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## **OPCA Applauds Governor, OHA for Expanding Access to COVID-19 Vaccinations** *Oregon CHCs Begin Process of Vaccinating Staff*

The Oregon Primary Care Association (OPCA) would like to express its appreciation to Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for opening up the state's COVID-19 Phase 1a Vaccination Sequencing Plan this week to include Oregon's Community Health Centers (CHCs).

Oregon community health centers with over 100 employees began receiving vaccinations this week and vaccinating health care staff members thanks to the [OHA's COVID-19 Phase 1a Sequencing Update](#) issued on Tuesday. For health centers with less than 100 employees, we are gratified to hear that many have utilized their community partnerships with a local hospital, another CHC, or local public health agency to receive vaccines.

"We greatly appreciate Governor Brown and OHA expanding access to vaccinations for health care staff at Oregon's 33 community health centers," said Joan Watson-Patko, OPCA executive director. "Oregon's health centers have been providing front-line testing, treatment, and services to thousands of COVID-19 patients during this global pandemic. This important change helps protect CHC health care workers and allows them to continue to be on the frontlines of caring for their patients and communities, many of which are disproportionately affected by COVID-19."

Oregon CHCs have seen over triple the COVID-19 positivity rate (18.4%) as the state average (5.8%) and over four and a half times the rate for racial and ethnic minorities (26.8%), according to the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and OHA data as of Dec. 17, 2020.

OPCA looks forward to continuing to work with Gov. Brown and OHA on the continued vaccination effort across the state.

### **About Oregon's CHCs**

Oregon's community health centers deliver integrated medical, dental, and behavioral health services at over 200 locations to the communities made vulnerable across the state. Over 466,000 Oregonians receive their care at a community health center, including one in four people on the Oregon Health Plan. Over 73% of patients live below the poverty line, and 94% live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Over 75% of community health centers have clinic sites serving rural communities, 30% of Oregon's community health centers are federally recognized as Health Care for the Homeless locations, and 33% are designated as Migrant Health Centers. Find out more about [Oregon's CHCs here](#).

### **About OPCA**

OPCA is a non-profit membership association of Oregon's 33 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), including one FQHC Look-Alike. FQHCs are also known as community health centers (CHCs). The organization's mission is to lead the transformation of primary care to achieve health equity for all.

OPCA believes all people, in Oregon and beyond, should have the chance to lead their healthiest lives and have access to equitable health care. Oregon Primary Care Association supports a network of CHCs that deliver exceptional health care to people in urban, rural and frontier communities who may otherwise not have access to services. By helping health centers apply innovative approaches to health care delivery and system challenges, OPCA is transforming primary care in Oregon and beyond. Follow us on Twitter [@OregonPCA](#) or on [Facebook](#)