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**HOSPITALS SUPPORT GOV. BROWN’S DECISION TO DELAY VACCINE ELIGIBILITY EXPANSION**

*While Oregon waits to receive enough doses to meet the huge increase in demand, hospitals will continue to vaccinate those in the Phase 1a group*

**Lake Oswego, Ore. – January 15, 2021 –** Following Governor Brown’s decision to postpone the expansion of the group eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to include educators and those aged 65 and over, OAHHS President and CEO Becky Hultberg issued the following statement:

“When the federal government announced this week that the full reserve of vaccine would be released to states and that Oregon would be offering doses to educators and those aged 65+, we were supportive but skeptical that the supply would meet this massive increase in the number of Oregonians who would become eligible.

Now we all have learned that there will be no increase in the number of vaccine doses delivered to Oregon. We support Governor Brown’s decision to delay the expansion until we can be sure that the doses are in hand to meet this demand.

It is unfortunate that the news on Monday set unrealistic expectations about the available supply of vaccine.

Until more vaccine is delivered, Oregon’s hospitals will continue their work to administer the vaccine to as many members of the Phase 1a group as possible. Many of our hospitals have scheduled large scale vaccination events to continue their progress with the Phase 1a cohort.

From the beginning, the COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been unpredictable. At the 11th hour, hospitals shouldered a huge part of the burden for distribution of the doses, with little outside support. The fact that the playing field keeps changing makes this work even more difficult in the midst of a pandemic, as our overburdened staffs take care of a surge of patients.

When the COVID-19 vaccines became available, the state of Oregon directed hospitals to administer the first doses to their frontline caregivers and others with patient contact. Many of our hospitals have finished this step. Then in early January hospitals were asked to expand their reach to vaccinate the rest of Phase 1a, and our facilities have leaned into this work.

We are grateful to all of the Oregonians who have worked so hard to help bring us through the pandemic, especially our frontline health care workers. This is a team effort, and Oregon’s hospitals will continue to do whatever it takes to help us beat COVID-19.”

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***About OAHHS:*** *Founded in 1934, OAHHS is a statewide, nonprofit trade association that works closely with local and national government leaders, business and citizen coalitions, and other professional health care organizations to enhance and promote community health and to continue improving Oregon’s innovative health care delivery system.*