



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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The Alliance wishes all of our members a healthy, safe and happy 2021!

Those Over Age 75, Essential Frontline Workers Should Be Next in Line for Covid Vaccine

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a federal panel advising the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has approved recommendations that people [over the age of 75 and essential frontline workers](#) be next in line for the Covid-19 vaccines. They would follow the health care workers, nursing home residents and staff vaccinated during the initial phase of the inoculations.

The panel's recommendations are non-binding and state officials will make the final decisions on the order of vaccinations; however, many states are looking to ACIP to help them settle challenging ethical questions over the distribution of the scarce supply of doses.

About 20 million people are 75 or older and there are about 30 million front-line workers, including police, firefighters, teachers and grocery workers. Seniors between the ages of 65-74, other essential workers and people between the ages of 16-64 with high-risk conditions would be inoculated after those groups.

"The recommendations reflect the fact that seniors are the most likely to face serious illness or death from the virus," said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. "Unfortunately it will take months to complete the process. We must continue to wear our masks and social distance as much as possible in the meantime. Please follow the CDC guidelines."

Nursing Home Occupancy is Down Sharply Across the Nation

The pandemic is changing the way Americans care for seniors, with a growing number of families opting for in-home care over nursing homes. Nursing home use has been decreasing gradually for years, with occupancy in 2019 at 80%, down from 84% a decade earlier. The pandemic has accelerated the trend due to deaths, fear of infection and family members' concerns over restricted visitation at the facilities.

This year alone [occupancy in nursing homes is down 15%](#), or more than 195,000 residents. More than 115,000 deaths caused by Covid-19 have been linked to long-term care facilities.

Nursing-home operators say that rising numbers of baby boomers with a need for institutional care will drive occupancy rates back up.

Surveys have long shown many seniors prefer aging at home, and the pandemic has made nursing homes even less popular, according to a September survey of adults 40 and older by AARP. Just 7% said they would prefer a nursing home for family members needing long-term care, and 6% said they would choose one for themselves. Nearly three in 10 respondents said the pandemic had made them less likely to choose institutional care.

“Once the pandemic is over, long term care trends are unlikely to return quickly to the way they were,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We are going to see the after-effects from the pandemic for a long time, with more seniors aging in place, before demographic changes bring the number of nursing home residents back up.”

Scam Alert: Seniors Being Targeted With Promise of Early Access to Covid Vaccine

Public health officials are warning the public of [scammers who promise early access to the vaccine in exchange for sensitive personal information](#).

Beware of any call from someone asking for your Social Security number or credit card information in conjunction with the vaccine. No legitimate doctor’s office, pharmacy or insurance company would call asking for this information.



“Be on the lookout for those contacting you via phone, text and email,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “If what they are offering seems too good to be true, it probably is. Access to the vaccine is strictly controlled, so do not believe strangers saying they have early access.”

If you receive one of these solicitations, experts say the best thing to do is hang up immediately. Do not open or respond to any messages or click on any links or email attachments from unknown sources. If you are

unsure about a message, check with your healthcare provider, as they will be able to pass on the most accurate information about the vaccine.

Georgia Senate Runoffs are Only Five Days Away

Retiree-led phone banks will continue this week as the important Georgia Senate runoff elections approach. With only a few days left until Election Day on January 5th, Alliance members from all states are invited to call Georgia voters in support of Democratic candidates **Jon Ossoff** and **Raphael Warnock**. The next shift will take place on January 2nd, 2021 at 2:00pm Eastern Time. Click [here](#) to sign up.



Early voters lined up in Atlanta on December 16.

The early voting period is well underway, and the number of voters turning out for the election is breaking records. According to an *NBC News* data analysis, [almost 70,000 voters have registered in the state](#) since the general election in November.

“Given how close the races were during the general election, any slight shifts in voter turnout can determine the winners,” said President **Roach**. “A phone call really could make a big difference.”

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.