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VA begins COVID-19 vaccinations

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today, the New Orleans and Bedford, Massachusetts VA Medical Centers are the first two department facilities to begin administration of COVID-19 vaccinations to frontline health care employees and Veterans residing in long-term care Community Living and Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder centers.

See [here](#) for a photo of the first VA patient to receive the vaccine.

Both facilities are part of the initial group of [37 VA medical centers across the country](#) that began receiving and administering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine this week.

The sites were chosen for their ability to vaccinate large numbers of people and store the vaccines at extremely cold temperatures.

COVID-19 vaccine implementation will include an initial limited-supply phase followed by a general implementation phase, when large supplies of the vaccine become available.

“Ultimately, the department’s goal is to offer the vaccine to all Veterans receiving care at VA,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “As increased vaccine supply is obtained, VA plans to distribute these vaccines at additional facilities to provide the vaccine to more Veterans and employees.”

The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) stated in clinical trials the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine was 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease. The vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, 21 days apart. The side effects appear similar to those of other vaccines and are short-lived.

VA will report directly to the CDC data on all vaccine doses administered by VA. The department will also provide general, public updates on the number of people who receive the vaccination at these sites, similar to how VA posts COVID-19 testing figures.

Veterans seeking additional information may sign up to get updated information through VA’s COVID-19 Vaccine [Keep Me Informed tool](#), visit the [VA Coronavirus Vaccine FAQs webpage](#), contact their care team or visit their facility website.

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