

First COVID vaccine doses arrive in France

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France's first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine were delivered early Saturday to the Paris hospital system's central pharmacy outside the capital, an AFP journalist saw.

After more than 62,000 COVID-19 deaths in France, shots are set to

begin with people in two elderly care homes on Sunday, the same day the rest of the EU begins injections.

A refrigerated truck brought the roughly 19,500 doses from the Pfizer factory in Puurs, northeast Belgium, to Paris, the capital's APHP hospital authority said, with pharmacy chief Franck Huet calling it a "historic" moment in the pandemic.

After repackaging in Paris, the vaccines will be delivered to a long-term care unit at a [hospital](#) in Sevran, outside the capital, and an old-age care home in Dijon, in eastern France.

The first EU deliveries come after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) gave the Pfizer-BioNTech shot its [green light](#) on Monday and France's HAS health authority in turn on Thursday.

Countries are especially eager to begin their vaccination campaigns as a new strain believed to be more infectious spreads from Britain. A first case was identified in France on Friday.

But large-scale inoculations for residents and staff in France's 7,000 elderly care homes will not begin until early 2021.

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