

# News Release

For Immediate Release: December 29, 2020

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## **State Committee Prioritizes Those 75 and Older for Second Phase of COVID-19 Vaccination**

*Aligned with federal guidance, recommendation is designed to protect Arizona's most vulnerable*

PHOENIX — Arizonans 75 and older are now prioritized to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in the second phase of distribution following an [updated recommendation](#) yesterday by a panel of state, local, and tribal experts, including members of the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS).

“One of Arizona’s top priorities since the start of the pandemic has been to protect our most vulnerable,” said Governor Doug Ducey. “This updated prioritization will get older Arizonans vaccinated sooner, further protecting those most at-risk and relieving the strain on our hardworking health care professionals. My thanks to the trained vaccinators across the state working to mitigate the spread of the virus and protect Arizonans.”

The recommendation by the Arizona Vaccine and Antiviral Prioritization Advisory Committee (VAPAC) is intended to protect those who are most at risk for severe outcomes due to COVID-19, such as hospitalization and death, and to reduce strain on Arizona’s hospitals. Older Arizonans are far more likely to experience severe COVID-19 complications and be hospitalized than younger individuals.

The VAPAC decision is aligned with the updated recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which recently voted to include those over the age of 75 in phase 1B. According to [national data from the CDC](#), those 75 years of age and older are eight times more likely to be hospitalized and 220 times more likely to die compared to younger adults. These risks continue to significantly increase for individuals 85 and older.

“We have seen the devastating effects COVID-19 has had on our communities,” said ADHS Director Dr. Cara Christ. “Prioritizing those 75 and older in the next phase of vaccinations will protect those at even greater risk while helping preserve hospital capacity.”

Vaccination has begun across Arizona for front line healthcare workers, emergency medical services workers, and residents and staff at long-term care facilities. This group is referred to as phase 1A for COVID-19 vaccine prioritization in Arizona.

Those 75 and older will now be eligible for vaccination in the next phase, which also includes education and childcare workers and members of protective services occupations. This group is referred to as

prioritized phase 1B. ADHS anticipates moving into prioritized phase 1B mid to late January statewide. Some counties may move into this phase earlier.

The [Vaccine and Antiviral Prioritization Advisory Committee](#), which met yesterday, provides recommendations to ensure fair and equitable vaccine allocation across the state of Arizona. The committee makes recommendations to the Department on populations that should be prioritized to receive vaccine doses when there are limited supplies available. This group has been meeting routinely to discuss prioritization since the beginning of December and will continue to meet to review vaccine distribution and make recommendations for Arizona.