

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE                                               Contact: Koko Mackin**

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**Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Provides 100% Coverage for COVID-19 Vaccines and Recommends the Vaccines for Those Currently Eligible**

**Birmingham, AL –** Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is providing 100% coverage for the administration of COVID-19 vaccines during the government’s phased-in vaccine distribution. Blue Cross is recommending the COVID-19 vaccine for those currently eligible. Blue Cross members on individual, Medicare and almost all employer health plans will be able to receive a FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine without having to pay any out-of-pocket expenses.

“The health and wellness of our members and communities remains our top priority,” said Tim Vines, President and CEO, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. “We want to make sure our members have access to the COVID-19 vaccines without cost being an obstacle.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the arrival of the first COVID-19 vaccines is a major development in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. The current vaccines are up to 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 and provide a high level of protection against contracting the virus. Getting vaccinated will help keep individuals, families, our communities and Alabama healthy and safe.

“The FDA-authorized vaccines for COVID-19 show we are headed in the right direction in defeating the virus,” said Dr. Dow Briggs, Executive Vice President, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. “To ensure our members and Alabamians get the most appropriate care, we encourage them to consult their doctor or pharmacy if they have any questions about the vaccines.”

According to the CDC, safety continues to be a top priority when developing and authorizing a

COVID-19 vaccine.

* **Careful Testing.** All vaccines go through clinical trials to test safety and effectiveness. For the COVID-19 vaccine, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) established rigorous safety standards for vaccine developers to meet.
* **Clinical Trials.** No serious safety concerns were reported. Trials for the COVID-19 vaccine have had fully independent safety monitoring boards, and safety data are continuously reviewed by the FDA and expert panels.
* **Continuous Monitoring.** Once a vaccine is authorized for use, monitoring by the FDA and the CDC continues, with systems in place to track problems or side effects not detected during the clinical trials.
* **Side Effects.** Some people may develop temporary symptoms such as a fever, muscle aches, headache, and/or fatigue. These side effects signify the vaccine is working, and the body is developing an immune response.
* **Contracting COVID-19 from the Vaccine.** The COVID-19 vaccines being developed and distributed in the United States do not contain live virus particles, so people cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. Only exposure to the novel coronavirus is how COVID-19 is contracted.

Even though a safe COVID-19 vaccine is available, following current preventive measures is still essential. **Wear a face mask, continue social distancing and wash hands frequently.**

For information on eligibility, vaccine safety, and to schedule a vaccination appointment, visit [ALCovidVaccine.gov](https://alcovidvaccine.gov/#_blank). For appointments you can also call [855-566-5333](tel:855-566-5333).

***About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama***

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama has insured Alabamians for 84 years. Blue Cross offers coverage plans to corporations, individuals and the senior market. For more information about Blue Cross, visit [AlabamaBlue.com](http://www.AlabamaBlue.com). Connect with us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BCBSAL/?fref=ts), check out our videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/BCBSofAlabama) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/BCBSofAlabama) for more up-to-date information.

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