

Joint Effort Drives Successful West Virginia Vaccination Rollout

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The road to West Virginia’s successful vaccine distribution features some notable milestones. It takes a team-oriented approach to reach the finish line.

“FEMA is honored to serve alongside our state partners in the battle against COVID-19,” said Janice Barlow, Acting Regional Administrator, FEMA Region 3. “We’re ready to support our state and local agencies in any way possible.”

Already among the nation’s leaders in getting shots in arms, West Virginia this week was the first to launch an online COVID-19 vaccine pre-registration system. It allows residents to add themselves to a statewide list of people who are interested in being vaccinated. Those who sign up can receive real-time updates on vaccine availability – by email, text or phone - and will soon be able to schedule an appointment to get vaccinated when supplies allow.

Since its debut on Monday, more than 100,000 West Virginians had pre-registered for vaccinations through the site. The state has partnered with [Everbridge to offer the system](#), providing a statewide, coordinated and high-capacity alternative to residents deluging their local health departments with phone calls.

“Once again, we’re doing an outstanding job and leading the nation in our approach to get this vaccine rolled out,” Gov. Jim Justice said on Monday. “I am excited to get this system in place and I truly hope it will be a big benefit to West Virginians so you’re not sitting there, dialing and dialing.”

As the Everbridge system helps West Virginia line up residents for the vaccine, the state is making the absolute most of available doses. With the discovery that vaccine vials listed as holding five doses could potentially contain six, West Virginia has proved adept at extracting that additional shot when possible and while carefully following CDC guidance on the topic. As a result, the state by Jan. 25 had administered 106.4 percent of allotted doses.



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“This is a hard number to believe,” Gov. Justice said. “You’d say, ‘Well, how in the world can you exceed 100 percent of what you’ve got?’ Well, we’re getting more doses out of the vials than what was originally anticipated.”

Such strides reflect a team approach fostered by Gov. Justice through his creation of a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) by executive order to support all COVID-19 vaccination preparedness, deployment, and delivery related lines of effort.

The task force has harnessed the resources of the West Virginia National Guard along with local health departments, community health centers, hospitals, pharmacies and many others to assist in the administration of more than 171,000 first doses of vaccine and more than 46,000 second doses.

Nearly one in 10 West Virginians have received the initial dose, but there is also a deliberate focus behind that figure. Recognizing that more than half the state’s COVID-19 deaths had occurred in a nursing home or long-term care facility, Gov. Justice and his JIATF put their residents and staff at the front of the line. When West Virginia received its first shipment of the Pfizer vaccine on Dec. 14, the task force began delivering initial doses to those facilities that day. By Dec. 30, initial shots had been administered at all 214 of those facilities, making West Virginia the first state in the nation to reach that goal.

This all-hands-on-deck approach continues. With West Virginia already a national leader in doses administered per-capita and as a percentage of allotment, Gov. Justice has pledged that the JIATF’s community vaccination clinic model will reach all 55 counties of the mostly rural Mountain State by Feb. 1.





Members of the West Virginia National Guard conduct and participate in a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Joint Forces Headquarters, Charleston, West Virginia, Jan. 13, 2021. West Virginia maintains one of the highest percentages of vaccine allocation use in the United States and is rapidly expanding capacity to inoculate the population. (Edwin L Wriston/U.S. Army National Guard)



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