

Biden announces new vaccination incentives

June 3 2021, by Ernie Mundell and Robin Foster



In an effort to convince hesitant Americans to get their COVID-19 shots, President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced a host of new vaccination perks from a private-sector initiative.

"For all the progress we're making as a country, if you are unvaccinated, you are still at risk of getting seriously ill or dying or spreading disease to others, especially when Americans spend more time indoors again, closely gathered in the fall," Biden said in his speech announcing the enticements.

The administration hopes the partnership with private companies will help it meet its goal of at least one shot in 70 percent of American adults by the Fourth of July.

The perks include free food delivery, baseball tickets, Xboxes and chances to win cruise tickets, groceries for a year and free airline flights, the *Washington Post* reported.

While announcing the incentives, the White House also launched a handful of community-based outreach initiatives, including blanketing local media, providing colleges with resources and recruiting 1,000 Black-owned barbershops and beauty salons across the country to participate in vaccination efforts.

The more aggressive push to vaccinate Americans comes as just under 63 percent of American adults have received at least one dose of a vaccine, the *Post* reported, but demand is dropping.

The latest vaccination efforts will include canvassing and phone and texting banks to reach people in areas with low vaccination rates, Biden noted.

"We need everyone across the country to pull together to get us over the finish line," he said.

Vaccination rates vary sharply around the country: Some states have given at least one dose to two-thirds of the population, while others have

only reached slightly more than one-third. Conservative parts of the country, in particular, have lower vaccination rates, the *Post* reported.

"Getting the vaccine is not a partisan act," Biden said. "The science was done under Democratic and Republican administrations. Matter of fact, the first vaccines were authorized under a Republican president."

The private-sector enticements include a CVS-run sweepstakes to win free cruises, tickets to Super Bowl LVI and cash prizes; gift cards from DoorDash; free tickets to Major League Baseball games for those vaccinated at stadiums; Xboxes distributed by Microsoft through Boys and Girls Clubs in hard-hit areas; free groceries from Kroger; and a sweepstakes run by United Airlines to win a year of free flights. Anheuser-Busch also announced it would give away free beverages if the country reaches Biden's 70 percent goal.

To increase vaccine accessibility for parents, the White House also said that four of the nation's largest child-care providers will offer free child care to all parents and caregivers getting vaccinated or recovering from vaccination from now until July 4.

US set to send millions of vaccine doses to countries in need

The United States will soon be sending millions of coronavirus vaccine doses around the world, including Latin America, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said Tuesday.

Still, exactly where those doses will go and when they will be delivered to countries that desperately need them was still unclear.

"Sometime in the next week to two weeks, we will be announcing the

process by which we will distribute those vaccines," Blinken said during a media briefing in San Jose, Costa Rica, the *Washington Post* reported.

President Joe Biden has promised to give 80 million doses to other countries by the end of June. But no further details have been offered, as stiff competition worldwide for vaccines has left many developing countries lagging far behind developed ones.

In Costa Rica, the country of 5 million people recently imposed nationwide driving restrictions to lessen the strain on hospitals overloaded with COVID-19 patients. Both Blinken and Costa Rican President Alvarado Quesada were asked during the media briefing whether Costa Rica would receive doses this summer, the *Post* reported.

"We look forward to what the United States is going to announce in the matter of vaccines," Quesada told reporters at San Jose's presidential palace. "We hope to be part of the countries that receive that."

In Washington, the distribution of vaccines to Latin America by China and Russia has been viewed as part of a strategic competition.

Beijing has shipped more than 165 million doses of its vaccine to Latin America and the Caribbean. Some Latin American countries now rely heavily on the Chinese-made vaccines, including El Salvador, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, the *Post* said.

Meanwhile, the United States has focused on vaccinating its own population, distributing only 4 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Canada and Mexico while committing \$4 billion to Covax, the international platform supported by the World Health Organization that donates vaccines to countries in need, the *Post* reported.

The coronavirus pandemic initially damaged China's public image after

it became the global epicenter of the outbreak, but the speedy distribution of its vaccines has shifted the conversation despite some questions about the efficacy of its jabs, the newspaper said.

On Tuesday, Blinken stressed the United States would not attach strings to its [vaccine](#) donations, the *Post* reported.

"We will focus on equity," he said. "We'll focus on science. We'll work in coordination with Covax and we will distribute vaccines without political requirements of those receiving them.

As of Thursday, the U.S. coronavirus case count passed 33.3 million, while the death toll passed 595,800, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, more than 171.7 million cases had been reported by Thursday, with nearly 3.7 million people dead from COVID-19.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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