



ITASCA COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ITASCA RESOURCE CENTER
1209 SE 2nd Avenue, Grand Rapids, Minnesota 55744-3983
Hearing Impaired Number TDD: 218-327-5549
(218) 327-2941

Visit us at: www.co.itasca.mn.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ITASCA COUNTY AMONG FIRST TO GET NEW SINGLE-DOSE VACCINE

(Grand Rapids, Minn., **March 2, 2021**) – Itasca County is about to see a surge in available COVID vaccine after weeks of waiting for adequate supplies. A county of nearly 13,000 residents aged 65 and over, Itasca stands at 55 percent of this priority population vaccinated. The new vaccine supplies unexpectedly announced this week will be made available to these elders, who are most at risk of serious illness and death from COVID-19.

Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital will receive at least 250 doses of the newly approved Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 single-dose vaccine this week. These doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be offered to those ages 65 and older at a vaccine clinic this weekend. Appointments for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine clinic will be available to schedule starting Thursday, March 4 at 9:00 a.m. via MyChart or by calling the Grand Itasca appointment line at 218-326-7344.

Grand Itasca also continues to administer Pfizer vaccines to patients. Appointments for Pfizer vaccines continue to be scheduled one week at a time, with the schedule opening up on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. When the Pfizer schedule opens next Monday, March 8th, the minimum age for scheduling the vaccine will be 65 years of age.

Grand Rapids' two Thrifty White pharmacies also received news from federal health officials of a significant boost in their available vaccine for those 65 and older, with 1,200 doses available in coming days. Thrifty White appointments can be made online at www.thriftywhite.com.

Itasca County Public Health will host a small clinic (50 doses) in Grand Rapids for those 65 plus on Thursday, March 4. Registrations required (no walk-ins allowed): <https://prepmo.health.state.mn.us/reg/0514296074>.

“With case rates still at higher levels in Itasca County, vaccination is a tremendous opportunity for our communities,” said Kelly Chandler, division manager for Itasca County Public Health. “All of these vaccines will be given in the next few days and seniors are strongly encouraged to take advantage of their priority position to get vaccinated and get protected.

“It’s a sign of both trust and need that Itasca County is among the first to receive the J&J vaccine. And once we protect 70 percent of our elders, we also are prepared to move into other groups of residents.”



Vaccines in Itasca County also are available through Essentia Health Deer River, Bigfork Valley, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe/IHS, Scenic Rivers Clinic and Walmart. Itasca County Public Health is focused on specific groups such as schools, childcare providers and those 65 and older by appointment only.

As of March 1, Itasca County's 14-day case rate per 10,000 residents remains at 22, which is higher than that of all surrounding counties. COVID-19 spread is considered uncontrolled when this rate is 10 or higher. Over the past seven days, 48 new infections have been diagnosed.

Itasca residents with questions or concerns may leave them at the Itasca County COVID message line, with calls returned 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The Itasca COVID line number is 218-327-6784. Information about vaccination options and current local data and information may be found at the county's website here: <https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/798/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

-END-

Media briefing: Itasca County Health Department will host 30-minute press briefings on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. as needed. The next scheduled briefing will be March 4.

Itasca County Public Health media contacts

Kelly Chandler (218-327-6144 and kelly.chandler@co.itasca.mn.us) or Anna Anttila (anna.anttila@co.itasca.mn.us).