



**TO: Media**

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### **North Country Healthcare Hospitals Receiving COVID-19 Vaccines**

As part of North Country Healthcare's (NCH) commitment to best ensure the health and wellbeing of our communities, NCH hospitals (Androscoggin Valley Hospital, Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital, Weeks Medical Center) anticipate receiving a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccinations as early as this week, with administration to begin shortly thereafter.

New Hampshire received a limited, initial allotment of the vaccine earlier this week. That allotment was then disbursed to several regions of the State. Initial doses are part of the Phase 1a vaccination plan which incorporates at-risk health workers, older adults in residential care settings, and first responders. Healthcare providers and staff are appropriately tiered based on their level of patient care, age, and potential risk factors. Subsequent vaccination beyond Phase 1a will occur as supplies allow.

The vaccine, which is administered as two injections three or four weeks apart, dependent on the brand received, is part of NCH's ongoing effort to reduce transmission of the virus which has recently spiked in Northern New Hampshire.

The COVID-19 vaccines have undergone trials which tested for both safety and efficacy. Following two doses from the same manufacturer, recent clinical trials have shown the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to be 95% and 94% effective, respectively, in preventing COVID-19. Currently the Food and Drug Administration has endorsed Pfizer for authorized emergency use to those aged 16 or older. Such emergency authorization is anticipated shortly for the Moderna vaccine.

NCH encourages you to speak with your healthcare provider about your interest in receiving, as well as any questions about, the vaccine as it becomes available in future phases. “We encourage everyone to become informed about the vaccine and its proven safety in clinical trials,” commented Ed Laverty, PA-C, NCH Incident Command Chair. “In addition to social distancing, wearing facemasks and washing hands, receiving the vaccine is another important step that we can take to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 as well as its potentially harmful effects.”

It is important that those who receive the vaccine continue to wear facemasks, as the effects of the vaccination are not generally immediate, and because it could take several months to administer the vaccine to all those who wish to receive it.

ABOUT COVID-19: COVID-19 disease is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. It is predominantly a respiratory illness that can affect other organs. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Symptoms may include: fever or chills; cough; shortness of breath; fatigue; muscle or body aches; headache; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit:

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

The NH Department of Health and Human Services website:  
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/index.htm>

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines>

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