

- Good afternoon everyone, thank you all for being here today. My name is Michelle Shoresman and I'm the media liaison for our County of San Luis Obispo COVID-19 emergency response. In a moment I'll introduce Dr. Penny Borenstein, our county health officer to say a few words. But first, I wanna give you a timeline of what we're gonna be doing here today. So Dr. Borenstein will speak, we'll have a few individuals of our five recipients today say a couple words about getting their vaccine and then we'll take questions from the media.

These are the first doses to be administered by Public Health in the county. After the vaccinations, we'll have a few minutes for questions. Those who are receiving the vaccine today include Alec Flatos, fire engineer and paramedic for the San Luis Obispo Fire Department and resident of the city of San Luis Obispo. Marla Howard is the in-center hemodialysis nurse for DaVita Dialysis Centers and is a resident of Morro Bay, Dr. Matthew Williams, emergency physician at Sierra Vista Regional Medical Center and a resident of San Luis Obispo, Jennifer O'Connor, emergency department nurse at French Hospital Medical Center and resident of SLO, and last but not least, Dr. Daisy Llano, our medical director at the San Luis Obispo County Psychiatric Health Facility and also a resident of San Luis Obispo. We will also, like I said, have some questions afterwards by Dr. Penny Borenstein and once again, I'd like to thank our sign language interpreter Robin Babb for being here today and now Dr. Penny Borenstein will say a few words.

- Thank you all for being here, is this an exciting moment or what? It is for me, I'm gonna go off script for a moment and say it is for all of our laboratory personnel who actually work in this facility tirelessly for the last 10 months, evenings, weekends, testing specimens and are the unsung heroes. We also have members of our medical and health team with us here today and I think we are among the most excited people in the county to see this moment having arrived. Before I go into the vaccinations and talk about that, I do wanna take this moment to remind people that though the vaccine is here and is coming slowly, we certainly are in the most challenging moment with this virus and this pandemic at this moment in time.

As I've mentioned recently this week, we can now say confidently that in the United States of America today this is the number one cause of death in the month of December 2020. It exceeds heart disease, it exceeds cancer, it exceeds a host of other things that we are used to as killing people through a variety of different diseases. This is one that does not have to happen. So, I implore people for the 100th time, or the 1,000th time or the 10,000th time, to please use all of the well-

understood mechanisms for preventing disease spread. Thank you all for wearing masks, thank you for spreading out, thank you for not having parties, thank you for not gathering, and staying away from here or anywhere if you are sick.

So, with that I will talk about our vaccination efforts. We have now received 1,950 doses of the first FDA approved for emergency use that COVID 19 vaccine. We have those in hand and we are grateful that we are the first entity in the county to have received vaccines. Our hospital partners who are here today are also anticipating additional vaccine coming their way, as is the long-term care industry but at the moment, the only doses that exist in this county are with Public Health. We received them a couple of days ago and yesterday we were excited to be able to begin the distribution to some of those partners and our hospitals in this county all got some vaccine yesterday and have begun the process of immunizing their healthcare staff. We are exceptionally grateful for that partnership with our hospitals and they are exceptionally grateful for the opportunity to vaccinate their very hardworking staff who are seeing firsthand up close and personal the impacts of this disease.

So before we actually administer the disease, I wanna talk a little bit about why this particular vaccine is different from all others. It is, especially the Pfizer but also the Moderna vaccine, which we expect to take possession of nearly 4,000 doses next week, even that vaccine which doesn't need to be at a minus 70 degrees but still needs to be at a frozen temperature maintained carefully so it stays effective. So with that, we have freezers that we have bought to be able to handle this ultra-low temperature of the Pfizer vaccine. We have additional storage capacity for the Moderna vaccine and should other refrigerated types of vaccines come online we have that capacity as well. Before the Pfizer vaccine is administered, it needs to be mixed with a diluent. So it comes as a powder, it gets mixed with a liquid and that has to be done shortly before the actual vaccine administration. So we have trained personnel who are going to be doing that process.

And finally, what's different about this vaccine and why we're still thinking about whether our drive-through model can work, is individuals with this particular vaccine are asked to wait at least 15 minutes after getting their vaccine in order to ensure they will not have an immediate bad outcome or side effect to the vaccine. There are side effects, we expect to see that, pain in the arm, redness, swelling. What we don't wanna see are the severe impacts. And so, with those effects we are spreading out across industries how many people in a particular setting will get the vaccine in case people do experience that need to take one day off and recover

from the side effects. But all of that said, we have put it all together in a way that we feel confident, that this is a very safe and a very effective vaccine and to emulate that, we have some of our front line healthcare workers who are prepared to get that vaccine today. So with that, I would like to invite some of them to say their own words about this experience. So, in order will welcome up Alec from San Luis Fire Department, Marla from DaVita kidney health and Dr. Matthew Williams our Emergency Room physician who is with us today.

