

Montana Health Alert Network

# DPHHS HAN

## ADVISORY

### Cover Sheet

**DATE**

March 2, 2021

**SUBJECT**

Update to Implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination in Montana

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**DISTRIBUTE** to your local HAN contacts. This HAN is intended for general sharing of information.

- Time for Forwarding: **As Soon As Possible**
- Please forward to DPHHS at [hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov)
- **Remove this cover sheet before redistributing and replace it with your own**



**For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only**  
DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:  
DPHHS CDCP

**Immunization Section**  
**1-406-444-5580**

*For technical issues related to the HAN message contact the Emergency Preparedness Section at 1-406-444-0919*

DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:  
1-800-701-5769

DPHHS HAN Website:  
[www.han.mt.gov](http://www.han.mt.gov)

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[hhshan@mt.gov](mailto:hhshan@mt.gov)

**Categories of Health Alert Messages:**

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Information Service:** passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

Please update your HAN contact information on the Montana Public Health Directory



# DPHHS HAN

## Information Sheet



### DATE

March 2, 2021

### SUBJECT

Update to Implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination in Montana

### BACKGROUND

In December 2020, Montana began its COVID-19 vaccination effort focusing on populations that include individuals identified as Phase 1A recipients, front-line medical workers, health care providers with direct patient contact, and staff and residents of Long-term Care (LTC) and Assisted Living Facilities (ALF). When it appeared that the Phase 1A recipient pool willing to receive a vaccine was largely satisfied, Montana moved into Phase 1B, with a focus on protecting those most at risk of severe complications related to COVID-19. Phase 1B individuals were identified as persons aged 70 and older, American Indians and other people of color who may be at elevated risk for COVID-19 related complications, and persons aged 16-69 with certain high-risk medical conditions.

The Gianforte administration remains committed to prioritizing the most vulnerable Montanans in its vaccine distribution plan. As vaccine supplies increase, Montana will be expanding the Phase 1B effort to continue to protect those most at risk for COVID-19 related complications. On March 8, 2021, Phase 1B will shift to Phase 1B+ to now include persons aged 60 and older and those with certain medical conditions not included in original Phase 1B. Qualifying medical conditions are outlined below.

Additional information tracking Montana's efforts will be available at the DPHHS website at:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/>

and at CDC's vaccine tracking site at:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#vaccinations>

Detailed recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) related to use of COVID-19 vaccines can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19.html>

### INFORMATION

After review of recent COVID-19 activity, hospitalizations and deaths, and vaccination resources, the state of Montana will continue to prioritize vaccine delivery to those most at risk of severe complications related to COVID-19. The table below reflects updates to our January 6, 2021 HAN message and outlines vaccine delivery to individuals aged 60 and older and individuals with underlying medical conditions who face higher risk of complications related to COVID-19 infection.

## Phase 1

### Phase 1A Recipients (No Change)

- Frontline healthcare workers
- Long-term Care and Assisted Living Facilities (LTC/ALF)
- Healthcare workers with direct patient contact or virus exposure

### Phase 1B Recipients (No Change)

- Persons aged 70 years and older
- American Indians and other people of color who may be at elevated risk for COVID-19 related complications
- Persons aged 16-69 with high-risk medical conditions. Qualifying medical conditions include:
  - Cancer
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
  - Down Syndrome
  - Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
  - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
  - Severe Obesity (BMI  $\geq$  40 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
  - Sickle cell disease
  - Type 1 & 2 Diabetes mellitus

### Phase 1B+ Recipients (New)

- Persons aged 60 years and older
- Persons aged 16-59 with medical conditions not included in Phase 1B who may be at elevated risk for COVID-19 related complications. Qualifying medical conditions include:
  - Asthma (moderate to severe)
  - Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
  - Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
  - Liver disease
  - Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
  - Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
  - On a case by case basis, medical providers may include individuals with other conditions that place them at elevated risk for COVID-19 related complications.

### Phase 1C Recipients

- Frontline Essential Workers not already included in Phase 1B or Phase 1B+
- Individuals residing in congregate care and correctional facilities not already included in Phase 1B or Phase 1B+

### Phase 2 Recipients

- All remaining Montanans aged 16 and older not already included in Phase 1A, 1B, 1B+ or 1C

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Health Care Providers

All providers with direct patient contact are eligible to receive vaccine and can continue to receive vaccine through all phases. Most jurisdictions have completed vaccination of highest-risk health care staff and are vaccinating other providers with patient contact as supplies allow.

If not already aware, the state recommends consulting with your local public health partners or the hospital in your community to determine which health care providers are currently able to receive vaccine. Additional vaccine has been allocated to health care providers with direct patient contact to support continued vaccinations for individuals eligible in Phase 1A.

### Public Health Departments

Collaborate with vaccine providers in the community to monitor vaccine supplies and local vaccination efforts. Continue to vaccinate those in Phase 1A and individuals eligible in Phase 1B. Appropriate planning for Phase 1B+ and its broadened target groups should continue to be emphasized, as the demand for information remains very high. Routine and consistent public messaging is encouraged.

Public messaging regarding Phase 1B+ must convey that vaccine supplies from the federal government are gradually increasing, but demand will likely outweigh supply during the initial stages of Phase 1B+. If not already occurring, public health agencies and partners are strongly encouraged to work closely together and consider joint messaging and methods to schedule patients as needed.

DPHHS messaging will continue to be updated on a weekly basis with respect to vaccine supplies, target groups and uptake of vaccine.

Please share this HAN and the attached schedule with relevant partners and the general public at your discretion.