

Thousands of Vaccine Appointments Canceled as Supply Lags

Last Updated Feb. 1, 2021, 5:54 a.m. ET

Doctors in Peru are staging a hunger strike to protest a lack of pandemic equipment. As Biden and Harris were sworn at the Capitol, masks were the order of the day. Crowds weren't.

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Here's what you need to know:

- [‘It’s such a lottery’: Disappointment and frustration as vaccine offers melt away.](#)
- [On Biden’s first day in charge, swift action on Covid-19 and the economy is a priority.](#)
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- [Without big galas, an inauguration so small, it fit on your phone.](#)
- [A company vaccinating Ohio nursing-home residents lets 890 doses go bad.](#)
- [Doctors in Peru stage a hunger strike over the government’s pandemic response.](#)
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‘It’s such a lottery’: Disappointment and frustration as vaccine offers melt away.

That Covid-19 vaccine appointment may not just be hard to get — it may not even be all that secure.

Thousands of people across the country learned that their appointments had been abruptly canceled in the last few days, after vaccine shipments to local health departments and other distributors fell short of what was expected.

The health department in Erie County, N.Y., which includes Buffalo, canceled seven days of appointments this week, affecting 8,010 people, saying the state had sent far fewer doses than the county ordered. All future appointments should be considered “tentative, and are subject to vaccine availability,” the department said in a statement on Wednesday.

“We made appointments based on our hope and expectation that we would be able to fill those,” said Kara Kane, a department spokeswoman. “There’s a lot of confusion, a lot of questions, a lot of concern.”

Dianne Bennett, 78, lost a first-dose appointment at the Erie County Medical Center because of the cancellations, as did her husband. They were told to try again later, but Ms. Bennett said they had no idea when another appointment would be available.

“It’s such a lottery,” she said. “I just think it’s outrageous.”

Similar issues have cropped up across the country, as demand far outpaces supply and vaccine providers struggle to predict how many doses will arrive.

At Beaufort Memorial Hospital in South Carolina, hospital officials canceled 6,000 scheduled appointments through March 30 after they were notified that thousands of vaccine doses they expected were not coming.

San Francisco’s public health department expects to run out of vaccine on Thursday, The Los Angeles Times reported, because the city’s allocation dropped sharply from a week ago and the state did not replace doses that had to be discarded.

Local health officials throughout California say they have trouble scheduling appointments because they are unsure how much vaccine they will receive from week to week, the paper said.

In New York City, 23,000 vaccination appointments scheduled for Thursday and Friday were postponed because of a shipping delay, Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Wednesday, a day after warning that the city’s supply would soon be exhausted.

“We already were feeling the stress of a shortage of vaccine,” the mayor said at a news conference. “Now the situation has been made even worse.”

Recent moves to open up eligibility have aggravated the situation.

After the state of Georgia announced that anyone 65 or older could get the vaccine, the 10-county Northwest Health District was swamped with more than 10,000 appointment requests in one weekend — far more than it could satisfy with the supply it had on hand. So it shut down its scheduling website, and told people to call their local health department to arrange an appointment instead, frustrating many people who thought they had already secured a slot.

“We’re having to schedule appointments at least a week out, based on anticipated delivery, but we don’t know what will show up on a daily basis,” said Logan Boss, the spokesman for the health district. “It’s difficult to explain that to the public.”

— *Lucy Tompkins*

Tracking the Coronavirus >

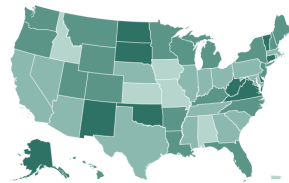
United States >	On Feb. 1	14-day change
New cases	139,830	-29% ↘
New deaths	2,010	-2% ↘

Risk in your area >

Washington, D.C., is at a **very high risk** level. See more detail >

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U.S. vaccinations >



Fully vaccinated	1.8%
At least one dose	8.0%

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On Biden’s first day in charge, swift action on Covid-19 and the economy is a priority.

Within hours of his inauguration on Wednesday, President Biden signed 17 executive orders, memorandums and proclamations, five of which were aimed at helping the country bring the pandemic to heel.

In an effort to strengthen the nation’s response to the coronavirus, which as of this week, has claimed more than 400,000 lives, Mr. Biden signed an executive order appointing Jeffrey D. Zients the official Covid-19 response coordinator, reporting to the president. Mr. Zients was the co-chairman of the Biden transition team, and led the National Economic Council under President Barack Obama.

That order also restores the National Security Council’s Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense, a group disbanded under President Donald Trump in 2018.

Though Mr. Biden has not ordered a national mask mandate, which would probably face legal challenges, he is requiring social distancing and the wearing of masks by federal employees, contractors and others on federal property. He is also starting a “100 days masking challenge” urging all Americans to wear masks and state and local officials to implement public measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Mr. Biden is also reinstating ties with the World Health Organization after the Trump administration withdrew the nation’s membership and funding last year.

Mr. Biden also took action to help Americans who are struggling economically as a result of the pandemic.

He is moving to extend a federal moratorium on evictions and has asked agencies, including the departments of Agriculture, Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, to prolong a moratorium on foreclosures on federally guaranteed mortgages. The extensions all run through at least the end of March.