



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Working Together Before Moving Forward – Prioritizing 65 and Older Vaccinations

Washburn County vaccinating healthcare entities, including Indianhead Medical Center, Spooner Health, and the Washburn County Health Department, are working together to vaccinate a critical mass of Washburn County residents 65 and older before opening vaccination to future eligibility groups.

In Washburn County, 75% of hospitalizations and 90% of deaths due to COVID-19 occurred in individuals 65 and older. As of Wednesday, February 24, 2021 only 46.4% of Washburn County residents 65 and older have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. The amount of vaccine being allotted to Washburn County vaccinating healthcare entities is too low to achieve vaccination of a critical mass of our county's most vulnerable residents prior to March 1.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) announced on January 26, 2021 the [next groups eligible](#) for COVID-19 vaccination, tentatively beginning March 1, 2021. These groups include education and childcare, individuals enrolled in Medicaid long-term care programs, some public-facing essential health care personnel, non-frontline essential healthcare personnel, and facility staff and residents in congregate living settings. On Monday, February 22, DHS instructed vaccinating entities to prioritize previously eligible groups before starting to vaccinate the March 1 eligibility groups.

At this time, Indianhead Medical Center, Spooner Health, and the Washburn County Health Department **will not** begin vaccination of the next eligible groups on March 1, 2021. We will continue to track and focus our efforts on vaccinating our 65 and older population. Once a critical mass of the 65 and older population has been vaccinated, we will open vaccination to the next eligible groups. K-12 institutions and child care providers will be coordinating with local and state health officials to schedule vaccination when vaccine supply allows.

It is important to remember that vaccine supply is limited, and vaccinations are targeted to specific groups of people with a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. It will take time to reach all people within each priority population. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to vaccinate Washburn County residents.

Information and resources related to COVID-19 in Washburn County can be found at <https://www.co.washburn.wi.us/news/public-health/Coronavirus-Outbreak>