

# Potential for mass COVID vaccination site at Bakersfield College, thousands on waitlists for vaccine

## LOCAL NEWS

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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (KGET) – Thousands of Kern County residents still are waiting to get their COVID vaccines. Because of high demand – there are plans to open another site at Bakersfield College. There are only three groups that currently qualify for the vaccine: people 65 and older, health workers, and first responders. Kern Public Health says it's uncertain when they'll move forward to include more groups.

“We are awaiting that guidance from the state to see when we can start moving through that next phase,” said Michelle Corson with Kern Public Health.

“However vaccine is extremely limited, so we currently have more folks eager to get the vaccine than we're getting allotments from the state.”

The state sends vaccines to hospitals, urgent care centers, and Kern Public Health every week. Each receives a different number of vaccines. But there's no way to tell how many vaccines the state will provide each week.

“There's a lot of discussion we know that we expect some announcements and changes,” Corson said. “We don't know when we don't know if the same tiered system will continue, or if they'll take a more age-based approach.”

Kern Public Health opened its mass vaccination site at the fairgrounds on p street in bakersfield two weeks ago. Through this site – 3,581 doses of the vaccine have been administered and public health is waiting for more.

“We've got the ability to do much more,” Corson said. “We've got the staffing we're ready and we want more we're asking for more. So we're just dealing with what we're given currently.”

Plenty of local hospitals and urgent care centers are also waiting on the state for more vaccines. The Universal Urgent Care near CSUB has around 700 people on

its waitlist. An employee there says it will take at least a week to vaccinate everyone. And there are currently thousands on the vaccination waitlist at Bakersfield Heart Hospital.

“We know this is frustrating, when you’re a resident who wants the vaccine and you qualify,” Corson said. “It’s extremely difficult not to get the vaccine. So we expect this to improve, we’re told more vaccine is to be expected from the national and state level.”

Bakersfield College is working with the Latino COVID Task Force and Centric Health to build a second mass vaccination site in Kern County. It would be at Bakersfield College in their Student Health and Wellness Center. The hope is to lift some of the burden off of other vaccination sites. Kern Public Health expects to fill all vaccination appointments for this week by the end of today. If you qualify you can call 868-0165 to schedule your appointment.

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