



# East Central

## District Health Department

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### East Central District Health Department's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program Well Underway

[Columbus]—Since December 28, 2020, East Central District Health Department (ECDHD) has immunized 432 persons, and they have done it without wasting a single dose of the vaccine.

ECDHD Emergency Response Coordinator Libby Finochiaro is coordinating ECDHD's COVID-19 vaccine program, and says that she is proud of the zero-vaccine waste they have achieved so far. It is her goal to make sure that record continues. "We are very excited, and grateful to have the opportunity to immunize people against COVID-19, and we are dedicated to making sure that every dose we receive gets given out as a vaccine, and isn't wasted. Our immunization team has a dual focus: safety, and vaccinating as many people as possible, based on the amount of vaccine we receive," said Finochiaro. "If we receive 100 doses of vaccine, we are determined to make sure 100 immunizations are given."

In order to be able to maximize efficiency, ECDHD has partnered with Good Neighbor Community Health Center (GNCHC) to provide personnel, and other resources for the immunization clinics. Following Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services guidelines, Finochiaro and the team from GNCHC, including Beth Miller, Director of Clinic Operations, Sally Vetro, Director of Nursing, APRN Crystal Christie, and RN Amy Leick, have immunized several sectors within the Phase I Allocation recommendation, including:

- Community-based physicians.
- Community-based pharmacists.
- Developmentally disabled persons.
- Long-term care staff and residents.
- Dentists.
- Veterinarians.

In addition, ECDHD recently shared 100 doses of vaccine with a community partner when the partner's expected allocation didn't arrive.



“This is really a community effort,” said Sally Vetro, GNCHC Director of Nursing. “The two agencies (East Central and Good Neighbor) have pooled resources to make sure we can quickly and efficiently vaccinate the largest number of people possible.” Vetro added, “We try to give people 24 hrs. notice of their appointment time, but sometimes, with cancellations, we have to change or move appointments. We really appreciate the flexibility of those people who receive a last-minute call, and make the effort to come in so we don’t have to waste vaccine.”

With State and CDC guidelines regularly changing, and a only a week-to-week vaccine allocation to plan with, Finochiaro noted that it is difficult to put absolute time-frames on exactly which sector will get vaccinated when, but that the team is actively planning and preparing for the future.

“Our vaccination team has bi-weekly planning meetings, and we are reaching out to community partners like Platte County Emergency Manager Tim Hofbauer, and others who will be critical in helping us when we begin vaccinating large groups in Tier B,” said Finochiaro. “Our team is preparing for scenarios that range from visiting long-term care facilities where we would vaccinate residents on-site to multi-day, off-site clinics where we vaccinate hundreds of community members.” And, she added, “Whether it’s a large vaccine clinic or a small one, we will continue to strive to get every available dose into the arm of someone who needs it.”

The NE Dept. of Health and Human Services anticipates launching a portal where people can sign up to receive the vaccine in their county, but for now, ECDHD has a sign-up form on their website, at <https://ecdhd.ne.gov/covid-2019-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines.html>

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