

Cass County, Missouri

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COVID-19 Vaccinations in Cass County, Missouri

CASS COUNTY, MO (February 1, 2021) – The Cass County Health Department (CCHD) has been on the frontlines since the beginning of the pandemic. Additionally, CCHD has been working diligently with the Cass County Commission to develop mass vaccination plans including the operation of two drive-through clinics.

CCHD received its first 400 doses of COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday of last week and had administered 320 of those doses by Friday. The remaining doses will be administered on February 2, 2020 as a test of the drive-through clinic format. CCHD has not previously had any vaccine and had previously not been able to distribute any doses due to lack of supply. All of the doses administered by the Health Department will be done in accordance of the current phase (Phase 1B - Tier 2 or above) of the State of Missouri Vaccination Plan (<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/>).

Prior to last week, only two entities in Cass County had vaccine available to members of the public currently eligible in the current vaccination phase. Those entities are Belton Regional Medical Center (BRMC) and Cass Regional Medical Center (CRMC). Additionally, CVS and Walgreens have been vaccinating long-term care residents and staff in the County.

Vaccine distribution is handled by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). CCHD has no role in that process. Under the newly released State vaccine distribution plan, Missouri's 114 local public health agencies will receive a total of approximately 6,000 doses of vaccines per week or about 53 doses per local public health agency. DHSS has not advised CCHD of how many, if any, doses it can expect to receive.

CCHD has had over 21,000 people fill out a survey on the County website since January 5, 2021 wishing to get on the notification list for vaccines. Additionally, the health department is fielding hundreds of calls a week requesting a vaccine. Unfortunately, there is currently no entity in Cass County that can meet the demand because of the lack of supply. Across the State, there are more than 2 million Missourians currently eligible to receive the vaccine.

Commissioner Ryan Johnson has gone on the record saying “Cass County needs the vaccines to vaccinate its citizens. Unfortunately, the demand for vaccines greatly exceeds our current supply. We have communicated with state officials in hopes of expediting getting shots into the arms of people who want the vaccine. Our people deserve this.”

Missouri has primarily used avenues other than local health departments to distribute vaccines. This approach has frustrated many public health professionals who have the experience in administering vaccines and who have been working hard to plan for vaccine administration. DHSS released its updated plans last week to continue to direct the majority of vaccine to hospitals and mass vaccination events, <https://health.mo.gov/news/newsitem/uuid/82fe19f5-9282-4e51-8c0c-a633c787010c/hospitals-to-support-high-throughput-vaccine-distribution-in-missouri>.

Both BRMC and CRMC have reached out to CCHD regarding vaccination distribution. CCHD will be assisting both entities in identifying eligible individuals, supplementing staff resources as needed, and as supplies allow, assisting with its own vaccination clinics. BRMC and CRMC have been critical partners in pandemic response, including hosting weekly COVID-19 testing events.

Vaccination opportunities will be sent first to those who have signed up on the survey at <https://casscounty.com/2462/COVID-19-Vaccine>. As supplies become more available, vaccination opportunities will be posted on the County website and social media.

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