From: Ginny Merriam
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Cc: Grp. ALT
Subject: FW: Missoula County vaccine coordination explainer
Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 11:44:04 AM

Dear Council members,

I just sent this explainer to news media, and it could be helpful for you too as you field questions from constituents. We are working hard to help the public understand that vaccine doses are limited and that they should watch the website or, if they do not have Internet access, watch local news media and phone the call center at 258-INFO.

If any of you have questions, please don't hesitate to call me.

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Subject: Missoula County vaccine coordination explainer

Dear news professionals,

The purpose of the Missoula County COVID-19 Vaccine Coordination Team is to provide public information in one place for the duration of the vaccination effort in Missoula County. You are vital in helping us communicate with the public. We're providing this explainer/backgrounder for your reference as you cover this unfolding effort.

Here are the basics:

- Missoula County currently has 26 registered vaccine providers, and the Vaccine Coordination Team serves as an umbrella organization to efficiently coordinate vaccine administration among those providers. The Missoula City -County Health Department is one of those providers but is not directly overseeing the vaccine coordination effort.
- Each provider receives its vaccine doses through the state; there is no local distributing agency.
- Missoula County receives, for the foreseeable future, 1,500 first doses per week divided among the providers as the state determines what best serves the public. So far, vaccine doses have been concentrated in the larger providers.
- Missoula County residents seeking vaccinations can visit https://covid19.missoula.co and look for their regular health care-providing institutions – for instance, if your physician is part of Providence or Community Medical Center or Partnership Health Center – to check the message from that provider. Vaccine is not yet available at individual doctors' offices. Providers will notify patients through the website and also through their own channels when vaccine is available and patient groups have come up for vaccination. **People should not call providers directly unless specifically informed to do so.**
- People who do not have regular health care providers can watch the website for public clinics, which will be held in large settings for infectious-disease safety.
- People who do not have Internet access can phone the call center at 258-INFO. We have added a branch of that info line specifically for vaccine information. Staff there can answer

questions and assist people in signing up for clinics or vaccinations at providers.

- The website and call center are the single central place for information from all providers and announcements of public clinics.
- Many smaller-volume providers have not received any vaccine doses to date. These include pharmacies.
- The central limiting factor is the inadequate amount of vaccine available nationally. Everyone hopes this will change as pharmaceutical companies manufacturing it are able to ramp up production.
- The Missoula County COVID-19 Vaccination Coordination Team formed in mid-January at the direction of the Missoula County commissioners and the mayor of Missoula. It is managed by the Western Montana All Hazard Incident Management Team under the Office of Emergency Management. It is made up of City and County employees and staff from other agencies who are trained in incident management of such things as fires, floods and other public disasters. The team serves as an umbrella agency coordinating information about the distribution of vaccine in Missoula County. The team aims to reduce public anxiety by providing accurate, timely accurate information and to identify and address barriers to administering the vaccine to all who wish to receive it.
- Call these incident Public Information Officers any time for any questions:
  Nick Holloway, (406) 370-9381
  Ginny Merriam, (406) 546-7692
  Allison Franz, (406) 439-2306

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