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MEDIA LIST	Consolidated / Expanded / Targeted		PHOTOS / VIDEO	Yes / No

Area Agencies and University Team Up to Provide COVID-19 Vaccinations

POCATELLO, Idaho—Southeastern Idaho Public Health, Idaho State University, and Portneuf Medical Center are collaborating to **vaccinate the current priority groups which includes those 65 years of age and older**. Priority groups can be found here at <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/covid-19-vaccination>. A vaccination clinic for those who have scheduled appointments, will open this week on the University’s campus to serve the community.

For the foreseeable future, this joint strategy will provide a vaccination clinic on Thursdays and Fridays starting February 18. The clinic will be held at the Sports and Orthopedic Center on the ISU campus in the Holt Arena parking lot, at 560 Memorial Drive. The vaccine clinic will run 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. **Appointments are required, and walk-ins will not be accepted. If you fall into the current vaccine priority group, call Southeastern Idaho Public Health at (208) 233-9080 and press #1 to schedule an appointment.**

Preparations and planning have taken place at record speed by all three agencies. Idaho State University will provide faculty and student nurses, pharmacists, and physician assistants as well as other health professions volunteers such as dental hygiene students; Southeastern Idaho Public Health will provide nurses, clinical staff, Medical Reserve Corp volunteers, vaccine and supplies; Portneuf Medical Center is providing use of their facility on the ISU campus. This new mass vaccination clinic further increases the reach into the community where authorized vaccine providers at several local pharmacies and clinics are already underway.

“Our agencies are linked to the communities we serve, and we are grateful and excited to join forces,” said Maggie Mann, Southeastern Idaho Public Health Director. “This important collaboration with our local agencies demonstrates our commitment to working together to beat this pandemic.”

Southeast Idaho’s approximately 27,000 residents who are age 65 or above have been prioritized for the next phase of vaccinations. In parallel with that effort, vaccination of any remaining health care workers, educators, emergency personnel and residents of long-term care facilities, etc. will continue. It is important to note that vaccination in one phase may not be complete before vaccination in another phase begins. Vaccination in these phases will likely overlap.

“As the State’s leader in the health sciences, we are proud to collaborate with others in our community to provide this critical service,” said ISU President Kevin Satterlee. “Our collaboration with the local health district and Portneuf Medical Center brings together trained professionals and dedicated volunteers, in an ideal location, to vaccinate our community. We are proud to join this collaborative effort that will greatly enhance the health, safety, and well-being of our entire community.”

The clinic will be able to administer about 600 doses of the vaccine per day.

Current estimates are that by early summer 2021, enough vaccines will be available for everyone who is recommended to receive the vaccine. There will be no out-of-pocket costs to individuals for the vaccine; however, healthcare providers may bill insurance for administrative costs. The COVID-19 vaccine will require two doses, separated by three or four weeks depending on the manufacturer. Idahoans should receive both doses in order to have full protection from the virus. Individuals who receive the vaccine may experience mild side effects such as low-grade fever, sore arm and fatigue, which indicate that the vaccine is working.

SIPH has a list of vaccine providers on their website at www.siphidaho.org. If you do not qualify for a vaccine in any of the current priority groups, you may sign up for an email update alerting you when the vaccine is available and how to make an appointment.

“I want to thank the people of southeast Idaho for their patience as we take on the most significant undertaking in public health’s modern history,” said Mann. “We have a plan to vaccinate every eligible resident, but it will take time. Your turn will come. Please continue to wear your mask, keep six feet between you and others and wash your hands frequently.”

SIPH has a call center to field questions from the community and is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can reach the hotline at (208) 234-5875.

For southeast Idaho specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit the district health department’s website. For Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit coronavirus.idaho.gov.

The Southeastern Idaho Public Health issues a daily Facebook Live update Join at 11 a.m. Mondays through Fridays at facebook.com/siphidaho.

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Idaho State University was founded in 1901 and has grown to be one of the most comprehensive institutions in the country. The University is one of only six institutions in the US offering programs from technical certificates through graduate and professional degrees. As the state’s designated lead institution in health professions, Idaho State is home to more than 75 percent of Idaho’s health degree programs. Idaho State attracts students from around the world to its campus locations in Pocatello, Meridian, Idaho Falls, and Twin Falls. More information about Idaho State University is available at isu.edu/about.