



**Quad Cities COVID-19 Coalition  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Jan. 14, 2021**

**Current COVID-19 case count**

**Scott County** – Total of 16,276  
Total deaths in Scott County: 161

**Rock Island County** – 56 new cases since Wednesday; total of 11,521  
Currently in hospital in Rock Island County: 35  
Total deaths in Rock Island County: 281

**Today's call**

A video recording of today's media briefing can be found at  
<https://www.scottcountyiowa.com/health/covid19/news>

**More vaccination opportunities will be available**

Remarks from Nita Ludwig, administrator, Rock Island County Health Department

A Moline school nurse rejoiced on a “sunny, historic day” Tuesday as she got her first dose of the long-awaited COVID-19 vaccine. We understand that almost everyone in the Quad-Cities is eagerly awaiting their own moment to cheer. This will take time. We’ve asked for patience, and we know that waiting is frustrating and difficult. Your turn will come.

As of right now, we are in Phase 1A, which means healthcare workers can receive the vaccine, which is slowly coming into our community. In total, Rock Island County has received about 6,000 doses. Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker is expected to say this week that we will move to Phase 1B as an entire state on Monday. About 8,000 healthcare workers live and work in Rock Island County. About 60 percent of them have received their first dose, while 1,000 have gotten their second doses. We will continue to vaccinate those in Phase 1A. Next week, another 1,000 healthcare workers receive their second dose. As a reminder, the two vaccines being given have different second-dose timelines: 21 days for Pfizer and 28 days for Moderna.

The Rock Island County Health Department leadership team is working to fine-tune our mass vaccination clinic process. We were happy to vaccinate about 300 people Tuesday, but we know there are many more vaccinations that need to be administered. We hope you understand that this is a new process for every public health department across the county. We have decades of experience in vaccinating people for flu and other preventable diseases.

However, the COVID-19 vaccine protocol includes requirements not necessary for flu, including additional paperwork and an observation period.

Our clinics will continue for the foreseeable future on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Greater Quad City Auto Auction, 4015 78th Ave., Milan. These clinics are dependent on weather and vaccine supply. We will vaccinate healthcare workers in Phase 1A and essential frontline workers in Phase 1B.

Phase 1B in Illinois includes residents 65 and older and frontline essential workers, including police officers; firefighters; educators; food and ag workers; manufacturing workers; corrections workers and inmates; U.S. Postal System workers; public transit employees; grocery store workers; and daycare staff. Phase 1C is yet to be defined, but we expect it to include frontline workers and those with underlying health conditions and will follow Phase 1B.

Take a moment and think about your friends and neighbors. How many of them fall into Phase 1B? In all, Phase 1B includes about 65,000 of Rock Island County's 143,000 residents. This will take time and resources beyond what our staff of 50 people, with only 10 nurses, can accomplish. We must rely on our healthcare partners and our Medical Reserve Corps volunteers to help with this massive and historic undertaking.

We can't do this alone.

Community Health Care, a longstanding health department partner, is helping in this massive vaccination effort. Rock Island County healthcare workers can get vaccinated on weekends by appointment through CHC. Please email [covidvaccine@chcgca.org](mailto:covidvaccine@chcgca.org) for additional instructions on how to sign up.

In addition, we are awaiting final state public health approval before we can announce a partnership with a pharmacy in Rock Island County. In time and as vaccine availability grows, we expect the state will allow other pharmacies to administer vaccinations.

We also must rely on your patience – even though we understand it's hard to give. Your turn will come.

## **Iowa Department of Public Health announces Phase 1B recommendations**

Remarks from Edward Rivers, director, Scott County Health Department

Earlier this week, Iowa's Infectious Disease Advisory Council (IDAC) announced its recommendations for priority groups to be immunized when Iowa begins Phase 1B of COVID-19 vaccinations.

IDAC identified persons 75 years of age and older and groups vulnerable to high risk of exposure or severity of illness. These groups include:

- Persons with disabilities living in home settings whom are dependent on attendant care staff, and their attendant care staff, if not otherwise vaccinated under Phase 1a.
- Correctional facility staff and persons incarcerated, including state and city or county operated facilities.
- Staff of and persons living in congregate settings, not covered by the first two categories, including shelters, sober living homes, behavioral health treatment centers, and detention centers. College dormitories shall not be included as part of Phase 1B.
- Where public health data indicates outbreaks or clusters of disease among food, agriculture, distribution and manufacturing workers whom work in or live in congregate settings that do not allow for social distancing. For example, working in a meatpacking or manufacturing production line or migrant workers whom live in bunkroom style housing.
- PK-12 school staff, early childhood education, and childcare workers. Sub-prioritization should consider persons who work with younger and at-risk children in care, to better ensure child-wellbeing and mitigate impact to parent workforce.
- First responders (e.g., firefighters, police officers, dependent adult abuse, and child welfare social workers).

After receiving IDAC's recommendation, Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) added two categories to preserve public health protections and provide for continuity of government. They are:

- Inspectors responsible for health, life, and safety, including those in hospital and long-term care settings, child, and food production safety.
- Government officials, including staff, to ensure continuity of government, engaged in state business at the Iowa Capitol during the legislative session.

We know there has been lots of talk about essential workers being part of Phase 1B. Although some essential workers are included, if their work environments don't accommodate social distancing, others are not, at this time.

Like you, we hear the national news reports on priority groups and what other states are doing. A recommendation earlier this week by Operation Warp Speed members to vaccinate all persons 65+ or with serious medical conditions has generated a flood of calls to our department. We can report that, at this time, the Iowa Department of Public Health does not intend to change the priority groups in Phase 1B to include these recommended groups. The state is not receiving sufficient vaccine from the federal government to implement this recommendation.

Neither has IDPH has received an indication that Iowa's vaccine supply levels will increase in the coming weeks. Until this changes, immunization in Iowa will continue to move at a slow pace. All local health departments in the state, including ours, act under the authority of the state of Iowa, and receive vaccine from the state of Iowa. So we must comply with IDPH direction, and

have no authority to act otherwise. Also, IDPH has issued a vaccine shortage order that prohibits, under penalty of law and license action, providing vaccine to anyone not in the phase categories.

Additionally, the IDPH has determined that we will begin Phase 1B as a state: not county-by-county. They expect this to happen no later than February 1. However, that does not mean that on February 2, everyone in Phase 1B will be scheduled to be vaccinated. Vaccine is coming to Iowa and Scott County quite slowly. We learn weekly whether or not we will be getting vaccine for the upcoming week. The amounts have varied and some weeks we have received no first dose vaccine.

Having only limited amounts of vaccine to provide during a pandemic creates an extremely challenging situation for local health departments, because it's so important for everyone to be immunized. I assure you that our staff and partners are moving as quickly as possible, given the amount of vaccine that we have received to date.

We ask that you please continue to be patient and have faith that we, your local health department staff – many of which are your neighbors – will continue to work feverishly until everyone who wants the vaccine has it.

### **More information**

- [www.TogetherQC.com](http://www.TogetherQC.com)
- [coronavirus.iowa.gov](http://coronavirus.iowa.gov)
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=2>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Rock%20Island>
- <https://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/facilities/Pages/Covid19Response.aspx>
- <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/long-term-care-facility-outbreaks-covid-19>

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