



New Federal Vaccination Site At United Center Opening March 10

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CHICAGO – The Biden Administration, Governor JB Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth today announced eligible Illinoisans from every part of the state will be able to be vaccinated starting March 10 at a new United Center site that prioritizes access for seniors and equity for the hardest hit populations.

The Biden Administration is opening pilot Community Vaccination Centers across the country. The United Center site will open on March 10 with the capacity to administer 6,000 doses per day, all of which will be provided directly by the federal government and not taken out of the state or city's allotment.

The site will be by appointment only; seniors will have first access to appointments before the site opens, and if appointments remain available after seniors have had their exclusive registration period, any remaining available slots will be open to any Illinoisans eligible under the state's guidelines. After the launch on March 10, registration will continue to be open for all Illinoisans eligible in the state's Phase 1B+.

Preparations and buildout of the United Center Community Vaccination Center are now underway. Information about where and how to make appointments will be available in coming days. Demand is anticipated to be high.

The United Center will be open to all Illinois residents currently eligible to be vaccinated under the state guidelines and will be managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency with support from the Department of Defense, State of Illinois, Cook County and the City of Chicago.

The United Center site builds on an expanding network of state-supported sites operating across southern, central and northern Illinois. The United Center location is one of the best places in the country to advance key equity priorities through its

proximity to medically underserved communities and goals of reaching those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.

“The United Center is one of the best locations for vaccinating large numbers of people in America: it’s easy to get to, is in the midst of a medically underserved community, can handle large crowds and is well known to everyone in Illinois,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Thanks to FEMA, the United Center is just our most recent among a growing number of state-supported mass vaccination location for residents. To date, the Illinois National Guard has launched 15 state-supported sites, including locations in Springfield, Rockford, Carbondale and Metro East – and that’s on top of mass vax sites operated by our 97 local health departments. I am deeply grateful to the Biden-Harris administration for working closely with us to bring on this high-capacity site, and I’m particularly proud that we’ve worked together to prioritize seniors in this process, moving us that much closer to putting this pandemic to an end.”

“The federal government is committed to the equitable distribution of vaccines across the country and in the state of Illinois,” said Kevin M. Sligh, acting regional administrator, FEMA Region 5. “The goal of establishing these joint federal pilot centers is to continue expanding the rate of vaccinations, with an explicit focus on socially vulnerable or underrepresented communities.”

“The opening of the federal mass vaccination site at the United Center brings us another step forward in our equity-centered COVID-19 vaccination plan,” said Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle. “From our seniors to the communities hardest hit by the pandemic, we will not stop until we get shots into the arms of our residents who patiently wait to see the light at the end of this pandemic.”

“The new United Center mass vaccination site is a game changer for Chicago and the entire region,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “This is what Presidential leadership looks like—bold, collaborative, and science-based. With this new site, we’ll now be able to take our vaccination success to a whole new level and bring to bear the historic and inclusive recovery that is soon to come.”

“Getting vaccine shots into the arms of Americans will help break the back of this pandemic. This site in the City of Chicago, which Senator Duckworth and I have been working for, will help our most vulnerable communities get the protection they desperately need. I applaud Governor Pritzker, Cook County President Preckwinkle, and Mayor Lightfoot for working with us and the Biden Administration to make this site a reality. Help is on the way, Illinois,” said U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL).

“This new mass community vaccination center is an important step in our efforts to overcome this pandemic, and it will help get shots in the arms of Illinoisans at a much

higher rate, especially in the communities hit hardest by COVID-19,” U.S. Senator Duckworth said. “Senator Durbin and I worked closely with the Biden Administration to help bring this center to Chicago, and I am also thankful for the support of Governor Pritzker, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Mayor Lightfoot in bringing this facility to Chicago.”

This federal pilot site will not divert allocations from other jurisdictions, as vaccine will be provided direct by the federal government to the site. The site will operate seven days a week for eight weeks under the federal government’s vaccination pilot program.

The United Center was selected by the Biden administration in coordination with state, county and city partners to fulfill the administration’s commitment to expanding the rate of vaccinations across the country in an efficient, effective and equitable manner, with a keen focus on making sure that communities with a high risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection are not left behind.

In addition to the United Center, Illinois has 15 state-supported mass vaccination sites already open across the state. These sites are currently open to any eligible resident via appointment. For more information on how to make an appointment to receive the vaccine, updates on the state’s plan and eligibility, and answers to frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, go to coronavirus.illinois.gov.