



January 22, 2021

Mr. James P. Danly
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Mr. Danly,

Thank you for your letter to former Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Robert R. Redfield, MD and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Chair José R. Romero, MD regarding higher Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine prioritization for a subset of the energy workforce. I am responding on behalf of CDC.

While the end goal is to offer vaccines to the entire U.S. population, identifying priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination has been critical for implementation planning. Because the initial supply of vaccine is limited, ACIP, CDC's independent vaccine advisory committee, has recommended which groups should receive the earliest allocations of vaccine. ACIP develops vaccine recommendations that go to the CDC director for adoption. The committee held public meetings since June 2020 regarding COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and considered scientific evidence of SARS-CoV-2 epidemiology (the virus that causes COVID-19), vaccine program implementation, and ethical principles in its deliberations.

In December, ACIP voted to recommend that critical populations be prioritized in the following phases:

- **Phase 1a:** healthcare personnel¹ (paid and unpaid people serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials) and residents of long-term care facilities²
- **Phase 1b:** frontline essential workers³ and persons aged 75 years and older
- **Phase 1c:** persons aged 65–74 years, persons aged 16–64 years with high-risk medical conditions,⁴ and other essential workers not included in phases 1a or 1b

ACIP classified the following non–healthcare essential workers as frontline workers in phase 1b: first responders (e.g., firefighters and police officers), corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers and support staff members) as well as child care workers. Essential worker sectors recommended for vaccination in phase 1c include

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/healthcare-personnel/appendix/terminology.html>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/index.html>

³ 3. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Guidance on essential critical infrastructure workers: version 4.0. Washington, DC: US Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; 2020.

<https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

those in transportation and logistics, water and wastewater, food service, shelter and housing (e.g., construction), finance (e.g., bank tellers), information technology and communications, energy, legal, media, public safety (e.g., engineers), and public health workers. More information is available on CDC’s “Interim List of Categories of Essential Workers Mapped to Standardized Industry Codes and Titles” webpage.⁵

CDC adopted ACIP’s recommendations, which are detailed in CDC’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.^{6,7} These interim recommendations for phased allocation provide guidance for federal, state, territorial, and local jurisdictions while vaccine supply is limited. Further prioritization decisions may be made by relevant public health authorities based on the particular needs of the population.

During a January 12, 2021, COVID-19 vaccine briefing, former U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II announced that vaccine supply now exceeds demand from phase 1a groups. The former administration recommended that jurisdictions prioritize the most vulnerable by expanding access to everyone age 65 years and older, as well as to anyone under age 65 with a co-morbidity with some form of medical documentation as defined by governors.

CDC is working closely with jurisdictions to support their vaccine administration plans. Our goal has and will remain to safely and effectively vaccinate the American public to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your interest in this ongoing response. We appreciate your support as we all work together to fight COVID-19. Please share this response with the co-signers of your letter.

Sincerely,

Sandra Cashman, MS
Executive Secretary
Office of the Chief of Staff, CDC

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/categories-essential-workers.html>

⁶ Dooling K, McClung N, Chamberland M, et al. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ Interim Recommendation for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1857-1859. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949e1>

⁷ Dooling K, Marin M, Wallace M, et al. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ Updated Interim Recommendation for Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, December 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. ePub: 22 December 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm695152e2>