

**Good afternoon. The information below is intended to be disseminated widely. Please share and forward as appropriate. Thank you!**

February 25, 2021

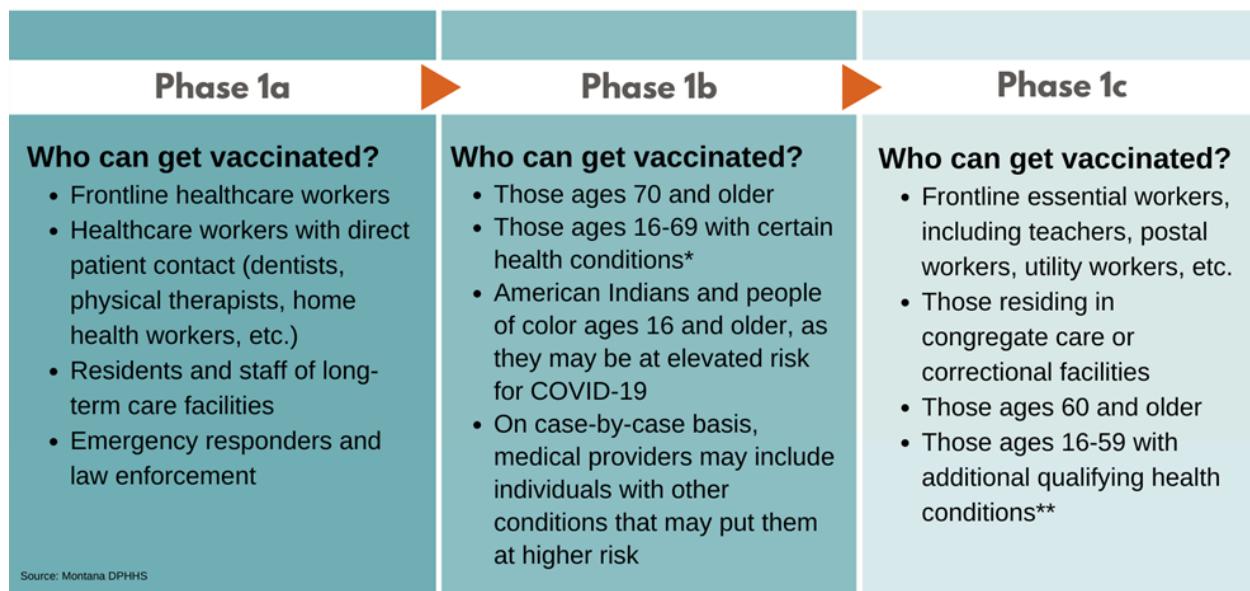
Dear Clergy,

The last year has been a struggle for many and not being able to worship or serve with those we are closest to has compounded that struggle. Vaccine availability has provided a sense of hope that things will return to some sort of normality.

As many under your guidance may have questions, we would like to take this opportunity to provide you with information (below) that can be copied and forwarded in any number of ways including Newsletters and email or other venues that you may use to communicate with your congregations. Also attached for your convenience are two graphics. The first shows the Phases for vaccinations and eligibility. The second exhibits the current Phase and tier and answers the reasoning or the “why” to tiers.

Vaccine currently available in Missoula County is intended for eligible Missoula County residents. Residents can find up-to-date information about vaccine clinics and locations by visiting <https://covid19.missoula.co/> or calling **258-INFO (4636)** if they do not have Internet access. Residents with regular healthcare providers should look for that provider’s information on the website. Residents can also use the website to track vaccine availability across Missoula County, where clinics are being offered, how to sign-up and continue to monitor where the “line” is and where their places are in it. We also encourage residents to monitor local news media outlets for announcements.

Due to the availability and supply of the vaccine, Missoula County is using a tiered approach during Phase 1b. Supply will ultimately determine the pace and when those in the next tier will be eligible for vaccination. Below is a graphic to visualize where the current “line” is and who is currently eligible to receive the vaccine.





We are here

## Phase 1b, tier 1

### Who can get vaccinated?

- Those ages 70 and older
- American Indians and people of color ages 16 and older, as they may be at elevated risk for COVID-19

Source: Missoula City-County Health Board

## Why tiers?

### Vaccine supply is limited.

- In a perfect world with sufficient vaccine supply, prioritizing vaccines for some over others would not be needed.
- Until vaccine supply increases, the Health Board recommends vaccinating residents in these tiers so those most at risk from COVID-19 get vaccinated first.
- The tiers are recommendations. Vaccine providers may choose to prioritize vaccinations in Phase 1b differently.

## Why these tiers?

### Data informs the recommendations.

- 75% of Missoula County's COVID-19 deaths were people ages 70 and older.
- Native Americans make up 7% of the state's population, but account for 16% of COVID-19 cases and 28% of COVID-19 deaths.
- People of color in Montana who don't identify as Native American made up 7% of COVID-19 cases and 12% of deaths.

Source: DPHHS analysis

For those without Internet access, staff at the vaccine call center can assist with information and scheduling for providers with online registration. Residents will be able to access the call center by calling 406-258-INFO (4636) and follow the prompts.

While we wait, we encourage people to continue to take the precautions against transmission of the virus: masking, social distancing, washing hands and keeping their social circles small.

We thank the public for their engagement and encourage people to monitor the website <https://covid19.missoula.co/> for changing information as supply increases.

Thank you,

Nick

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