

COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Faces Delays

Carolyn Crist

December 30, 2020

Editor's note: Find the latest COVID-19 news and guidance in Medscape's [Coronavirus Resource Center](#).

The COVID-19 vaccine distribution process in the U.S. is moving slower than anticipated, falling short of Operation Warp Speed's goal to vaccinate 20 million Americans by the end of the year.

If the current pace of vaccination continues, "it's going to take years, not months, to vaccinate the American people," President-elect Joe Biden said [during a briefing](#) on Tuesday afternoon.

In fact, at the current rate, it would take nearly 10 years to vaccinate enough Americans to bring the pandemic under control, according to [NBC News](#). To reach 80% of the country by late June, 3 million people would need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine each day.

"As I long feared and warned, the effort to distribute and administer the vaccine is not progressing as it should," Biden said, reemphasizing his pledge to get 100 million doses to Americans during his first 100 days as president.

So far, 11.4 million doses have been distributed and 2.1 million people have received a vaccine, according to [the CDC](#). Most states have administered a fraction of the doses they've received, according to [data compiled by The New York Times](#).

Federal officials have said there's an "expected lag" between delivery of doses, shots going into arms, and the data being reported to the CDC, according to [CNN](#). The FDA must assess each shipment for quality control, which has slowed down distribution, and the CDC data is just now beginning to include the Moderna vaccine, which the FDA authorized for emergency use on Dec. 18.

The 2.1 million number is "an underestimate," Brett Giroir, the assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, told NBC News on Tuesday. At the same time, the U.S. won't meet the goal of vaccinating 20 million people in the next few days, he said.

Another 30 million doses will go out in January, Giroir said, followed by 50 million in February.

Some vaccine experts have said they're not surprised by the speed of vaccine distribution.

"It had to go this way," Paul Offit, MD, a professor of pediatrics at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, [told STAT](#). "We had to trip and fall and stumble and figure this out."

To speed up distribution in 2021, the federal government will need to help states, Biden said Tuesday. He plans to use the Defense Authorization Act to ramp up production of vaccine supplies. Even still, the process will take months, he said.

Sources:

C-SPAN: "President-elect Biden Remarks on Coronavirus Pandemic."

NBC News: "Operation Warp Speed at a crawl: Adequately vaccinating Americans will take 10 years at current pace."

CDC: "CDC COVID Data Tracker: Vaccinations."

The New York Times: "More Than 2.1 Million People in the U.S. Have Gotten a Covid-19 Vaccine."

CNN: "US officials promised 20 million vaccinated against coronavirus by the end of the year. It's going slower than that."

STAT: "Frustration over vaccine rollout builds, as new variant reported in U.S. for first time."

WebMD Health News © 2020

Cite this: COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout Faces Delays - *Medscape* - Dec 30, 2020.