

McClain County continues COVID-19 vaccine effort

By Traci Chapman

For some officials at Oklahoma State Department of Health there was a concern in December – would they be able to show seniors the benefits of getting vaccinations for the novel coronavirus? With individuals and groups lining up to say they would not trust the process, some officials said they were concerned about what kind of response they would see to the vaccine.

It was a concern that – at least for now – turned out to be totally unfounded, they say.

Across Oklahoma, seniors have lined up in droves to take the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. For Blanchard residents, those vaccinations are administered by McClain County Health Department/

McClain County began its frontline healthcare worker/first responder vaccinations in mid-December; those for Phase 1 – anyone aged 65+ began shortly thereafter, said Sara King, Oklahoma State Health Department Region 6 community health education and planning lead.

“We began administering vaccines to those in the first tiers of Phase 2 at the end of December, as soon as Phase 2 opened for eligibility.”

Region 6 encompasses McClain, Cleveland, Grady, Hughes, Pottawatomie and Seminole counties. A shift between changes is only mandated by the state and would be done concurrently for all counties, officials said.

Each Oklahoma county has a slightly different set-up that allows for local needs and contingencies, state health officials said. In McClain County, a weekly large-scale vaccination effort is conducted each Thursday at Mid-America Technology Center; Blanchard and Purcell county health department offices provide vaccinations on an alternate basis during the week daily, King said.

“Vaccines administered at the health department take place as inventory allows throughout the



McClain County Health Department, like its counterparts across the state, in December began its COVID-19 vaccination efforts. Locally, the demand has been high for vaccines among Phase 1 - which includes individuals 65 and above. Injections are given by appointment at Blanchard and Purcell health department offices and Mid-America Technology Center.

week - our clinical and clerical staff alternate between our Purcell and Blanchard offices to maximize clinic capacity each day at the respective sites,” she said. “Our POD (at Mid-America Technology) regularly administers approximately 850 vaccines on Thursdays.”

All vaccinations – for both first and second injections – would only be done through appointment. Those are available through the state portal, located online at <https://www.vaccinate.oklahoma.gov> or, for those with no email or internet access, by calling 211.

Once an individual procures an appointment, McClain County has very specific procedures for how that

appointment will go, King said.

“Once onsite at Mid America Technology center, clients check in with the National Guard to receive a color associated with their appointment time; they are asked to stay in their vehicles until their color flag is flown,” she said. “At this point, clients may enter the facility to receive their vaccine and be monitored for 15 to 30 minutes, depending on history of allergies.”

Required second booster doses of Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are automatically scheduled by the health department in McClain County.

“(We schedule those) ...three to work weeks (depending on Pfizer or Moderna) from the date of their

prime dose, same time and location as their prime dose,” King said.

The vaccination effort has been both massive and a joint one with several entities across the state, officials said. King specifically acknowledged those in McClain County helping to keep things rolling.

“We would like to thank our partners at Mid America Technology, the National Guard and our Oklahoma Medical Reserve Corps volunteers for assisting alongside our staff in vaccine distribution,” King said. “Additionally, we encourage everyone to continue wearing their masks, watching their distance, and washing their hands even as they received their COVID-19 vaccine.”