

Discover & Deliver: Continued Vaccine Developments Offer Hope in Challenging Times



While we are nearly halfway through the first month of 2021, for many, it may simply feel like 2020 2.0 as unprecedented political developments and ever-rising COVID-19 case numbers continue to dominate the news.

To date, [10.3 million people](#) have received one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 541,000 are now fully inoculated. However, over 19 million doses of the vaccines delivered to the states have yet to be distributed.

Yet, some developments over the last week provide new cause for hope.

- **CDC guidelines:** This week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [issued new guidelines](#) to expedite the distribution process. The CDC recommended that states move forward with vaccinating individuals over 65 and people with underlying comorbid conditions. Across the country, the guidelines have trickled down to the states as individuals in this group from [California](#) to [New Jersey](#) began to receive the vaccine today.
- **Prolonged immunity:** This week, Moderna also sought to answer one of the key outstanding questions about the FDA-authorized vaccines: how long will immunity last? The company [announced on Monday](#) that they are confident the company's vaccine will provide a year of immunity from COVID-19.

- **Virus variants:** As the new variant of coronavirus spread across the country, Pfizer and BioNTech stated their vaccine appears to be effective against the new virus mutations. And even if the virus mutates beyond the scope of protection provided by the current vaccine, the [CEO of BioNTech noted](#) that “one key advantage” of the mRNA vaccine is its adaptability, stating: “We can change the sequence of the vaccine within a few days and we could deliver a new vaccine within six weeks in principle.”
- **Promising new data:** On Wednesday, a [study in the New England Journal of Medicine showed](#) that the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine created neutralizing antibodies in 90% of the trial participants. The company believes they may have the complete data from the Phase 3 trial by the end of January and could file for an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) shortly thereafter.

At a time when there is so much darkness, it’s important to keep our eyes focused on the light ahead. The developments this week serve as a reminder that the science continues to deliver promising developments, giving us hope that an end is in sight.

—Kelly Anderson, Senior Director, Health and Drug Policy, Global Innovation Policy Center