

COVID-19 Vaccine Planning: Risk Stratification Plan

Overview



The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a phased plan to maximize the benefit of any authorized COVID-19 vaccine. There will be limited vaccine available in Phase I as production launches.

As more vaccine becomes available, VA's goal is to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to all health care workers and Veterans who choose to be vaccinated.

What is Guiding Our Planning?

Ethical Principles Guiding VA's Plan



Safety

Follow all protocols to protect Veterans and staff



Maximize benefits of the vaccine

Offer the vaccine so it will benefit the most people



Equity

Distribute the vaccine in a manner that is just



Fairness

Offer the vaccine without discrimination



Transparency

Share information as it becomes available

VA Experts Developing the Plan



Ethics



Health equity



Pharmacy



Infectious diseases

How Did We Develop Our Plan?

Partnered with CDC and other federal agencies



Analyzed VA Veteran and staff data



Aligned VA data with CDC recommendations



VA Risk Stratification Plan

Evaluated data on high-risk groups and reviewed health disparities by race and ethnicity



Reviewed guidance from professional groups including:

- Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine



Your Safe Care is Our Mission.

Visit the [COVID-19 Resource Room](#) to submit your vaccine questions.

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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VA's Risk-Based Stratification Criteria

STEP 1

Apply Risk-Based Criteria:

- Risk of acquiring infection
- Risk of severe illness and death
- Risk of transmitting disease
- Risk of harm to society (if essential workers, including health care personnel, are unable to work)

STEP 2

Provide Further Review of:

- Research
- Ethics - or moral principles - underlying vaccine allocation

STEP 3

Coordinate with CDC:

Review Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and CDC guidance when issued

U.S. Food and Drug Administration issues an authorization or approval for COVID-19 vaccine(s)

STEP 4

Release Plan:

Revise and release Risk-Based Stratification Plan

Here is Where the Plan Stands Now



Based on the risk-based stratification criteria, VA will likely first offer the COVID-19 vaccine to health care personnel (HCP) working in the highest risk patient care settings because vaccinating HCP:

- Ensures they can continue caring for patients throughout the pandemic
- Decreases the risk of infecting Veterans, coworkers and society
- Promotes a healthier, stronger workforce to care for Veterans



Under VA's current plan, VA will first offer COVID-19 vaccine to high-risk health care personnel. As more vaccine become available, VA will offer the vaccine to high-risk Veterans. VA's ultimate goal is to offer it to all Veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated.

High-Risk Veterans



Among Veterans enrolled in VA's health care system, age appears to be a greater risk factor for COVID-19 mortality than having several high-risk medical conditions.

- More than half of Veterans are over age 65.
- Veterans will need to be prioritized by level of risk initially while vaccine quantity is limited.



According to the CDC, racial and ethnic minority groups represent 40% of the total U.S. population yet comprise nearly 60% of COVID-19 cases and 50% of COVID-19 deaths.

- VA's risk-based stratification criteria takes into consideration that people of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 illness, hospitalization and death.