

This morning, we began scheduling appointments for people age 65 and older for COVID-19 vaccinations. Very quickly, close to 2,000 available appointments were filled either by people calling on the phone or scheduling online. We are working to open up more appointments through the spring, which we expect to be done later this week. As more information becomes available in the coming days, we will share it through our regional media partners, on our website, and our Facebook page.

There are close to 27,000 people in the 65 and older age group in SIPH's eight-county region (Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Butte, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, & Power Counties) all needing these limited appointments. The reality is that vaccine supply is extremely limited, with currently just under 2,000 doses coming to our eight-county region each week. These doses are then distributed to enrolled provider locations in our region to administer to individuals. Please recognize, because our vaccine supply is so limited, not all enrolled providers will receive vaccine each week, and all providers are having the same challenges with extremely limited vaccine supply. We anticipate it will take at least 13 weeks to get the vaccine to everyone in the 65 and older group at this rate. However, we are hopeful that the vaccine supply will increase in the coming weeks. While we understand so many are very eager to receive the vaccine, we are asking for your patience.

We are extremely pleased that so many appointments were made so quickly today. The online scheduling links went live at 8:00 a.m., as did our phone lines. At the same time, our experience today also helped identify some areas for improvement, which we are working to address. We understand that inability to get through on the phone lines due to them all being in use created frustration and confusion as well.

Please know that we are committed to working with our community partners to get the COVID-19 vaccine out to people as quickly as we can, given extremely limited vaccine supply. We appreciate your patience as we work through this monumental undertaking as quickly as possible.

Thank you, and take care,

Maggie Mann, Director