



# MEDIA RELEASE

## San Juan County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 18, 2021

### **AUTHORIZATION to MOVE to PHASE 1b Tier 1**

On Monday January 18<sup>th</sup>, Governor Inslee and the Washington State Department of Health have opened vaccine eligibility to Phase 1b Tier 1. San Juan County will begin delivering Phase 1b Tier 1 immunizations on Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup>.

More detailed information is below. **PLEASE READ ALL OF THIS INFORMATION CAREFULLY.**

### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE for PHASE 1b – Tier 1?**

-Anyone over the age of 65 (*note this is a last-minute change to the guidance issued previously by DOH*)

-Those over the age of 50 living in a multigenerational household. The definition of multigenerational household is below ([and more detailed DOH guidelines are here](#)):

There are two categories of people who are eligible under the multigenerational household definition:

1. People who are (a) over the age of 50 AND (b) are not able to live independently who either:
  - a. are receiving long-term care from a paid or unpaid caregiver, or
  - b. are living with someone who works outside the home
2. People who are over the age of 50 AND are living with and caring for a grandchild

No one under age 50 is eligible in Phase 1b Tier 1, and no one over age 50 caring for a partner, friend, or child (exception - grandchild) is eligible.

The full details on Phase 1b, including definitions for Tiers 2 through 4 [are best reviewed here](#).

### **IS THERE A TOOL to HELP me KNOW WHAT PHASE and TIER I AM IN?**

Yes, WA State Department of Health has an online tool that enables individuals to evaluate their phase eligibility and print out or screenshot an approval verification that documents their eligibility. That online tool is at:

<http://www.findyourphasewa.org/>

### **IS THERE ENOUGH VACCINE to IMMUNIZE EVERYONE in PHASE 1b – TIER 1?**

No. There are approximately 5,000 San Juan County residents who qualify for Phase 1b – Tier 1. Now that San Juan County has nearly completed vaccinating Phase 1a residents, approximately 300 doses of the Moderna vaccine are on hand to begin vaccinating Phase 1b Tier 1 residents.

Until vaccine supplies increase at the Federal level and are distributed to States, local health departments, and healthcare providers, there will be significant delays and most residents will need to be patient until supply meets demand.

**Just to be clear, DEMAND will be MUCH GREATER than SUPPLY for the foreseeable future.**

## **WILL THE VACCINE REQUIRED for SECOND DOSES be AVAILABLE?**

Yes. WA Department of Health is distributing equal amounts of second doses to ensure that those who are immunized can receive their second dose 28 days after their first vaccination.

## **WHAT ARE THE PLANS for DELIVERING VACCINE on EACH ISLAND?**

San Juan County Health & Community Services vaccine staff will continue to rotate between Orcas, Lopez, and San Juan on a regular basis. Scheduling will be by advance online registration and the number of slots available for registration will be limited by the supply of vaccine on hand and the capacity of each vaccine clinic. Residents of outer islands may attend clinics on the larger islands, and there will be outreach to outer islands as supplies and capacity allow.

**The vast majority of those who go to register will not find any available slots until more vaccine becomes available.**

San Juan County is actively planning on expanding vaccination efforts to deliver up to 1,000 doses of vaccine each week across the county. However, until vaccine supply increases, actual number of doses delivered each week will be limited by the available supply.

## **WHAT ABOUT MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER or LOCAL PHARMACY?**

Most local healthcare providers and pharmacies plan to deliver immunizations. Many are in various stages of DOH approval or are approved but are awaiting vaccine supply. As their capacity ramps up, local healthcare providers and pharmacies will play a critical role in delivering vaccine to the community.

At this time, it is not recommended to call your healthcare provider to inquire about availability. Providers will be informing their patients and the community as their vaccine efforts begin.

## **SO, WHO GETS the VACCINE FIRST WITHIN PHASE 1b – TIER 1?**

While not a perfect system by any means, registration for San Juan County Health & Community Services vaccine delivery will be on a first come, first served basis – provided that those registering are eligible for Phase 1b – Tier 1.

**There is no waiting list.** Those who are unable to register at first should continue to check the online registration tool until slots become available. **Please do not call the Health Department to inquire about availability** or to schedule an appointment. At this time, limited staff resources are entirely devoted to the operation of the vaccine clinics.

Updates on vaccine status will be made available on the [San Juan County COVID Vaccine website](#), on the [San Juan County Health & Community Facebook Page](#), and via regular updates to local news sources.

## **WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?**

-Again: Demand will exceed supply.

-There will also be a chance that someone may intentionally deceive providers and receive a vaccine when it is not their turn. Do not be that person. Seriously, it's like kindergarten. Don't cut the line. Stay safe, stay patient, stay kind. It will take time to get to everyone, and we need to work together as a community to prioritize our most vulnerable residents. The phased approach is in place to ensure those at highest risk receive vaccine first.

-Recognize that the San Juan County vaccine team is made of many dedicated staff and volunteers, but that they do not have the ability to respond to every call or email based on the sheer volume of emails and calls coming into the health department at this time.

-All of our existing safety precautions will need to be followed for many months to come.

## **OK, ENOUGH ALREADY. HOW DO I SIGN UP?**

Each island has its own sign up page. Links are below. Those who are able to register will receive a confirmation email and be automatically scheduled for their 2<sup>nd</sup> shot exactly 28 days later at the same time as their first shot.

Registrants will need to be prepared to show picture ID at the time of their immunization.

For each island, click on the link below to complete the registration process. Please remember that slots will fill up quickly, and additional slots will not become available until more vaccine supply is on hand. Keep checking in on the registration tool to see if slots have opened.

If you are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, based on your membership in Phase 1a and/or Phase 1b Tier 1, click on one of the links below to schedule an appointment at one of the Health & Community Services vaccination sites:

- [Lopez Island](#)
- [Orcas Island](#)
- [San Juan Island](#)

Note that for those without ready access to the internet, or for whom English is not their first language, roll-out of additional registration options and support are underway, and more details will be made available very soon.

## **THANK YOU ISLANDERS!**

These next few weeks are going to be challenging. Supply is limited, delivery systems are coming up to speed, and demand for vaccine is understandably at fever pitch. Please know that things will become smoother and easier with time. For now, patience is really the very most important quality we can all bring to this experience.