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## Inslee announces COVID-19 vaccine approval by multi-state workgroup

1 message

Gov. Inslee Press Updates &lt;press@updates.gov.wa.gov&gt;

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## Inslee announces COVID-19 vaccine approval by multi-state workgroup

Gov. Jay Inslee today announced the authorization of the first COVID-19 vaccine by the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup. The governor was joined for the announcement by workgroup members Drs. Ed Marcuse and John Dunn and State Health Officer Dr. Kathy Lofy.

The announcement comes after the FDA and CDC granted their initial authorization to the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. The Western States Workgroup, comprised of vaccine experts from Washington, California, Oregon and Nevada, have been meeting to review the data and analysis to ensure the safety and efficacy of all vaccines federally authorized.

"I'm pleased that the Western States Workgroup gave their unanimous recommendation to the vaccine last night and encourages immediate use of the vaccine in our states," Inslee said during a press conference Sunday morning. "It cannot come soon enough – with Washington closing in on 200,000 total COVID cases and approaching 3,000 deaths – this help is much needed to prevent further infection, hospitalization and loss of life."

Workgroup members hope that their independent review inspires confidence in Washingtonians around the vaccine's safety.

"I was enormously reassured by the rigor and transparency of the FDA and CDC reviews," Marcuse said. "I am now confident in the safety and efficacy of this Pfizer vaccine. We have sufficient information to recommend its immediate use so we can begin to reduce the horrific toll of this pandemic."

"After looking at all of the available data, our workgroup unanimously agreed that at this time the benefits of this vaccine greatly exceed any theoretical risks," Dunn said. "I personally am reassured by the safety profile and look forward to being vaccinated as soon as I am eligible."

The first of the vaccine doses are expected to start arriving from the federal government tomorrow and will begin to be administered as soon as Tuesday.

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Vaccinations will begin as soon as possible in health care and long-term care facilities and tribal governments across the state. Health systems and local public health departments have been preparing for the arrival and distribution of the vaccine.

“This doesn't mean we are out of the woods yet,” Inslee said. “We can't let up on masking, physical distancing and restrictions on indoor activities. We need to continue to slow the rate of infection as we work to get Washingtonians vaccinated. We must keep up the fight a little longer and I know we will get through this, together.”

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