



December 28, 2020

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Branch-Hillsdale-St Joseph Counties Receive First COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation

Coldwater, MI – The Branch-Hillsdale -St. Joseph Community Health Agency has received an initial allotment of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccinations began for individuals in Phase 1A priority groups last week as hospitals in the Branch-Hillsdale- St Joseph counties also received shipments to vaccinate their front-line workers. Communications are taking place directly with these entities and clinics are not open to the general public at this time.

Vaccine distribution for Phase 1A is limited and prioritized to: paid and unpaid persons in healthcare settings who have direct or indirect or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home, as well as residents of long-term care facilities. Upon completion of Phase 1A, follow-up communications will be released.

It will be several months before supply increases enough to vaccinate everyone, therefore distribution of the vaccine in Michigan will be in a phased approach. According to Rebecca Burns, Health Officer, “The prioritization guidance emphasizes ensuring the continued functioning of the health care system and essential services in the community, and protecting people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness. We understand that many are anxious to receive the vaccine and appreciate everyone’s patience.”

The BHSJCHA will announce on its website and Facebook as each priority group in phase one is addressed and any public clinic dates and times as they become available. BHSJCHA is not

currently making appointments or keeping a list of people who are interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Moderna vaccine is a two-dose vaccine. The first and second doses are spaced 28 days apart. After the second dose, the Moderna vaccine is 94.5% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection. The two doses of the Moderna vaccine cannot be mixed and matched with the similar Pfizer vaccine. Both vaccines use mRNA technology. While these are the first mainstream vaccines that use this technology, mRNA technology for vaccines has been studied for some time. The Moderna vaccine is FDA-approved and safe for individuals who are aged 18 and older.

“Vaccination is the best strategy to prevent the spread of disease,” said Burns. “The Moderna vaccine has been highly effective in clinical trials and we are optimistic that widespread vaccination will help us beat COVID-19.”

After receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, individuals should continue to take precautions such as social distancing, hand washing, and mask wearing. Like every vaccine, the COVID-19 vaccine is not 100% effective. Additionally, the vaccine has not been approved for children. As such, these disease prevention measures will need to be maintained until pandemic activity is sufficiently reduced.

For updates regarding BHSJCHA’s COVID-19 vaccination efforts, please visit www.bhsj.org and click on the red COVID-19 button.

BHSJCHA is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing healthcare, and protecting the environment. For additional information, contact your local health department office or visit www.bhsj.org and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BHSJCHA.

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