



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Richard F. Cortez
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Everado "Ever" Villarreal
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ellie Torres
Commissioner, Precinct 4

**OFFICE OF
COUNTY JUDGE
RICHARD F. CORTEZ**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 30, 2020

Hidalgo County schedules first community COVID-19 vaccine clinic targeting healthcare workers, elderly

EDINBURG — Hidalgo County has scheduled its first community vaccine clinic to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to healthcare workers and the elderly, Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez said Wednesday.

The clinic will be held in the city of Mercedes at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Grounds, at 1000 N. Texas Ave. Officials will begin administering the Moderna vaccinations on Tuesday, January 5, beginning at 8 a.m. on a first come, first served basis. Since there is still a limited number of doses available, the clinic will run until vaccinations are depleted.

"Hopefully, this marks the beginning of the end of this terrible pandemic," Judge Cortez said. "While local hospitals and some medical clinics have been working diligently to vaccinate people, this is the first opportunity for people in the community to receive the vaccines."

Cortez said as more vaccines become available in Hidalgo County, the pool of those eligible to receive vaccinations will continue to expand.

Hidalgo County will be following state protocol that targets healthcare workers. These workers will be asked to provide proof that they are in the healthcare industry.

The state protocol and Tuesday's clinic also targets anyone born before 1955 and are now 65 years or older. In addition, people aged 18 and older with certain medical conditions are eligible to be vaccinated with the advice of their doctors.

More information, including a form that can be prefilled, is available on the Hidalgo County website at www.hidalgocounty.us.

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The following is the state definition for healthcare workers who are eligible for vaccinations on Tuesday:

First Tier

1. Paid and unpaid workers in hospital settings working directly with patients who are positive or at high risk for COVID-19. Such as but not limited to:
 - a. Physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists and other support staff (custodial staff, etc.)
 - b. Additional clinical staff providing supporting laboratory, pharmacy, diagnostic and/or rehabilitation services
 - c. Others having direct contact with patients or infectious materials;
2. Long-term care staff working directly with vulnerable residents. Includes:
 - a. Direct care providers at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and state supported living centers
 - b. Physicians, nurses, personal care assistants, custodial, food service staff;
3. EMS providers who engage in 9-1-1 emergency services like pre-hospital care and transport;
4. Home health care workers, including hospice care, who directly interface with vulnerable and high-risk patients;
5. Residents of long-term care facilities.

Second Tier

1. Staff working in outpatient care settings who interact with symptomatic patients. Such as but not limited to:
 - a. Physicians, nurses, and other support staff (custodial staff, etc.)
 - b. Clinical staff providing diagnostic, laboratory, and/or rehabilitation services
 - c. Non 9-1-1 transport for routine care
 - d. Healthcare workers in corrections and detention facilities;
2. Direct care staff in freestanding emergency medical care facilities and urgent care clinics;

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3. Community pharmacy staff who may provide direct services to clients, including vaccination or testing for individuals who may have COVID;
4. Public health and emergency response staff directly involved in administration of COVID testing and vaccinations;
5. Last responders who provide mortuary or death services to decedents with COVID-19. Includes:
 - a. Embalmers and funeral home workers who have direct contact with decedents
 - b. Medical examiners and other medical certifiers who have direct contact with decedents;
6. School nurses who provide health care to students and teachers.

Also eligible for vaccines on Tuesday under state protocol are:

1. People 65 years of age and older;
2. People 18 years of age and older with at least one chronic medical condition that puts them at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, such as but not limited to:
 - Cancer
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies
 - Solid organ transplantation
 - Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index of 30 kg/m² or higher)
 - Pregnancy
 - Sickle cell disease
 - Type 2 diabetes mellitus.

These recipients are strongly encouraged to consult with and secure permission from their respective doctors to receive the vaccinations.

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