



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Dec. 8, 2020**

Current COVID-19 case count

Scott County – Total of 12,305
Total deaths in Scott County: 104

Rock Island County – 94 new cases since Monday; total of 9,293
Currently in hospital in Rock Island County: 83
Total deaths in Rock Island County: 181
3 newly reported deaths: a man in his 90s, a woman in her 80s, and a woman in her 70s, all of whom had been living in long-term care facilities.

Today's call

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at
<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

Question and answers to planning for COVID-19 vaccine distribution

The first questions were answered by Edward Rivers, director of the Scott County Health Department

Who is involved in the vaccination planning in the Quad Cities?

- Our health departments, emergency management agencies, our local health systems (Genesis and UnityPoint) and Community Health Care, the local federally qualified health center.
- We are meeting frequently and updating our plans as new information is released from the CDC and the state health departments.

What do these plans include?

- These plans include education on the vaccine, how we will store vaccine, where it will be given, and how we will communicate to individuals when their turn to get the vaccine has come.
- Giving vaccine during a public health pandemic where social distancing is so important adds more challenges to planning for vaccinations for the general public; however, our plans are addressing these important factors too.

Should we expect the vaccine distribution to be similar in Iowa and Illinois?

- Unfortunately, probably not. Similar to the beginning of the pandemic, we are planning for the rollout of vaccine distribution to be different between Rock Island and Scott Counties due to the fact that they are guided by two different states.
- We know this can be frustrating and can add another layer of challenges not only to our planning and our communication with the community – but it is also frustrating for the community when the rollouts are different. We realize we are going to need to be flexible and make changes to our plans as new information and guidance is given to each of our counties. Please be patient with us!

Who is making the decision for which groups get the vaccine when?

- There is a federal advisory group called the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. This group has announced their recommendations for the first phase of COVID-19 vaccination. The committee recommended that vaccine should first be offered to health care personnel and residents of long-term care facilities.
- In Iowa, an Infectious Disease Advisory Committee has been created to provide further guidance on the order in which individuals in this first phase of the vaccine will get vaccinated.
- The Illinois Department of Public Health also is working on its phased approach. It is adopting the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine’s (NASEM) “A Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine.”

Why will healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities get the vaccine first?

- As prioritization discussions took place at the federal level, the factors that played a role in the priority group decision-making involved:
 - Decrease death and serious disease as much as possible
 - Preserve functioning of society
 - Reduce the extra burden the disease is having on people already facing disparities
 - Increase the chance for everyone to enjoy health and well-being
- Healthcare workers, in particular those in hospital settings, are at the front of the line to get the vaccine because of their exposure to patients and their vital presence to keep the healthcare system running.
- As more vaccine becomes available, additional healthcare workers will receive the vaccine.
- Residents in long-term care facilities have accounted for a large proportion of hospitalizations and deaths, which indicates that these individuals have been bearing a greater burden of the negative outcomes from COVID-19.

- These factors contributed to the committee's recommendation to prevent spread by protecting those on the front lines, healthcare workers treating COVID-19.
- Once these groups have been vaccinated, the next group in the priority list will begin to receive the vaccine.

The next set of questions were answered by Nita Ludwig, administrator, Rock Island County Health Department

How will I know when it's my turn to get the vaccine?

- We have a team in place working hard to communicate this important information to our community. You can expect to get information on this from our departments, through avenues such as social media, our website, our local media partners, and also local healthcare providers.

When will businesses/workers get the vaccine?

- While we can't give an exact timeline, we do know that the national proposed priority group recommendations have essential workers listed in phase 1b. This means they would be next in line after all healthcare workers and long-term care residents have received vaccine.
- We expect guidance to come out that tells us who those essential workers are.

What should my business be doing right now to prepare for the vaccine that is to come?

- We encourage all businesses to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine to help you begin the first phases of planning for vaccinating your employees.
- The CDC has frequently asked questions about the vaccine that can be helpful.
- Employers can also begin making sure they keep an updated roster of their employees and the role they play in the organization. If vaccine continues to be limited, some employees of a business may meet the definition of essential workers while others may get the vaccine at a later date.
- We promise to share more information regarding the groups getting vaccinated in Phase 1b when it is available to us.

When will I know that it is our turn to get the vaccine for my business and employees?

- As we move through the Phase 1a vaccinations of our healthcare workers and long-term care residents, we will begin more detailed planning for Phase 1b. This planning will include communicating new information and timelines to businesses with essential workers in our community.

- We ask you to be patient with us as we wait for this to roll out and new guidance to be shared. We know it's difficult to not have the answers at this time.

Where should I look to learn more about the vaccine?

- First, it is most important to use reliable sources of information when learning about the COVID-19 vaccine. This type of information is researched, written, approved, and peer-reviewed by subject matter experts.
- Locally, reliable information is available on the Scott and Rock Island County Health Departments' websites.
- The QC COVID-19 Coalition also has a website, togetherqc.com. This site has very similar information on the vaccine from the CDC and state health departments.
- Your healthcare provider will also be a good source of information on the vaccine when it comes closer to your turn to receive it.

What main message would you like to share with the community about the role each person plays in our vaccination plans?

- While our plans are vast and involve lots of factors, we are planning how we will make vaccine available to everyone in our community.
- When your turn comes, please consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The more individuals that are vaccinated in our community, the greater likelihood we have of slowing down the virus. The vaccine, along with wearing a mask, social distancing, washing your hands, and staying home when you are sick, will be an important tool in helping slow the spread.

More information

- <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/restore-illinois-mitigation-plan>
- https://governor.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Summary%20of%20Enhanced%20Public%20Health%20Measures_final.pdf
- <https://www.scottcountyiowa.gov/health/post/do-masks-prevent-covid-19>
- <https://togetherqc.com/2020/10/mask-mandate-local-initiative/>
- www.TogetherQC.com
- coronavirus.iowa.gov
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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