



County of Malheur

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1108 S.W. 4th Street • Ontario, OR 97914 • (541) 889-7279

March 22, 2021
For Immediate Release

Malheur County gets green light from state to move on to next eligibility group

Malheur County has been given the go-ahead from the Governor's Office to open COVID-19 vaccine eligibility a week ahead of time to [Phase 1b Group 6](#), which includes people age 45-64 with one or more health conditions, people who work in agriculture and food processing, people experiencing unstable housing, and others. The expanded eligibility will help vaccine providers in the county, including the Malheur County Health Department, use the increasing supply of vaccine that is available.

"We could have vaccinated a lot more people than we did last Thursday," MCHD Director Sarah Poe said. "We administered 121 of the 300 doses we had available. Opening up eligibility will enable us to use a lot more of the vaccine we have coming into the county."

Approval to expand eligibility came by way of email on Friday evening, just hours after a [letter](#) was submitted to the Governor's Office requesting eligibility for Groups 6 and 7 of the state's [eligibility timeline](#).

"We have plans to continue weekly vaccine clinics, to support additional healthcare providers and pharmacies, and to start taking vaccine to locations where disproportionately affected populations live and work. This includes very rural communities, onion sheds, and organizations that serve people experiencing houselessness. This takes a great effort logistically, especially to not waste doses when vials are opened. To encourage more vaccine-hesitant and vulnerable people to be vaccinated, we believe we will be more effective if we can open the groups that include people over 16 with an underlying health condition and those in multi-generational housing. We have not been able to use all the vaccine we have available with the eligibility as it is," the letter stated.

All groups that have become eligible so far remain eligible as new groups are added. It is important that people understand this, Poe said, because data released today by the state shows that Malheur County is behind the state average in vaccinating seniors. As of March 15, the state average for people age 65 and over who have had at least one vaccine dose is 53.69%. In Malheur County, it's 43.72%. "That's concerning because Malheur County is one of the easiest places in the state to get a vaccine, and older adults are at highest risk of severe disease," she said.

All Oregonians age 16 and over will be eligible for the vaccine by May 1.

MORE

The Malheur County Health Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, political beliefs or source of income. Interpreter services and/or other assistive aids are provided at our facility at no cost. Our facility is accessible.

In addition to MCHD, the following health care providers and pharmacies currently offer COVID-19 vaccines:

- Valley Family Health Care:
 - Vale, 541-473-2101
 - Ontario, 541-889-2340
 - Nyssa, 541-372-5738
 - TVWC, 541-881-2800
 - TVPC, 541-889-2668
- Stark Medical, Ontario, 541-889-2244
- Bi-Mart, Ontario, 541-889-2141
- Walmart, Ontario, 541-889-6040
- Malheur Drug, Vale, 541-473-3333
- Malheur Memorial Health, Nyssa, 541-372-2211
- Medicap Pharmacy, Nyssa, 541-372-2222

###

The Malheur County Health Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, religion, gender identity, political beliefs or source of income. Interpreter services and/or other assistive aids are provided at our facility at no cost. Our facility is accessible.