

## RMCHCS receives first COVID-19 vaccines

Written by Staff Reports

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Gallup — Following this weekend's authorization by the Federal Drug Administration for the emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services received its first shipment of vaccines on Dec. 16. The New Mexico Department of Health will ship the first allotment of 125 doses from its Albuquerque warehouse and will follow up with two more shipments, a week apart.

RMCHCS will follow the Centers for Disease Control recommendation and administer the first vaccines to healthcare personnel who directly interact with patients and are at the highest level of risk for infection.

RMCHCS is working with the New Mexico Department of Health and McKinley County on a public vaccination plan, which they will activate once the vaccine becomes available to the public.

The vaccine consists of two doses, with the second dose administered approximately 21 days after the first.

The vaccine may have some minor potential side effects. Some individuals who participated in the trials reported no side effects, while others reported soreness and inflammation at the injection site, much like a regular flu shot. There were also reports of fever, headaches, and muscle aches for a day or so following the injection..

The availability of the vaccine is a crucial step toward preventing the spread of the corona virus. While the data is early, studies have shown that the vaccines are safe and about 95 percent effective in preventing the COVID-19 infection and severe disease from COVID-19.

"We are very excited to begin administration of the COVID vaccine. With a 95% efficacy rate, this is truly a game changer in the pandemic," Chief Medical Officer, Valory Wangler, M.D. said. "We are thrilled to provide this critical protection for our staff and to offer this to our patients and community as supply and recommendations allow in the coming weeks and months."

Getting the vaccine does not mean one can stop taking safety precautions. Everyone will still

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be required to wear masks when in public, wash hands frequently and practice social distancing, as it will take some time before enough people will have the vaccine to stop the spread of the virus.