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NEWS RELEASE

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Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Booster Vaccine

Great Falls, MT — In September 2021, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new recommendations for certain persons to receive a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Accordingly, the Cascade City-County Health Department is now offering third doses or booster doses as set forth below.

At least 28 days after the second dose of either the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, a third dose is available to persons with moderately or severely compromised immune systems. To be eligible, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Active treatment for solid tumor and hematologic malignancies
- Receipt of solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
- Receipt of CAR-T-cell or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within 2 years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g., DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids (i.e., ≥ 20 mg prednisone or equivalent per day), alkylating agents, antimetabolites, transplant-related immunosuppressive drugs, cancer chemotherapeutic agents classified as severely immunosuppressive, tumor-necrosis (TNF) blockers, and other biologic agents that are immunosuppressive or immunomodulatory

Additionally, a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, at least 6 months after completion of the primary two-dose series, is available to the following:

- People 65 years and older
- Residents in long-term care settings
- People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions (see below)
- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions (see below), based on their individual benefits and risks
- People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting

The CDC has identified the following underlying medical conditions that may increase the risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic lung diseases, including COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), emphysema, chronic bronchitis, asthma (moderate-to-severe), interstitial lung disease, cystic fibrosis, and pulmonary hypertension
- Dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or other neurological conditions
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies, or hypertension
- HIV
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system)
- Liver disease
- Obesity or overweight (BMI > 25 kg/m²)
- Pregnancy or recent pregnancy (42 days following the end of pregnancy)
- Sickle cell disease or thalassemia
- Smoking, current or former
- Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
- Stroke or cerebrovascular disease which affects blood flow to the brain
- Substance use disorders, such as alcohol, opioid, or cocaine use disorder

If you are eligible, please visit <https://www.mtreadyclinic.org/> to schedule a third dose or booster dose, or email CCHD at vaccine@cascaedecountymt.gov with your name, date of birth, address, phone number, and any relevant health conditions. If you do not have access to a computer or internet, you may call CCHD at 406-791-9250 and leave a voicemail with the same information and a CCHD representative will contact you to schedule. **Scheduling online is preferred** to prevent overloading the phone line.

Additional doses or boosters of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine have not been approved at this time, and you should not "mix and match" vaccines from different manufacturers.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible for a third dose or booster dose, please discuss with your physician or other healthcare provider before scheduling an appointment.

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For media opportunities, please call Ben Spencer: (406) 217-8578
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