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**Department of Health
and Social Services**

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Administration of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine paused for national safety review; mRNA vaccine administration will continue in Alaska and nationally

April 13, 2021 ANCHORAGE – Out of an abundance of caution, vaccine providers in Alaska have been asked to pause all use of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine (Janssen) immediately, in accordance with [a joint announcement](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration this morning.

All upcoming appointments with the J&J vaccine are being canceled in Alaska. This is because CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is reviewing six cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in women aged 18-48 years after vaccination with the J&J vaccine. Symptoms in these patients began 6-13 days following vaccination.

ACIP will meet tomorrow, April 14, to review the relevant data. Meanwhile, administration of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will continue both in Alaska and nationally. The Pfizer and Moderna mRNA vaccines are considered extremely safe and effective.

Anyone who was scheduled to receive the J&J vaccine in Alaska this week should be aware that their appointment will be canceled or postponed. If you need help rescheduling your appointment to instead receive one of the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer or Moderna), please call the Alaska Vaccine Helpline at 1-907-646-3322 or toll-free 1-833-4-VAXLINE (1-833-482-9546).

"We take every vaccine adverse event seriously. This pause is an important part of the process that ensures the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines," said Dr. Joe McLaughlin, Alaska's state epidemiologist. "This is how our safety checks work. DHSS is notifying vaccine providers via email and phone calls this morning and is also providing information to all health care providers. Alaskans should also know this appears to be a very rare event, with six cases out of 6.8 million doses of J&J vaccine administered to date."

As of April 12, there have been 11,178 Johnson & Johnson vaccine doses administered in Alaska out of 35,500 doses allocated in the state. This vaccine has been delivered to a number of sites in Alaska, including pharmacies, outpatient clinics, federally qualified health centers and local public health authorities.

The six U.S. cases were flagged in the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS), a component of national post-licensure vaccine safety monitoring. None of these six cases occurred in Alaska. Anyone who has received the vaccine who develops severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider or seek medical care.

Health care providers are asked to report adverse events to [VAERS](#).

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