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Executive Summary - DRAFT

October 26, 2020

Introduction

The Montana COVID-19 Vaccination Plan solidly outlines the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services' (DPHHS) procedures used to guarantee accurate supply management and distribution of COVID-19 vaccine within the State. This document defines the necessary activities to initiate and sustain a mass vaccination campaign, including: 1) Coordinate tracking, reporting, and ordering vaccine and ancillary supplies; 2) Ensure the timely and equitable distribution of vaccine and ancillary supplies to providers; 3) Define roles and responsibilities; and 4) Communicate timely and accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine including safety, availability, training, regulations, efficacy, and urgency. Montana, as a decentralized government, fosters collaborative partnerships with counties, tribes, non-profit organizations, healthcare entities, and private businesses to facilitate this plan and serve its people. The strategic framework guiding DPHHS's response to the COVID-19 pandemic envelops the processes and procedures described here and allows flexibility to adjust if necessary.

COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Sections:

Section 3: Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination

DPHHS is adopting a three-phase approach for vaccine operations. This strategic approach accounts for the overlap of work between three phases. Phase 1 addresses a limited supply of vaccine and occurs within the first two months of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorization.

The goal of Phase 1 is to maximize the limited supply of allocated vaccine to ensure essential response personnel and people at the highest risk of life-threatening infection receive at least the first dose within the first two months of initial distribution.

Phase 2 addresses an expanded supply of vaccine and widens the availability to more populations. The goal of Phase 2 is to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccine for critical population members who were not vaccinated in Phase 1, provide second dosing for Phase 1 recipients, and expand availability to other prioritized groups.

Focus for Phase 3 will shift to reaching all populations with a sufficient supply of vaccine. The goal is to make COVID-19 vaccine ordering and dispensing a routine process for providers and ensure equitable access across the entire population.

Section 4: Critical Populations

State agencies provide program services to specifically defined critical populations, but local and tribal health jurisdictions provide the direct services within their communities. Determination for critical populations for mass vaccination is comes from CDC guidance, Montana data, Montana University resources, and other DPHHS information. DPHHS will determine priority among critical populations using guidance from the CDC and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) with input from the National Academy of Medicine (NAM).

Section 5: COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

DPHHS's Immunization Program is recruiting and enrolling providers for all three phases of the mass vaccination campaign. Enrolled providers must have the ability to access and use the Immunization Information System (IIS) software, report administration data within 24 hours, sustain cold-chain management of the vaccine with appropriate storage equipment, and commit to training. The Immunization Program evaluates provider profiles to ensure they meet minimum requirements for enrollment and participation in the program.

Section 8: COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

As part of the enrollment process, providers must submit a Storage and Temperature Monitoring Addendum. The Addendum describes the equipment requirements for storing COVID-19 vaccine and a place to list the make and model of their storage units and temperature monitoring equipment at each location. The Vaccine Manager will review information provided on the Addendum to ensure the provider's capabilities meet the storage and handling requirements for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Section 10: COVID-19 Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders

Montana's IIS has a Reminder/Recall module and is available to all users with permissions higher than read only. All facilities submitting data will be provided instructional materials specific to COVID-19 reminder and recall functions in the IIS.

Section 12: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication

The Immunization Program will develop guidance and information communications intended for COVID-19 vaccine providers and will occur on a regular basis. Public messaging is coordinated through the DPHHS's Public Information Officer (PIO) with Immunization subject matter experts' guidance. Public information will 1) Notify the public of the arrival of vaccine into the state and introduce the plan for distribution and the reasons supporting it; 2) Notify the public when there is an increase of vaccine in the state and is available to an expanded group of at-risk populations and the providers offering it; and 3) Provide regular encouraging and positive messages for everyone to receive both doses of the vaccine. All communications are subject to the DPHHS Communications Policy. Message templates are shared with local and tribal health jurisdictions for their use as well.

Section 14: COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring

The Montana Immunization Program nurse consultant is the main point of contact for vaccine safety and Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) reports. The nurse consultant ensures the required training for vaccine providers includes the requirements and the process for reporting adverse events following any COVID-19 vaccination to VAERS.

Section 15: COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monitoring

DPHHS's Immunization Program monitors essential elements of information (EEI) to measure the implementation of its plan and procedures, but also to assess the effectiveness of the strategic operations. Results from regular monitoring can allow adjustments to the plan and its strategies to ensure success to the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. Elements include, but are not limited to, access to COVID-19 vaccination services, provider-level data reporting, vaccine ordering and distribution, communications, and local-level situational awareness.

Additional Information

Montana's specific operational methods to support planning for ordering, receiving, allocating, and distributing COVID-19 vaccine falls within DPHHS's framework approach to emergency response operations. The all-hazards framework includes Emergency Operations Plan annexes for Medical Supplies Management and Distribution (MSMD), Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), Public Health Crisis and Emergency Communications (CERC), Medical Surge, Communicable Disease Epidemiology, Health Alert Network Operations, Tactical Communications, Incident Management, and Information and Intelligence Management Operations.