

News Release-draft

These past several weeks and into the future, partners in the five county area that Southwest Health and Human Services (SWHHS) are planning for distribution of the vaccine related to COVID-19. Vaccine is anticipated in this area as soon as the middle part of December.

This is another step in the prevention practices around containing this virus circulating at such a high level in the community.

“We have been using the only Public Health interventions available to us over these past several months”, said Carol Biren, Division Director-Public Health/CHS Administrator. “Actions such as Isolation and Quarantine, shutting down various locations, available testing and contact investigations and tracing have, up to this point, been our best tools. We are getting ready to launch one of our best public health prevention efforts; a vaccine and one that looks very promising.”

COVID-19 vaccine from a number of different manufacturers is coming into the community within the next month, sparking planning for distribution. Information from these manufacturers indicate that there is a high percent of coverage, bringing even more hope to this intervention.

SWHHS, in conjunction with a number of community partners, are planning on how to vaccinate targeted members in the community who meet the criteria established by the Federal government and the Minnesota Department of Health.

“This will be a phased in process, targeting highest risk persons first then down to the rest of the community as vaccine becomes available”, says Ms. Biren. “We are not doing this alone. Our partners will be carrying the largest load as it relates to vaccinations of those targeted people but this effort will also require the entire community to engage in this activity.”

First on the list to receive the vaccine are health care workers in hospitals, clinics, long term care facilities as well as other key personnel in the community such as EMS, Law Enforcement, teachers, etc.

Such a massive effort will require a large number of vaccinators so SWHHS and other partners are also seeking assistance from health care providers who would be willing to help with giving the vaccine.

Anyone interested in helping should contact SWHHS at _____. Citizens of these counties should watch the Facebook page, or the SWHHS website for information on future vaccination sites.