- Good afternoon everyone, I'm Alec Flatos, I'm a fire engineer with the city of San Luis Obispo. First, I'd like to thank Dr. Borenstein and all of county health, as well as our fire chief, Chief Aggson and the city of San Luis Obispo for being so supportive of what our mission was since this happened earlier this year. It's been a very long year for all of the EMS world. We've dealt with things that we've just never seen before. Personally, I've been involved in the fire service for 18 years in this county and we've never come across anything like this. So the support that we've had to go out and be able to do our jobs on the front line has been impeccable for all of those that are doing what we're doing. I'd like to say that personally, after thinking about this for so long, on the advice of personal friends that are doctors, nurses, we've made our decision, I've made my decision to be supportive of this absolutely because it's the right way that we can all move forward, be safe in our communities. Not only am I gonna be able to better protect our community with this vaccine but I'm also gonna be able to better protect my family and my loved ones. And so, unequivocally this is the right decision for all of us to make in the EMS world, and I look forward to being the first firefighter in this county to get this vaccine. And I look forward to all of us following suit, so that we can move forward. So thank you to county health, Dr. Borenstein, I appreciate it.

- Hello, I'm just so darn excited to be getting this vaccination today. I'm so proud of everyone that I work with and everyone in the healthcare business. I really wanna thank the scientists, the men and women that have been diligently working towards this vaccination and I wanna get on with living and stop all the death. Thank you so much.

- Hi there, I'm Dr. Williams. I'm an Emergency Room physician at Sierra Vista Hospital and Twin Cities Hospital and I'm very grateful to have the opportunity to get vaccinated for COVID-19 today. I wanna set a good example for the community, and show you all that those of us on the front line and in healthcare are completely supportive of this vaccine. We all believe fully in its safety and efficacy and in its

value. Unfortunately being an ER doctor, I've seen firsthand the devastating toll that this pandemic has taken on individuals, their families and the community as a whole. And with cases again skyrocketing and hospitals reaching capacity again, I don't think this vaccine could have come at a more critical time. In the meantime, I hope that all of you continue to socially distance and wear masks, and I hope that one day soon many of you, if not all of you will have the chance to get vaccinated, and to do your part to put an end to this horrible pandemic. And if you do have any questions or concerns about the vaccine or your symptoms, we do have a 24-hour telehealth available, and you can always call and ask us. This is a great day for the entire San Luis Obispo community, thanks for having me.

- I wanna thank all of you for those moving words and for being here today with us. With that, I'd like to introduce one additional unsung hero by name, Christine Gaiger has been a critical member of our Public Health team for more than 20 years. She is our communicable disease program manager and she runs a variety of other Public Health programs in our Public Health Department for the county and it is probably the understatement of the year to say that she has been a critical part of our response team not just for this pandemic but H1N1, which didn't quite have the same flavor as COVID-19 but she comes with that experience and decades' worth of public health nursing and management experience. So she has been chosen to be our vaccination administrator today and I'm gonna turn it over to her to accept these patients. Thank you.

- Thank you so much.

- And now Dr. Bernstein will take a few questions.

- Should you have any you need not.

- No questions?

- There's one.

- So the question was, how fast will we be administering the doses that we have thus far? Monday we're starting our full all day clinic, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday of next week. It's by invitation only. And the following three day week, we're not doing the pre holiday, Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve or the days of the holidays. And then after that, we are ramping up even more five day a week clinic, as well as continuing to distribute doses as we get them in to those partners that have enrolled and that includes our hospital systems and we are working with other

healthcare providers to enroll in the system and be able to do quite a bit of their own vaccine administration in the healthcare community

- [Woman] .

- So the question was how many doses have been distributed to hospital partners already? And I think that number is a little bit under 200. We're aiming for 250 this week of the supply that we have and more beginning early part of next week.

- [Woman] .

- So the question was given that the firefighters are also now in some stations dealing with outbreaks of COVID what impact does that have on our distribution of vaccines to them? So as I mentioned, we'll be staggering the vaccination across agencies, so that not everybody gets it at the same time should they have side effects but our entire EMS system is welcome to sign up through our registration system for the vaccination starting next week.

- [Woman] .

- So the question was when might the general public have availability of vaccine. So this first phase of vaccination is for the healthcare workers. We anticipate that that will take us through January, if not into February thereafter, we're looking to vaccinate high risk groups, individuals who are medically vulnerable because of medical conditions or over the age of 65, as well as essential workers and just to play it safe because we really do not have eyes on this but this is a guess shared by many of the national experts that for the general public we're probably looking at like late spring, if not into summer before we have the amount of vaccine for the general public, which is why if I can use that moment, this is not the time to let down your guard.

- Any other questions?

- Thank you so much for being here, Let me turn it back over to Michelle.

- I was just gonna say the same thing, thank you all for being here today and as Dr. Bernstein implied there'll be more information forthcoming on our readyso.org page about vaccine distribution. There is a vaccine page there that you can check back frequently for the most current information. We'll be updating that regularly, have a great day and a safe weekend and we'll see you at our next press briefing on

the 30th, unless we have need to call one sooner than that, thank you again. For members of the media,