
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KENT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADMINISTERS 1ST COVID-19 VACCINE TO RN

1950 doses delivered this week slated for frontline health department clinical team, EMS workers

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (December 18, 2020) – The first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines slated for Kent County Health Department distribution arrived at the department headquarters yesterday morning. Vaccinations began today among the department’s frontline clinical team, with the department’s immunization program supervisor, Mary Wisinski, BSN, RN, receiving the first dose.

“This is an incredible day,” said Wisinski. “We’ve been working so hard to battle this virus, and some days, it felt like it got the best of us. This isn’t one of those days. This gives us hope – we’re going to beat this.”

Wisinski will lead the health department’s team of immunization nurses in administering vaccines in the months ahead.

The Kent County Health Department shipment contained 1,950 doses that will go to individuals in some of the highest risk groups, as designated by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The department is scheduled to administer the vaccine to:

- Kent County Health Department staff responsible for the administering the vaccine. (i.e. immunization nurses.)
- Kent County area medical first responders

Area hospitals have also begun administering early doses to frontline healthcare workers in their facilities this week.

The health department aims to administer all 1,950 doses at vaccine clinics for clinicians and EMS workers scheduled through December and into the new year. The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses, 21 days apart, to be fully effective. The health department will receive another 1,950 doses within three weeks so they can administer the required second dose.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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“This is the day we’ve all be waiting for and working toward,” said Dr. Adam London, director of the Kent County Health Department. “I am so proud of the team here at the Kent County Health Department. They have been relentless in their efforts to stay on top of this pandemic, test our residents, conduct contact tracing and notifications, analyze and report data, communicate vital information to our community and now, vaccinate those most at risk. I can’t thank them enough, and I’m so grateful that those on the frontlines of this battle are among the first to qualify for the vaccine.”

Wisinski, has been with the Kent County Health Department since 2003, and has served as immunizations supervisor since 2007. She is responsible for immunization education and training for department immunization nurses, all aspects of the *Vaccines for Children Program* in Kent County and for all required childcare/school immunization reporting countywide. She is a member of the KCHD Emergency Preparedness Team and serves as the Immunization Action Plan Coordinator for Kent County.

The Pfizer vaccine was the first to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for emergency use in the U.S. on December 11, but supplies are very limited and will be administered locally according to strict [protocols](#) outlined by the CDC and MDHHS.

On Tuesday, the Kent County Health Department led a consortium of West Michigan health departments, hospitals, healthcare providers, universities and others in launching www.VaccinateWestMI.com where area residents can find the latest information about the COVID-19 vaccine. The site includes information about vaccine availability, local distribution plans, safety and efficacy, and will be updated regularly as new information becomes available.

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