



For Immediate Release

December 17, 2020

Cook Children's Administers First Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine

Fort Worth, Texas - Thirty frontline workers are the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at Cook Children's. Just hours after the shipment arrived, Cook Children's employees were given the vaccine, with the first two groups of 10 getting the shot at the same time. The initial recipients included doctors and nurses who work with COVID-19 patients, as well as employees who may be in close contact with patients and families such as environmental service workers, members of Cook Children's Teddy Bear Transport Team, security, lab, and food and nutrition employees.

"It's an emotional day because we've waited so long for this pandemic to end," said Debbie Boudreaux, Assistant Vice President of Nursing at Cook Children's. "This has been a team effort from the very beginning, with our COVID-19 Command Center working tirelessly to adapt to all the changes we've had to make to keep our employees, patients and families safe."

The vaccine arrived at Cook Children's Medical Center just before 10 a.m. on Dec. 17 via a UPS truck. The vials were immediately transferred to a special freezer where they will be kept at minus-70 degrees Celsius until they are ready to be thawed and administered.

Today's vaccination of frontline staff was considered a "soft launch" ahead of the full COVID-19 employee vaccination clinic, which is set to launch at 5 a.m. on Dec. 18. Frontline employees are prioritized and must register for their appointment.

"We're so grateful to be surrounded by remarkable people who unselfishly come to work every day with the purpose of making a difference in the life of a child," said Rick W. Merrill, CEO & President of Cook Children's Health Care System. "By volunteering to receive this vaccine, our employees display great courage and commitment in doing what they can to bring an end to this pandemic."

After receiving the vaccine, several Cook Children's employees shared the reason why they took the shot:

"I am getting the COVID vaccine to help keep myself and other people safe from this, and so I can hug my adult children and parents in peace." - Mary Suzanne Whitworth, M.D., medical director of Infectious Diseases.

“The reason why I’m taking the vaccine today is because my stepdad passed away last week from COVID complications, and it is super important to me, to my family, to the community, to get this vaccine as quick as you possibly can.” - Jason Reese, respiratory therapist

“I trust the science. I have been wearing full PPE since March, and I am truly exhausted mentally and physically. I know this is the only way to beat the virus because it’s been beating us in 2020.” - Deborah English, registered nurse on the COVID-19 unit

“I believe in the safety of our patients, and I want to make sure that we’re safe and they’re safe. I believe in the science, and I believe in Cook Children’s.” - Jill Fallahay, respiratory therapist with Teddy Bear Transport

[Video available for download here.](#)

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About Cook Children’s

Cook Children’s Health Care System embraces an inspiring Promise – to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we’re proud of our long and rich tradition of serving our community.

Our not-for-profit organization encompasses nine companies – a medical center, two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children’s, Cook Children’s Health Services Inc., and Cook Children’s Health Foundation. With more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations throughout Texas, families can access our top-ranked specialty programs and network of services to meet their unique needs.

We’ve worked to improve the health of children from across our primary service area of Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise counties for more than 100 years. Based on the exceptional care we provide, patients travel to Cook Children’s from around the country and the globe to receive life-saving pediatric care built on leading technology, extraordinary collaboration and the art of caring.

For more information, visit cookchildrens.org.

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