



Hillsdale Hospital Partners with Hillsdale College to More Effectively Distribute Covid-19 Vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna

Hillsdale County vaccinated ahead of schedule and following CDC's tiers 1A, 1B, protecting long-term care residents, healthcare workers, school teachers, law enforcement, and others

HILLSDALE, MI.— (Feb. 2, 2021) A unique partnership between Hillsdale Hospital and Hillsdale College has resulted in an effective and efficient distribution of both the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines in Hillsdale County.

The Pfizer vaccines require ultra low-temperature freezers. Hillsdale College has two of these specialized freezers in its biology department and volunteered use of that freezer space. Because of this access, Hillsdale Hospital was able to apply for and receive Pfizer vaccines as well as Moderna.

Hillsdale College also volunteered its Searle Center conference space free-of-charge to the hospital for its vaccination clinics. Hillsdale Hospital used the space to administer vaccinations to tier 1B essential workers and seniors aged 65 and older, as well as some tier 1A healthcare workers who opted to receive the vaccine later than when it was initially offered to them. The space allowed for proper social distancing and easy access to the vaccines held in the specialized freezers.

Before the new year rang in, Hillsdale Hospital had vaccinated all Tier 1A healthcare workers and first responders in Hillsdale County who elected to receive the vaccine when it was first offered to them. Hillsdale Hospital then expedited vaccinations to long-term care residents and workers. This tier 1A group was scheduled to receive vaccinations from other healthcare entities but were told they were on a weeks-long wait list. Hillsdale Hospital immediately stepped in to vaccinate this high-risk population.

By January 3, Hillsdale Hospital was informed that it would receive another 975 doses of Pfizer vaccine—only possible because of its access to the specialized freezers at Hillsdale College. This shipment allowed for more immunizations of essential workers in CDC-identified tiers 1A and 1B. Hillsdale Hospital's plan covered tier 1B essential workers in Hillsdale County with frequent contact with the public or large groups of individuals in order to minimize the potential for exposure and spread. This tier includes law enforcement officers, critical infrastructure workers, those working in the education sector and more.

Notably, Hillsdale County has more workers in the education sector beyond K-12 schools than most rural communities: Hillsdale Beauty College, Hillsdale College, Jackson College and the Litchfield Regional Training Center. Vaccinations were made available only to those in the education sector who are actively teaching students in the classroom or engaged in other activities that involve frequent contact with others in large groups and are therefore at higher risk of either exposure or of spreading the virus to a large number of people. For all sectors, Hillsdale Hospital made clear that this was not open to those working remotely or primarily from home, even if the individual worked in an included sector or occupational group.

By January 8, Hillsdale Hospital had already administered more than 1,200 of its 1,950 doses to tier 1A and tier 1B by the time the state expanded its eligibility criteria.

On the afternoon of January 8, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) announced that it would move seniors aged 65 years and older from tier 1C into tier 1B, moving the entire state's timeline ahead by a week. Fortunately, Hillsdale Hospital was already ahead of schedule in its vaccination plans. Before this announcement, Hillsdale Hospital had already shared its plan with MDHHS, which was met with no pushback or concern.

All public school teachers, administrators, and workers in Hillsdale County who have regular, direct, and in-person contact with students or the public had the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Those in the education sector make up 36% of the individuals vaccinated by Hillsdale Hospital, the majority of which are K-12 workers.

“The vaccination means that faculty and students will be able to be together in the classroom each and every day focusing on teaching and learning without the ever-present worry of the coronavirus,” said Colleen Vogt, director of Will Carleton Academy, a local charter school which serves students in grades K-12. “Parents will be able to know that we have taken the steps to protect ourselves, and therefore their children, in the fight against COVID-19. The WCA staff members who received their vaccines are so grateful for the opportunity to participate in the ultimate mitigation strategy.”

The collaboration between Hillsdale College and Hillsdale Hospital helped to speed this important vaccination process.

“Hillsdale College looks for opportunities to partner with our community. We were happy to help Hillsdale Hospital in its efforts to more quickly administer the vaccine to our community,” said Rich Péwé, chief administrative officer of Hillsdale College. “This collaborative model can be an example for others as they look for ways to efficiently vaccinate their community. We hope the fast action of the hospital to administer the vaccine will save lives and slow the spread of the virus.”

Hillsdale Hospital's efficient vaccination roll-out had a significant impact on its local community.

“In rural healthcare, we are used to operating with fewer resources than our urban and suburban counterparts,” said JJ Hodshire, president and CEO of Hillsdale Hospital. “Our partnership with Hillsdale College for the use of their ultra-low temperature freezer is a perfect example of how we have to get creative to care for our community. Were it not for the freezer access they provided us, we would have received 400 doses of Moderna. Instead, we received 975 doses of Pfizer followed by another 975. We can't do it alone, and we hope that other rural communities in our position will reach out to organizations in their area that might be able to help them with the challenging logistics of this vaccination effort.”

Data Points

- Total vaccines administered by Hillsdale Hospital as of January 29, 2021: 3,052
- Tier 1A healthcare workers, long-term care staff and residents make up 28 percent of all individuals vaccinated by Hillsdale Hospital.
- Tier 1B essential workers make up 60 percent of all those vaccinated by Hillsdale Hospital.
 - Those in the education sector make up 36 percent of individuals vaccinated by Hillsdale Hospital, the majority of which are K-12 workers.
- Seniors aged 65 and older make up 30 percent of all individuals vaccinated by Hillsdale Hospital.

Hillsdale Hospital prepared a detailed [Vaccination Administration Fact Sheet](#) for the community.