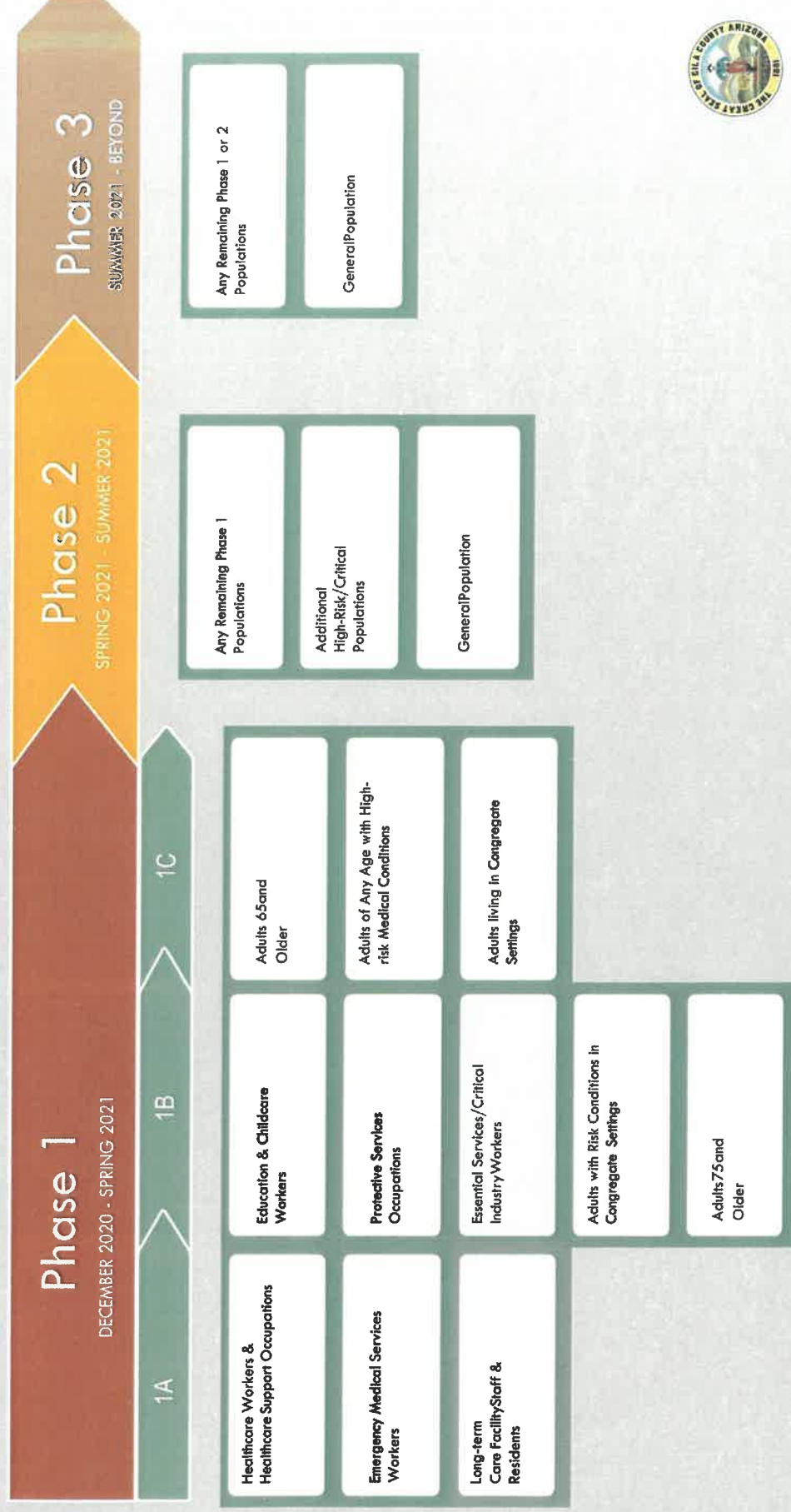
A: The Federal Government has contracted with CVS and Walgreens to administer the vaccine to this group. All the licensed long-term care and skilled nursing facilities in Gila County have signed agreements with CVS and Walgreens to have the COVID-19 vaccine administered to their staff and residents. This process has begun across AZ and each facility will be working directly with CVS and/or Walgreens to get their residents and staff vaccinated.

Gila County Vaccine Prioritization



*Distribution groups and timelines of phases shown are tentative. This information is subject to change due to future vaccine distribution guidance recommendations, FDA approval of vaccines, and vaccine allocation/availability.

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