

White House lists countries getting first batch of extra COVID vaccines

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(HealthDay)—An initial 25 million doses of coronavirus vaccines will be

sent out this month to a "wide range of countries" in Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and Africa, along with the Palestinian territories, war-ravaged Gaza and the West Bank, the White House announced Thursday.

The doses are the first of 80 million that President Joe Biden has promised to send overseas by the end of June. Three-quarters of this first batch will be given to the international vaccine effort known as Covax, officials said at a White House briefing on the pandemic.

The rest will be reserved for "immediate needs and to help with surges around the world" and regions dealing with "urgent, present crises," Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, said during the briefing, *The New York Times* reported.

Sullivan said the administration decided to give priority to "neighbors" of the United States, including countries like Guatemala and Colombia, Peru and Ecuador, but it will also work with regional networks like the African Union.

Still, the 25 million doses fall far short of what is needed: It will take 11 billion doses to vaccinate 70 percent of the world's population against the coronavirus, according to estimates from researchers at Duke University, the *Times* reported. As of last month, the analytics firm Airfinity estimated that 1.7 billion doses had been produced.

Officials said the Biden administration would donate additional doses throughout the summer as they become available, the *Times* reported.

"This is just the beginning," Jeffrey Zients, Biden's coronavirus response coordinator, said during the media briefing. "Expect a regular cadence of shipments around the world, across the next several weeks."

In America, nearly two-thirds of adults have had at least one shot of a coronavirus vaccine, and the rate of new cases and deaths has plummeted, contributing to an overall picture across the country that is "encouraging and uplifting," Dr. Rochelle Walensky, the director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Thursday.

But in poorer nations in Africa and Central and South America, vaccination rates are much lower and the picture is bleak. According to data from Johns Hopkins University, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia and Paraguay are awash in new cases; in Colombia, nearly 500 people a day have died of the coronavirus over the past several weeks. A sudden, sharp rise in coronavirus cases in many parts of Africa could amount to a continental third wave in the pandemic, the World Health Organization warned Thursday, the *Times* reported.

Some African nations have less than 1 percent of their populations partly vaccinated, according to data from the University of Oxford, and the percentages of vaccinated people in Honduras and Guatemala are around 3 percent of the population.

Biden's pledge to donate 80 million doses this month involves vaccines made by four manufacturers. Besides AstraZeneca, they are Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, the last three of which have received U.S. emergency authorization for their vaccines.

Biden announces new vaccination initiatives

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.

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.

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

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