

Qualifying for COVID-19 vaccination Mississippians age 16 and older are eligible for vaccination

Press Release

If you are 18 or older, you can be vaccinated at any of our drive-through sites at no cost. Persons younger than 18 should make a drive-through site appointment by calling 877-978-6453, or visit a private healthcare provider for COVID-19 vaccination to ensure that they receive a vaccine approved for their age.

COVID-19 vaccinations are provided to Mississippi residents only, or to out-of-state residents who work in Mississippi.

If you have had severe reactions from previous vaccines or injectable medications, please consult with your doctor or a private medical provider about vaccination, rather than visiting an MSDH drive-through site.

Who Should Be Vaccinated

* Persons aged 16 and older can receive the Pfizer vaccine, and those 18 and over can receive the Moderna

or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

* Pregnant women, lactating women and those who are immunocompromised may take the vaccine; however, consultation with your healthcare provider is recommended.

* You can be vaccinated if you have tested positive for COVID-19 if you wait until your isolation period is over and your symptoms have significantly improved.

Who Should Not Be Vaccinated

* You should not take the vaccine if you have had severe reactions from previous vaccines or injectable medications.

* If you have had any other type of vaccination in the last two weeks, you should not be vaccinated against COVID-19 yet. Make a COVID-19 vaccination appointment at least two weeks after you receive any other vaccination.

GETTING VACCINATED

Finding a Vaccination

Eligible Mississippians can be vaccinated at one of our drive-through vaccination sites. Many private health clinics and selected pharmacy outlets are also offering COVID-19 vaccinations.

* Find a free drive-through vaccination appointment

* Local pharmacies and healthcare providers giving vaccinations

* Interactive map of vaccination providers

After Vaccination

* Like most vaccines, you should expect some soreness and fatigue for up to a day after vaccination, a sign that the body is developing a proper immune response.

* Large-scale testing of the vaccine has found no major side effects to the vaccine

* Two vaccinations, several weeks apart (depending on type of vaccine) will be required for full effectiveness. You should schedule your second dose for the appropriate time. For Pfizer vaccine, that's 3 weeks after your first vaccination, and for Moderna, 4 weeks. If necessary, your second vaccination can be made as much as 6 weeks after your first.

* Continue to practice social distancing and other protective measures after you

are fully vaccinated. This prevents possible spread of COVID-19 to others, even though you may not be ill, and protects you from the potential risk of infection from new variants of COVID-19.

Your Second Dose

* Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses. Both doses of vaccine are necessary to be fully protected against COVID-19.

* If you receive the Pfizer vaccine, you should return 3 to 6 weeks later for your second dose. If you receive the Moderna vaccine, you should return 4 to 6 weeks later for your second dose.

* You must make a separate appointment for your second dose vaccination; it is not done automatically. Look for information on scheduling your second dose in the confirmation e-mail you get for your first vaccination appointment. If you have already had your first vaccination, look for a reminder e-mail with instructions on making your second dose appointment. If you need assistance with making a second dose appointment, call the COVID-19 Hotline at 877-978-6453.

* You will receive a text message reminder about your second vaccination as time for your second dose approaches. You can also set a reminder with the v-safe app for your smartphone.

* Please bring the vaccination card you received at your first dose to your second dose vaccination.

* If possible, schedule your

second drive-through vaccination at the same location you received your first dose.

* If your first vaccination was through a private provider or pharmacy and not at one of our drive-through locations, return to that pro-

vider or pharmacy for your second dose.

* After you are vaccinated, continue to follow all safety measures such as social distancing and mask wearing to reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 to others.

Durant P.D.'s Amnesty Period

The Durant Police Department's amnesty period is in effect. The last day to take advantage of this will be April 15th, 2021. You are encouraged to come and pay outstanding fines in full before the deadline to avoid additional penalties and warrants.



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Auditor works with legislature to increase penalties for fraud and embezzlement

Fraud, embezzlement no longer eligible for pretrial diversion

News Release

JACKSON, Miss. – Today State Auditor Shad White announced public employees who embezzle or fraudulently obtain more than \$10,000 of taxpayer money will no longer be able to participate in a pretrial diversion program. This announcement comes after Senate Bill 2552 was passed by both chambers of the Legislature and signed by the Governor.

Pretrial diversion programs have been used as a way to prevent a conviction for a crime from appearing on a person's criminal record. When SB 2552 becomes law on July 1 this year, two of the most common crimes investigated by the State Auditor's office will be added to the list of those crimes ineligible for pretrial diversion. This law will complement a 2019 law which prevents people convicted of embezzlement from holding public office.

"This year, at my request, the Legislature passed a bill to toughen the penalties on people who steal taxpayer dollars, and the Governor has now signed it into law," said Auditor White. "I want to thank Rep. Nick Bain, Sen. Daniel Sparks, legislative leadership, and the Governor for their work making this bill the law of the land."

You can read the full text of the bill by visiting the Legislature's website.

"I will continue to work for you in holding fraudsters accountable," White said, "but

I will also work with the Legislature and the Governor to forge agreements between them and improve our laws as well."

AG Fitch recovers nearly 500,000 PPE items from price gouger, gives back to community healthcare heroes and first responders

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Press Release

"Taking advantage of our neighbors in need during a crisis to turn an extra profit is wrong. We are turning this PPE back to the men and women who have sacrificed so much for us during this pandemic - health centers, law enforcement, and fire departments." Lynn Fitch

Attorney General Lynn Fitch and her team began the process of distributing hundreds of thousands of FDA-approved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N-95 respirators, surgical masks, and disposable gloves statewide. The Attorney General's Office came into possession of these items as a result of a plea agreement in a price gouging case on the Coast.

"Taking advantage of our neighbors in need during a crisis to turn an extra profit is wrong," said Attorney General Lynn Fitch. "We are turning this PPE back to the men and women who have sacrificed so much for us during this pandemic - health centers, law enforce-

ment, and fire departments."

In March 2020, following multiple complaints of price gouging, the Mississippi Attorney General's Office began an investigation into Gulf Coast Pharmaceuticals Plus, LLC.

United States Magistrate Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi, Robert Walker, signed a search and seizure warrant for the GCPP premises, and the following items were inventoried and seized:

- 6,576 N-95 respirators
- 8,950 KN-95 respirators
- 365,225 Surgical masks
- 26,300 Shoe covers
- 77,200 Gloves
- 230 Lab coats/ coveralls
- 4,332 Gowns/ scrubs/ scrub caps
- 300 Disposable scrub caps
- 163 Face shields/goggles

It was uncovered that Gulf Coast Pharmaceuticals Plus, LLC, under the direction and supervision of owner Kenneth Ritchey, was intentionally and feloniously price gouging medical facilities by excessively marking up and selling PPE that was in

short supply at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, including Mississippi's G.V. Sonny Montgomery VA Medical Center.

Kenneth Ritchey pled guilty to one count of price gouging and was ordered to pay nearly \$60,000 in restitution to the G.V. Sonny Montgomery Veterans Administration Hospital, a maximum fine of \$5,000, and all court costs. Ritchey also surrendered all PPE seized by law enforcement personnel to the Attorney General's Office.

In mid-January, representatives of the Mississippi Attorney General's Office contacted first responders, emergency management entities, health officials, and law enforcement associations asking organizations to complete a PPE request form, and all 189 unique organizations that submitted a request are receiving PPE.

The AGO is no longer accepting PPE requests. All available PPE has been allocated and distribution will continue to occur over the next month.

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