



**COMMANDER, NAVY REGION HAWAII/
NAVAL SURFACE GROUP
MIDDLE PACIFIC**

**COVID-19 AWARENESS
January 27, 2021**



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Region and MIDPAC Ohana,

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems like we have received news that has been a mix of bad and good. This week is no different. On the mainland we have seen the emergence of a new strain of the virus that seems to move more quickly among unprotected populations. The number of new cases seems to be reaching another plateau, but the levels are still much higher than we would like to see. Fortunately, distribution of the vaccine continues to gain momentum. For our military ohana on Oahu, more than 5,200 doses of the vaccine have been provided, nearly double the number of my last update. This is a great start, but we must continue to build on this momentum. The ultimate goal is to get shots into arms as we continue to push towards the ultimate goal of 80% of the population being vaccinated.

As we progress through the criteria established for determining who gets the vaccine first, I expect that soon most of you will have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Since the vaccine is being provided under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), your participation is voluntary. You owe it to yourself, your family, your community and your fellow workers to understand the benefits of vaccination before you make your decision.

Some have voiced concerns about the safety of the vaccine. After all, this is a new virus. Fortunately, the protocols for developing the COVID-19 vaccines are the same ones that have been safely used in developing countless other vaccines that we now take for granted. Vaccines for COVID-19 are only available after they are demonstrated to be safe and effective in large three-phase clinical trials. They have to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, and must be manufactured and distributed in a safe and secure manner. These criteria have been met. The vaccine is safe.

Along the same lines, others wonder if it is possible to contract the COVID-19 virus from the vaccine. The short answer to this is “no.” The COVID-19 vaccines use inactivated parts of the virus or a gene from the virus. None of these can cause COVID-19. You can research this many places, and many of those sites are on the Region’s COVID-19 Information and Resources page.

While the vaccine is showing great promise, we are not at the point where we can start talking about easing some of the mitigations we currently have in place. Just because you receive the shot, you are not immediately protected. The vaccine reaches full effect for approximately 95% of the population at least seven days after the second dose. It’s also important to note that there is also not enough research to show if people who have received the vaccine can still transmit the virus to unvaccinated individuals as an asymptomatic infection.

This is why we need to continue with the mitigation measures that we have relied upon since we began our response to COVID-19 – wearing face coverings, practicing good hygiene measures and maintaining social distancing. Remember, the more people that get vaccinated, the faster our health care experts can assess the

evidence, making safe and informed changes to preventive measures.

Please be patient as we continue to ramp up the vaccination programs. For some of you and your family members, it will take time. I encourage you to carefully consider the variables and be ready when the opportunity for vaccination becomes available.

As always, take care of yourselves and your families.

V/r, Robb

Stay up-to-date on the latest developments at the following links (Copy & Paste):

- CNRH COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/regions/cnrh/om/coronavirus-disease-2019.html>
- CNRH Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/NavyRegionHawaii/>

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