

CHA Media Statement

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Arrival of First COVID-19 Vaccine Marks Major Step Forward, But Limited Supplies, Logistics Pose Challenges for Hospitals

“This weekend’s confirmation by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup of the safety and effectiveness of Pfizer’s groundbreaking COVID-19 vaccine marks an important step forward in California’s fight against this devastating virus,” said Carmela Coyle, President & CEO of the California Hospital Association. “The workgroup’s ‘stamp of approval’ of the FDA’s review and approval process should give all Californians confidence in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine.”

“Over the coming days and weeks, California’s hospitals will vaccinate as many front-line health care workers as possible, but the available supply will be limited,” Coyle said. “State and local public officials will determine the amount of vaccine each hospital receives.”

“While the arrival of the vaccine is an important milestone, it’s important to understand that it will take many months, and much perseverance, to achieve anything near ‘herd immunity’ in a state as large as California,” Coyle noted. “The work before us is challenging, geographically unique, and constantly evolving.”

“Until there are adequate supplies, the process of determining who gets the vaccine — and in what priority order — will be based on specific public health guidelines developed by the state’s Department of Public Health and further refined by each county,” Coyle said. “Additionally, hospitals may deploy various strategies to vaccinate their workforce, based on the unique types of medical services offered and staffing capabilities of each facility.”

“This is an important moment for our state and our country,” Coyle said. “While this offers us hope of defeating the virus, we must remain vigilant by abiding stay-at-home orders, masking, and physical distancing.”

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