

Tulane University to begin COVID-19 vaccine rollout

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Tulane is expected to receive approximately 5,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in its first shipment early next week. Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano.

Tulane University has been designated as a COVID-19 vaccine provider site by the Louisiana Department of Health and will become one of the first universities in the state to begin administering doses of COVID-19 vaccine. This designation allows Tulane to receive vaccines directly from manufacturers and rapidly mobilize staff to provide immunizations for those in the university community who are eligible under state guidelines.

"We are honored that the state has chosen Tulane as a vaccine provider. As the largest private employer in New Orleans, allowing us to participate in the distribution of the vaccine helps to make the entire community safer," Tulane President Michael Fitts said. "We are committed to rapidly administering vaccines and will be prepared to support vaccinations for those in the Tulane community and beyond as more become available."

Tulane is expected to receive approximately 5,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine in its first shipment early next week with more following later this month. The vaccine is given in two doses, which are administered three weeks apart. The vaccine does not confer immunity against COVID-19 until at least a week after the second dose. Because it is currently unknown whether people who have been vaccinated can still transmit the virus to others, it is important that all continue to [adhere to safety protocols](#).

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President Michael Fitts

The first groups to receive the vaccine at Tulane include those on the front lines of COVID-19 research and community response. Those currently eligible for the vaccine, according to state guidelines, will start receiving emails this weekend to schedule an appointment.

"These inoculations are a milestone in our continued fight against COVID-19, an effort that has included researching new vaccines and treatments, caring for COVID-19 patients and operating one of the country's most rigorous testing, contact tracing and isolation/quarantine programs," said Dr. Lee Hamm, dean of the School of Medicine.

Due to limited supply, the state is rolling out the vaccine in phases. Physicians, nurses, frontline healthcare workers, emergency responders and those in assisted living facilities were the first to receive the vaccine when it became available last month. The state recently expanded eligibility to include those over 70 as well as graduate students, residents and staff of allied health schools.

Following the state's COVID-19 immunization guidance, which includes schools of allied health, Tulane will begin vaccinating the following eligible groups starting next week:

- School of Medicine, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine and School of Social Work faculty, staff and students who work directly with others in the New Orleans community
- Campus Health staff who work directly with infected students and employees and their close contacts
- Frontline food service and custodial/operations staff who engage directly with the student body in dining halls, residential facilities and elsewhere
- Employees over 70 years of age

Clinical trial data has shown that the Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective at preventing COVID-19. For more information about the vaccines, how they work and why they are an important tool in ending the COVID-19 pandemic, visit the [CDC Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines website](#).