News Release

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Oregon Department of Corrections Employees Receive COVID-19 Vaccine



DOC Chief Medical Director, Dr. Warren Roberts, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Today, the first Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) employees received the Moderna Therapeutics COVID-19 vaccine. DOC has received enough doses to treat 400 people and anticipates regular access to, and distribution of, additional vaccines in the future. In the coming months, this protection will be offered and strongly encouraged to all DOC staff, contractors, Oregon Corrections Enterprises employees, and adults in custody (AICs). Prioritization of vaccines will be determined by guidance from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Governor's Office.

Vaccinations at DOC begin with individuals who are in close contact with COVID-19-positive individuals and infectious materials. This includes medical providers and nurses, transport employees, security staff working on COVID-19 units and/or performing hospital watches, and a small number of AICs whose work assignments involve cleaning and disinfecting in COVID-19-positive units.

Dr. Warren Roberts, DOC's Chief Medical Director, was one of the first employees to receive the vaccine. Dr. Roberts shares, "Today, I received the first of two doses for my COVID-19 vaccination. I strongly encourage all DOC employees, the people we incarcerate, and the public to also get vaccinated as soon as it is available to them. This virus has wreaked havoc in our communities, and I am sure, like me, many of you are ready to get back to normal life. As the Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Corrections, I've seen first-hand the epidemic in the prison setting and know we need to fight back with all tools available. Some of the worst outbreaks in Oregon have been in institutional settings and this virus does not stay behind the prison walls, it seeps out into the surrounding community.

"The 13,000 adults in DOC custody miss seeing their friends and family, and vaccines will help us open visiting again. And as essential public safety professionals, DOC employees and their loved ones deserve some peace of mind and protection against the virus. Again, I encourage all Oregonians to get vaccinated and help us turn the tide. Even if you are skeptical, please consider those around you – your elderly parents, your neighbors, your community members who have underlying health conditions. We have all made sacrifices this year, but getting the vaccine is a heroic act and an enormous step toward protecting the lives of all Americans."

DOC is collaborating with our local public health officials, coordinating with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations to prevent the spread COVID-19. DOC is following OHA's guidance on long-term care facilities and law enforcement recommendations. DOC operates 14 prisons across the state and incarcerates approximately 13,000 adults in custody. For information on DOC's COVID-19 efforts, please visit DOC's website at Oregon.gov/doc.

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