

San Mateo County Adds New ICU Beds, Staff to Sequoia Hospital

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FDA Greenlights Second COVID-19 Vaccine for National Use

Health care workers across the U.S. are getting a new arrow in their quiver.

On Friday, just one week after Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine [received a federal green light](#), the Food and Drug Administration formally authorized a second vaccine for emergency use — this one developed by Moderna. The [biotech upstart](#) won authorization for use in adults following extensive federal analysis of the vaccine, which the FDA found to be [94% effective](#) at preventing the disease.

California is expecting 672,000 doses of the vaccine in coming weeks.

"With the availability of two vaccines now for the prevention of COVID-19, the FDA has taken another crucial step in the fight against this global pandemic that is causing vast numbers of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States each day," [said a statement](#) by FDA Commissioner Stephen M. Hahn, M.D.

The FDA decision represents another leap forward in the effort to combat the coronavirus, which has already killed [more than 300,000 people](#) in the U.S. alone. Since the Pfizer vaccine's authorization last week, health and defense officials have launched a [vast effort](#) to distribute [millions of doses](#) across the country. Health care workers and older adults were first in line for the inoculations when providers [began administering](#) them Monday.

In a push to inspire public confidence in the vaccine, Vice President Mike

Pence on Friday became the country's highest-ranking official so far to have it administered. Pence, his wife, Karen, and Surgeon General Jerome Adams all received their shots during a [televised event](#) at the White House.

Amid the flurry surrounding the Pfizer vaccine's rollout, Moderna's alternative was making steady headway in its own push toward authorization. The FDA released a [glowing analysis](#) of the vaccine on Tuesday, finding "no specific safety concerns." On Thursday, an outside panel of health care experts from across the U.S. [unanimously recommended](#) the vaccine with one abstention.

"The question that's being asked us is, 'Do we have enough evidence in hand to say that the benefits of this vaccine outweigh what at the moment, as far as severe safety issues go, are theoretical risks?'" [Dr. Paul Offit](#), panel member and vaccine researcher at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said during the hours-long recorded meeting.

"I think the answer to that question is clearly yes. I mean, the question is never 'When do you know everything?' It's 'When do you know enough?'"

Read the rest of the NPR story [here](#).

— [Colin Dwyer](#), NPR