



Pueblo County Unified Clinic Winds Down at Pueblo Mall as State Opens Mass Vaccination Site at State Fairgrounds

March 17, 2021

PUEBLO, CO. – After months of planning and operating the Pueblo County Community COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic, where more than 38,000 vaccinations have been administered, the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment and the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office will transition the vaccination clinic to the State of Colorado beginning Monday, March 22.

Last week, Governor Polis announced plans to expand Pueblo’s vaccination clinic to a regional mass vaccination site. The designation means the clinic will administer vaccine to Pueblo County residents as well as residents from throughout the Southeastern Colorado region. State organizers expect to vaccinate up to 3,000 a day next week and expand to 6,000 people per day by mid-April or when vaccine supply increases. To accommodate the increased traffic, the site is moving from the Pueblo Mall to the Colorado State Fairgrounds over the weekend and will begin operations on Monday, March 22nd. The change in location means the COVID-19 testing site, operated by MAKO Medical, will re-locate to the Pueblo Mall after testing Saturday.

One of the biggest changes is the process to sign-up for the vaccine. Those eligible will now schedule their appointment online using the Centura Health website, www.centura.org/vaccine. A toll-free number, 1-855-882-8065, staffed by Centura will take appointments by phone for those without internet access.

Pueblo’s current registration site, pueblovaxnow.com, will redirect visitors to PDPHE’s vaccination website starting Thursday afternoon. This website list multiple locations to get the COVID-19 vaccine, including the coming Community Vaccination Site at the fairgrounds. Pueblo’s COVID hotline, 719-583-4444, remains open, offering information on local health and business operations concerns regarding the pandemic.

Callers attempting to register for the vaccine will be forwarded to the Centura hotline. Individuals who have registered with pueblovaxnow.com or through the community’s COVID hotline and have not yet received a vaccine were given an automated call with instructions for registering on the new site as Pueblo appointments become available.

The Sheriff’s Office and Health Department opened the community clinic January 11 and have provided vaccines every week since then. Clinic organizers, in partnership with local first response

agencies and volunteers, consistently vaccinated up to 1,500 people per day at an average rate of 230 people per hour. Availability of vaccine has been a struggle for local planners, but with the state partnership, organizers expect to see 3 to 5 times the amount of vaccine previously available arriving in Pueblo.

“We’ve done an amazing job of getting the vaccine we receive into the arms of our residents. We’ve held clinics in bad weather, through staffing shortages, and vaccine shortfalls” said Pueblo County Sheriff Kirk M. Taylor. “With the support of all of our outstanding partners, we would do clinics everyday if vaccine was available.” But Taylor said with the transition to a state run clinic, there will be substantially more vaccine coming to Pueblo County. “The state has a pipeline for vaccine supply and we are happy to partner with them if it means getting more vaccine out to our residents,” Taylor said.

“This is an incredible development for Pueblo County as it will expand the amount of vaccine we are able to get out to the community,” said Randy Evetts, public health director for the Pueblo Department of Public Health and Environment. “We're excited to ramp up to this kind of volume.”

As of March 16, there have been nearly 23,000 first dose and more than 16,000 second dose vaccines administered at Pueblo’s mass vaccination clinic.

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