

NEWS BRIEF

President Biden Announces Plan to Purchase 100 Million Additional Johnson & Johnson Vaccines

President Joe Biden recently announced that he is directing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to purchase an additional 100 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

The White House had announced earlier in March that drugmaker Merck & Co. will help produce competitor Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine to expand its production and supply. The administration invoked the Defense Production Act to get two Merck facilities up to the standards necessary to safely manufacture the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. However, it will take months to fully equip these plants.

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"I am doing this because in this wartime effort, we need maximum flexibility. There's always a chance that we'll encounter unexpected challenges or there will be a new need for vaccine effort," Biden said. "A lot can happen, a lot can change, and we need to be prepared."

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The Biden administration and Johnson & Johnson will negotiate timelines and availability of these additional vaccines. It is expected that these additional doses will be produced later in 2021.

What This Means

This announcement bolsters the Biden administration's goal of having enough vaccines for all adults in the United States by the end of May. This plan creates flexibility for vaccine distribution and increases the supply of COVID-19 vaccines later in 2021. According to Biden, if the United States ends up with a surplus of vaccines, it will be shared with the rest of the world.

Employers should continue to monitor updates from local officials for vaccine availability. JP Griffin Group will keep you updated on any noteworthy developments.



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