



**COUNTY OF DEL NORTE**  
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**SUBJECT:** To Del Norte County Residents

We have been getting a lot of concerned questions about progress with vaccinations in our County. This seems like a good time to explain and update the facts from the ground level. The biggest problem has been the data that is needed to track the vaccines and monitor every part of the process, and it is fair to say that there are some problems at all levels.

For example, the state health department data portal directs people to a couple of spots that show the progress, one of them says that we have done 3,017 vaccines and another shows that we have 780 doses on hand. In actuality at the end of last week when the state data was posted, we had 620 Moderna doses in our freezer, and about 230 Pfizer doses still available to us in a Humboldt County freezer. In our county, the doses that have been administered or allocated to local medical offices and the hospital between the two sources comes closer to 3,450. This does not include the prison that has been doing their own vaccinations since early January. About 25% of the staff has agreed to vaccination and 75% of the inmates.

This week we still have about 600 Moderna and 160 Pfizer doses remaining, but those have to cover second doses for a lot of people over the next two weeks. Second doses for both of the "airport" clinics that we ran are due in the next two weeks which will be over 550 doses alone. Alongside all of that, we supply doses to five medical offices, and even a few to Sutter Hospital to cover second doses for them when their supply dried up. On top of that, we have been running targeted group clinics every week, for first and second doses for a whole bunch of people, mostly people in 1a who were difficult to contact, or who were slower to decide on vaccination. Until this last week we have averaged 300 doses of Moderna (311 per week, actually, between 12/9/20, and 2/10/21) shipped to us. In addition to that, we have had 1200 doses of Pfizer vaccine to use, which was distributed to us from Humboldt County, starting in mid-December. If you divide our total above by the time frame since we started vaccinating, we have given out 350 doses a week, on average.

We had 1200 doses delayed (a backlog in shipping due to the freeze back East last week), and we don't have a firm shipping date. We will run out by the end of this week, if we supply local offices for new first doses. If we don't do any more first doses this week, we think that we will have barely enough to cover for both weeks' second doses. If our vaccine arrives, we will be able to expand vaccination in a meaningful way for the first time.

Sound confusing? It is, especially when we live in a time when the recommendations are constantly changing; first, hold on to second doses, then no, use second doses as first doses and first doses as second doses, and then use 50% of second doses as first doses (or was it the other way around?) I am going on record to say that all of us in local public health departments in California have had our share of frustrating experiences with the vaccine rollout.

We decided to simplify, and keep a sensible inventory, to cover anticipated first and second doses for at least a few weeks in advance. We do not think there should be a need to run out, and cancel appointments. If the Federal government tells us to start only doing one dose per customer, our lives will become much easier.

We are now mostly focused on seniors; teachers too, but we had to postpone some of our planning about vaccinating teachers because we did not get the expected increase in supply at the start of the month. Our allocations are starting to creep up, and we are going to be working on expanding our large clinics, and holding additional ones to accommodate our teacher workforce, especially with the new directive from the Governor's office. This also includes daycare workers.

After them (or alongside them), are agriculture workers, and other emergency and essential government workers and food industry workers; grocery stores in particular, and yes, restaurant workers at some point in the future. The list gets less complicated after that, as the biggest group will be persons with medical conditions, ages 16 to 64, (starting March 15th) but by then the state system that is being rolled out will hopefully have worked out the bugs and will be operating smoothly. At some point in the next few months nearly everyone will have access to vaccine of some sort. We hope...

3400 doses in Del Norte means at the most, 1,700 people vaccinated. This in a county with about 25,500 non-incarcerated residents is just shy of 7% of the population. We were hoping to be at 10-15% at this point, but that would have meant twice as much vaccine shipped to us. It just did not turn out that way, but it's still a good start. And yes, very few people have been vaccinated out of turn. We have kept a list from the beginning of the program, of persons to be called at a moment's notice to get added to a pool of vaccines, but sometimes the list is completely tapped out, and we have called whoever came to mind, sometimes persons who literally made up their minds that moment. Time is a factor with this vaccine, and we have given shots within minutes of the expiration hour (yes, hour, not date. Our vaccines last 6 hours at room temperature, and then have to be discarded if not used.) You will continue to

hear stories like this, because we have been told over and over again, to not waste any of these doses, for any reason. We do not plan on letting that happen.

So once again, we ask people to be patient, we are doing the best that we can at the moment. Our plan remains the same, let our local offices use as much vaccine as they can manage, and hold the clinics that we need to do to reach the persons that are due at any given time. We will get there. In the meantime, please keep doing what we need to do to keep each other safe and slow the virus down. It's still the best protection for us all, and for our community.

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