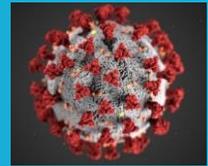


[North Dakota] INTERIM COVID-19 VACCINATION PLAN



Executive Summary - DRAFT

[October 26, 2020]

Introduction

A safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine(s) will be critical to preventing and reducing morbidity, severity, and mortality associated with COVID-19 in North Dakota. When a large proportion of the population has immunity to a virus (community immunity), a virus is less likely to spread. The safest way to achieve community immunity is through vaccination. Internal planning for a future COVID-19 vaccine started in May 2020. In August 2020, North Dakota was selected as a pilot site for enhanced planning with the federal government. In early September, planning expanded to include external stakeholders (i.e., long term care, pharmacies, tribes, corrections, universities, local public health, etc.). A draft plan for prioritization, allocation, distribution, administration, and reporting of a future COVID-19 vaccine was submitted to the CDC on October 16, 2020. Although this plan will require updates as new information is available, creation and partial implementation of this plan are needed now for resource acquisition and allocation, and testing of vaccination methods across the state.

COVID-19 Vaccination Planning Sections:

Phased Approach to COVID-19 Vaccination

North Dakota's COVID-19 vaccination plan outlines three phases of vaccination: a limited vaccine phase where vaccine is prioritized, a high availability phase where vaccines becomes available to anyone who wishes to receive it, and a high availability phase where demand for vaccine is low.

Critical Populations

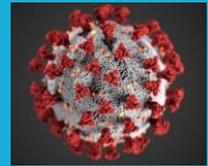
The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will make recommendations regarding which groups should be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccine. It is likely that health care workers will be the first group recommended for vaccination. North Dakota will have to make decisions regarding how specific doses are allocated. An Advisory Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination Ethics has been established to prioritize amongst federally recommended priority groups. Estimates of priority groups by state, county, city and facility (i.e., congregate settings, hospital staff) have been calculated and will be used in conjunction with health care provider enrollment to determine allocations once vaccine is available. The plan specifically discusses vaccination of special populations including those who are homebound, living in long term care facilities, other custodial institutions (corrections, group homes), American Indians, and New American/Foreign Born/Immigrant populations.

COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

Recruitment of health care providers to administer COVID-19 vaccine will be advertised through various provider associations (North Dakota Medical, Pharmacy, Long Term Care, and Hospital), immunization email list serv, and the NDDoH website. Enrollment with the state will be required for a provider to receive COVID-19 vaccine. In addition to requirements of provider enrollment identified by CDC, the following requirements will be added by the state:

- Providers must submit data to the North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS) within 24 hours.
- Providers must, at least weekly, update an online site (i.e., vaccinefinder.org) that lists the availability of vaccine in their clinic, identifies when clinics will be held to administer the vaccine, and identifies population groups eligible to receive the vaccine.

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COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

It is likely that North Dakota will request and receive vaccine through the CDC-authorized contractor (McKesson) or directly from the manufacturer. It is expected that CDC will authorize the direct shipment of full cases (100-dose or 1,000-dose increments) to providers authorized by the state to receive vaccine at one time. CDC advises against redistribution of frozen and ultra-low cold chain vaccine, so every effort to utilize direct shipment will be made. It is unlikely that North Dakota will be able to fully meet the need of rural areas and tribes without repackaging some of the vaccine into smaller quantities. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) warehouse has storage capacity and transport capabilities for refrigerated, frozen and ultra-low cold chain vaccines.

COVID-19 Vaccination Second-Dose Reminders

The North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS) can generate reminder and recall notifications for persons who received the initial dose of COVID-19 vaccine once the required time between doses has elapsed. Lists from NDIIS can be used to send postcards, call, or text people in need of second doses. Additionally, North Dakota has acquired a mass vaccination software, PrepMod, that will remind people when second doses are due.

COVID-19 Vaccination Program Communication

Public: A vaccine section was added to the [NDDoH COVID-19 website](#). The Governor's press conference each week receives significant media attention and will be used to communicate up-to-date information about COVID-19 vaccine. The ND COVID-19 hotline will be utilized to answer questions from the public regarding COVID-19 vaccine. In the COVID-19 vaccine enrollment agreement North Dakota will require facilities to post vaccine availability to [vaccinefinder.org](#) or a similar vaccine locator website once the vaccine is publicly available. A media campaign to promote and educate about COVID-19 vaccination will be developed.

Health care Providers: Communication with health care providers will need to be extensive and repetitive. A vaccine section for health care providers has been added to the current [NDDoH COVID-19 website](#). Professional associations will be used to communicate information to key stakeholders. An email list serv for COVID-19 vaccine enrolled health care providers will be used to communicate timely information.

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring

The NDDoH currently recommends and will continue to recommend that providers directly report adverse events using an [online form](#) to the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS). A link to VAERS is available upon login to the NDIIS. Health care providers will be educated about VAERS upon enrollment and routinely throughout the vaccination campaign. NDDoH will receive weekly VAERS data from the federal government. This data will be compiled and reported on an internal dashboard.

COVID-19 Vaccination Program Monitoring

The NDIIS will be used to determine COVID-19 vaccination coverage rates and uptake. A public facing dashboard will be available on the [NDDoH COVID-19 website](#). In addition to the public data dashboard, there are additional metrics for COVID-19 vaccine that the NDDoH will need for internal decision making. Data will be reviewed weekly to inform changes in COVID-19 vaccine allocation, distribution, and communication efforts.

Additional Information

The state does not expect to enact any mandates requiring vaccination for COVID-19.