



Brianna Salas, a nurse in the Emergency Department at UC San Diego Health, was the first team member to receive the COVID-19 vaccine—at 8:38 a.m. on Wednesday.

Ending the Pandemic Begins Now

A Statement by Patty Maysent, CEO, UC San Diego Health

These are momentous days, though too often darkened by rising rates of COVID-19 transmission, reports of overstressed hospitals, increasing sickness and mortality. But now, we are in a moment, one infused with hope. We are turning a corner: the beginning of the end of the pandemic.

This week, the first allocation of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine arrived at UC San

Diego Health, just as similar shipments are appearing across the country. The first inoculations at UC San Diego Health are slated to begin this week as well.

Per guidance for the Centers for Disease Control, Food and Drug Administration and public health experts, these first doses will go to health care workers at UC San Diego Health who are deemed at greatest risk of exposure to COVID-19, such as emergency department staff, critical care staff, trauma staff, respiratory therapists and personnel with face-to-face patient care in urgent care clinics.

Our goal is to vaccinate as many employees as quickly as possible, depending upon supplies and evolving circumstances. With subsequent vaccine shipments from Pfizer and as other vaccines, such as Moderna, come online, we will expand the opportunity to vaccinate to all health system employees, our patients and communities beyond. We are determined to do this as safely and effectively, as rapidly and methodically, as we can.

But even with actual vaccinations starting, we must continue to follow all current measures designed to slow viral spread and infection, from masking and distancing to hand washing and signing up for CA NOTIFY.

Some may ask why rush to vaccinate if these other measures are working. The simple answer is that they are only partial measures; the only way to completely end this pandemic is to widely distribute safe, effective vaccines, minimizing the costs to society, already so dear.

To that end, we have begun.

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Patty Maysent, CEO of UC San Diego Health, and Brianna Salas, a registered nurse in the Emergency Department.