## Tulare County Expands Eligibility for COVID Vaccinations, NOW Vaccinating Those with Underlying High-Risk Health Conditions and Disabilities

Tulare County Public Health has updated its COVID Vaccine Plan and is now offering vaccinations to those eligible with underlying and high-risk health conditions. People 16-64 years of age who have an underlying heath condition or disability which increases their risk of severe COVID-19 can now make an appointment to get vaccinated.

Healthcare providers may use their clinical judgement to vaccinate individuals aged 16-64 who are deemed to be at the very highest risk to get very sick from COVID-19 because they have the following severe health conditions:
- **Cancer**, current with weakened immune system
- **Chronic kidney disease**, stage 4 or above
- **Chronic pulmonary disease,** oxygen dependent
- **Down syndrome**
- **Solid organ transplant,** leading to a weakened immune system
- **Pregnancy**
- **Sickle cell disease**
- **Heart conditions**, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies (but not hypertension)
- **Severe obesity** (Body Mass Index ≥ 40 kg/m$^2$)
- **Type 2 diabetes mellitus** with hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.5%

In addition, **i**f as a result of a developmental or other severe high-risk disability one or more of the following applies:
- The individual is likely to develop severe life-threatening illness or death from COVID-19 infection
- Acquiring COVID-19 will limit the individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival
- Providing adequate and timely COVID care will be particularly challenging as a result of the individual's disability.

Tulare County residents and workers who are currently eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, including residents with underlying high-risk health conditions, can now get vaccinated at multiple locations throughout the county. There are five primary ways people with these high-risk conditions or disabilities may be able to find an appointment:

**1. Your Health Care Provider or Doctor:** We strongly recommend individuals with these conditions seek vaccination with a primary health care provider or system, or in an alternate clinical setting.  Check first with your usual health care provider to see if they have vaccines and available appointments.  Health care providers who have vaccines may also begin reaching out to you, as a patient with a significant, high-risk medical condition or disability known to the provider, to schedule your vaccine appointment.

**2. Pharmacies:** You can check your local pharmacies to see if they have vaccines and available appointments.  For the month of March, federal direction is that all school and childcare staff are prioritized for pharmacy vaccines, so supply for other populations remains limited.

**3. Community Pop-Up Clinics:** Community pop-up clinics for people with high-risk medical conditions and disabilities will roll out and will be targeted for equity to those living in communities with the lowest Healthy Place Index scores. Community partners will outreach to people eligible for the pop-up clinics.

**4. MyTurn:** Throughout the spring, as vaccine supply increases and the statewide vaccinator network grows, you will be able to schedule an appointment through California's MyTurn, in two ways:

## TULARE COUNTY
## HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA
**Agency Director**

- On-line at www.myturn.ca.gov.  The MyTurn website is accessible to people with disabilities and in eight languages:  English, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Japanese.
- Calling the COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-422-4255 or 1-833-4CA-4ALL.  The Hotline is accessible to people with disabilities and offers services in English and Spanish, with connections to interpretive services in more than 250 languages.

Anyone who meets the eligibility requirements to receive the COVID Vaccine can also visit the Tulare County COVID Vaccine webpage at: https://covid19.tularecounty.ca.gov/covid-19-vaccine/ for more vaccination locations including a full listing of healthcare providers and local pharmacies offering COVID vaccinations.

"We urge all our newly eligible residents and workforce to not delay and get vaccinated as soon as possible," shared Dr. Karen Haught, Tulare County Public Health Officer. "This vaccine is our best line of defense against the COVID-19 virus, as we look to build immunity in our community, allowing us to safely lift restrictions on businesses, open schools, and ultimately bring this horrible pandemic to an end."

**Will I need to verify I have a high-risk medical condition or disability when I go to my appointment?** To protect confidentiality, verification documentation of the diagnosis or type of disability is not required, but instead anyone meeting the eligibility requirements will be asked to sign a self-attestation that they meet the criteria for high-risk medical conditions or disabilities.

*For more information about COVID-19, visit www.tchhsa.org/ncov and www.covid19.tularecounty.ca.gov*

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