

# 'Health of the nation is literally at stake': Biden vows swift action on vaccine sites, supplies; 100 million shots

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President-elect Joe Biden said Friday his administration will add clinics, bolster the public health workforce and invoke a wartime production law to ensure adequate vaccine supplies in order for Americans to get 100

million COVID-19 shots in the first 100 days of his administration.

In his first detailed discussion of his vaccination plans a day after unveiling his \$1.9 trillion economic rescue plan, Biden said swift action is essential to reverse the "dismal failure" of the nation's vaccine rollout that's left millions of doses in storage during the deadliest stretch of the coronavirus pandemic.

"This is a time to set big goals, to pursue them with courage and conviction because the health of the nation is literally at stake," Biden said.

Biden's team has identified suppliers who could be tapped under the federal Defense Production Act to prevent potential shortages of glass vials, stoppers, syringes and needles that could delay getting shots in arms.

He reiterated an earlier pledge to open vaccines beyond [health workers](#) and nursing home residents to adults over 65 and frontline workers such as teachers, first responders and grocery clerks. Not everyone in these groups will get vaccinated immediately, Biden said, because manufacturing is not yet where it needs to be.

So far, of 31.2 million doses distributed as of Friday, nearly 12.3 million have been administered, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Biden will instruct the Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin setting up mass vaccination sites at places such as schools gyms, community centers and sports stadiums. He pledged these new clinics, as well as temporary mobile clinics, will be available in underserved communities hard hit by [coronavirus](#).

Biden's plan also calls for hiring 100,000 public health workers in roles such as vaccine outreach and contact tracing.

Earlier this week, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said the government would release all available [vaccine](#) and urged states to expand vaccinations to people 65 and older and [young adults](#) with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for complications from COVID-19. He was critical of states that limited eligibility and said they slowed access.

However, the head of the Oregon Health Authority wrote a letter Thursday to Azar questioning his pledge to release additional doses held in reserve. In the letter, Oregon Health Authority Director Patrick Allen said he learned during a call with General Gustave Perna that the federal government had no reserve supplies.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown anticipated those extra doses when she pledged to expand vaccination to people over 65 later this month. But after learning those doses might not exist, Oregon halted plans to begin vaccinating seniors on Jan. 23, Allen wrote.

"This is a deception on a national scale," Brown said. "Oregon's seniors, teachers, and all of us were depending on the promise of Oregon's share of the federal reserve of vaccines being released to us."

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