



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Good afternoon,

There is significant confusion surrounding the scheduling of COVID-19 vaccinations and we are requesting that local media and partners of Grand Traverse County disseminate the following message to your respective audiences.

We had an estimated 23,000 people identified themselves as eligible for Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccination during the preparation period leading up to the opening of our first mass vaccination site located at Northwestern Michigan College's Hagerty Conference Center. The efforts that the Health Department, the United Way, and other local partners undertook was to identify the demand for the vaccine for planning purposes for the phased rollout. The scheduling software was chosen as a long-term solution for scheduling of vaccinations for our community. We will use the information we have collected to direct those that have registered with us to the scheduling link.

That said, it is important to note again that we identified an estimated 23,000 people in the early planning stages of Phase 1A and 1B and have received 1500 doses that are allocated for first dose recipients to administer the week of January 18 – 22 at the NMC's Hagerty Center clinic. Those appointments filled very quickly on Friday. We are only adding appointment slots as vaccine supply is received and not creating appointments that would then need to be cancelled or rescheduled. The turnaround time from when we receive the notification of how much vaccine we will get until the next mass clinic starts is currently less than 3 days. Changes also can occur that are out of our control in this county. Vaccine distribution and allotment is a federal and state process. We continue to try to get larger volume of vaccine, but there is only a certain allotment for the entire state of Michigan which then has to be divided up between all local health departments and hospitals.

This is going to be a long process and will be frustrating for many people in the early weeks of the mass vaccination effort. We know it, we expected it, and we have been messaging this throughout the pandemic. Nothing about this virus is easy. Multiple manufacturers, 2 doses within a defined period, ultra-cold freezers, cold chain management, and reliance on state and federal supply chains of the vaccine proves to be challenging to manage. We understand this is frustrating. Calling or emailing the Health Department will not result in receiving any additional information other than what we have provided. This is a countywide effort. If you have questions please go to <https://gtcountycovid19.com/vaccine/> or www.grandtraverse.org/2394 for answers. We ask for your patience as this will be challenging until the vaccine is widely available.

Key information for you to know and relay when asked:

- Go to the Grand Traverse County COVID-19 vaccination page by clicking <https://gtcountycovid19.com/vaccine/>
- If you are eligible for the current phase of vaccinations proceed to the calendar.
- If there are doses available the calendar will have appointments. If there are not doses available there will not be appointments available.

- We learn how many doses we will be getting for the following week on Friday of the current week.
- Once we know how many doses we have for the following week we will populate the calendar on the website with appointments equal to the number of doses we have.
- We will send notice that we have populated the calendar for the following week.
- From that point, it is a first come first serve of those eligible in the current phase.
- Schedule an appointment
- You will get an email from @acuityscheduling.com, the scheduling software asking you to complete the documents necessary to get the vaccine. You may complete the documentation online and submit it online or print it out. If you cannot complete the documentation online, you may do it at the vaccination site.
- We encourage those who are unsuccessful at booking an appointment to check back frequently for open slots due to cancellations.

Thank you,



Wendy Hirschenberger, MPH
Health Officer



Nate Alger
Grand Traverse County Administrator