

VETERANS UPDATE

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VA GIVES 55,000 COVID VACCINATIONS



VA announced Dec. 30 that it administered initial COVID-19 vaccine doses to more than 5,000 Veterans in its Community Living Centers and Spinal Cord Injury and Disorders Centers, and more than 50,000 healthcare employees in its first two weeks of providing COVID-19 vaccines.

VA began vaccinating Veterans and healthcare workers at 37 initial VA medical centers following the Food

and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The following week, VA began COVID-19 vaccinations at an additional 128 sites, using both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines.

"I couldn't be happier with the work VA employees are doing in taking this important first step toward the end of the pandemic," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 12, Virtual Amazon Recruiting & Info Event, 2 - 2:30 p.m. Open to all Veterans and family members. Learn about exciting employment opportunities! RSVP to 401-273-7100 ext. 13411 to get the link.

Jan. 14, Virtual Legal Assistance with Military Discharge Upgrades, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Call 202-733-3324 or email upgrades@vetsprobono.org for an appointment to meet with an attorney for free!

VA's ultimate goal is to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans and employees. As vaccine supplies increase, VA care teams will reach out to eligible Veterans to schedule vaccinations. There is no need to call or visit a facility to sign up.

For more COVID vaccine information, visit <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>.

VETERANS ARE BEING TARGETED WITH COVID-19 SCAMS

Protect yourself from scams! If someone calls, texts or emails you about getting a COVID-19 test or vaccine, verify that they are your VA provider:

- VA will never call, text or email you and request money
- Do not give out any personally identifiable information or other personal or sensitive data, such as financial and banking information
- If you receive a call requesting this information, hang up!
- Delete emails or texts requesting this kind of information, and do not click on any links

For more tips on how to avoid COVID-19 scams, visit <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>.



VA PROVIDENCE STARTS GIVING COVID VACCINE



Dr. Michael Siclari, an Army Veteran and physician in the Providence VA Medical Center's Emergency Department, and Mary Beth Smith, Air Force Veteran and nurse manager of the Emergency Department, receive the first Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations in the VA Providence Healthcare System from nurse practitioners Bridget Henley and Caleb McVey, Dec. 21, 2020 (VA Providence HCS photo).

The VA Providence Healthcare System began COVID-19 vaccination with the Moderna vaccine Dec. 21 at the Providence VA Medical Center, following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization.

"The VA Providence Healthcare System is proud to begin offering the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to our health care personnel," said Lawrence Connell, director of the VA Providence HCS. "As vaccine supplies increase, our ultimate goal is to offer free COVID-19 vaccination to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated."

The Providence VAMC was one of 113 VA medical centers across the country to receive the first limited supply of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Sites were identified based on need for the vaccine according to CDC's 1A prioritization and capacity to store the vaccine at -20°C.

The Moderna coronavirus vaccine was 94 percent effective in clinical trials in preventing COVID-19 disease. The vaccine is administered in two doses, 28 days apart. The side effects appear to be similar to those of other vaccines and are short-lived.

Even after receiving COVID-19 vaccination, employees and Veterans

should continue wearing face coverings, practicing physical distancing and washing hands often.

As more vaccine becomes available, VA care teams will contact eligible Veterans to schedule vaccinations. There is no need to message, call or visit a facility to preregister.

Veterans can get the latest information and sign up to receive regular updates on the vaccine on VA's COVID-19 vaccine information webpage at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>.

VA



Providence Healthcare System
830 Chalkstone Ave
Providence, RI 02908
401-273-7100

Veteran's Crisis Line:
800-273-8255 press 1

Patient Call Center (PCC):
401-457-3336

Pharmacy Call Center:
866-400-1241

Office of Community Care
401-273-7100 ext. 13015

Website:
www.providence.va.gov

Facebook:
facebook.com/VAProvidence

Twitter:
twitter.com/VAProvidence



Not all healthcare workers are doctors or nurses! Steven Mitchell, an Army Veteran and housekeeper with the Environmental Management Service, gives a thumbs-up after becoming the third person in the VA Providence HCS to receive the Moderna COVID-19 vaccination. Housekeepers play a critical role in health care, disinfecting surfaces and equipment, changing and laundering linens, and performing a variety of other tasks that ensure facilities are safe and sterile, helping prevent any infection from spreading (VA New England photo).