

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Phase 1D Vaccinations Start This Week in Brookings County

Brookings, S.D. – Jan. 19, 2021 – To get vaccines in arms as quickly as possible, Brookings Health System is partnering with Sanford Clinic Brookings and Avera Medical Group Brookings to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to qualifying Brookings County residents.

The partnership between the health entities follows last week’s announcement from the South Dakota Department of Health (DOH) that vaccination eligibility would be opened up to select individuals within Phase 1d of the DOH’s COVID Vaccination Plan. Those now eligible include:

- Individuals 80+ years of age
- High-risk individuals, including those who have 2+ underlying medical conditions
- People who live in a congregate setting

“We ask for patience and grace during this undertaking,” said Brookings Health System President and CEO Jason Merkley. “Demand is much higher than supply. We estimate there are over 7,500 people total in Phase 1d within Brookings County and this week we received 300 vaccine doses. If vaccine allocations remain limited, it will take a great deal of time to give all eligible folks their turn.”

Starting this week, Brookings County residents will be contacted by their primary care clinic if they meet one of the following criteria:

- 80+ years of age
- High-risk individual

The clinics will contact the oldest and sickest individuals first. Individuals will receive a phone call when a vaccine dose is available for their turn.

Brookings Health System will work directly with congregate living settings to vaccinate residents.

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Brookings County residents who qualify for the current Phase 1d selection and are not a patient at Avera Medical Group Brookings or Sanford Clinic Brookings may join the vaccine waiting list at brookingshealth.org/vaccine.

About Brookings Health System

Brookings Health System, located in Brookings, South Dakota, includes a 49-bed hospital, the 79-bed The Neighborhoods at Brookview nursing home, Brookhaven Estates senior living apartments, Yorkshire Eye Clinic & Optical, and medical clinics in Arlington, White and Volga, South Dakota. It is a non-profit, city-owned facility that offers the community a full range of inpatient, outpatient, emergency and extended care services. Brookings Hospital provides local access to doctors in Brookings and offers robotic da Vinci surgery and Mako robotic-arm assisted procedures, making it one of the premier rural community hospitals in South Dakota. For more information about the services offered at Brookings Health System, please call (605) 696-9000 or visit us on the Web at brookingshealth.org.

PHOTO: This graphic illustrates the current vaccine status for Brookings County. Brookings Health System is partnering with Avera Medical Group Brookings and Sanford Clinic Brookings to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine to Brookings County residents newly eligible in Phase 1d of the South Dakota Department of Health's Vaccination Plan. Eligible individuals will be directly called by the clinics who are vaccinating the oldest and sickest patients first with the limited vaccine doses.