



'A step forward': Contra Costa Co. expands vaccine eligibility to grocery store workers and teachers

By Cornell Barnard

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EL CERRITO, Calif. (KGO) -- There's a new push to distribute the COVID-19 vaccine across the Bay Area. One East Bay County is now giving grocery employees and other essential workers the chance to get the shot but progress still depends on the amount of doses officials can secure.

"A lot of us here have been taking extra Vitamin D and zinc, everything that's been recommended," said Jose Ruiz.

Since the pandemic began, Ruiz has been trying to stay healthy managing the Natural Grocery Company in El Cerrito. He just got word that grocery employees, teachers and other essential workers in Contra Costa County are now eligible for the vaccine.

"It's a step forward, they have the option to be safer and have this more in control than ever," said Ruiz.

But it could be several weeks before Ruiz and his coworkers can get the shot.

"How quickly we can vaccinate those individuals will depend on how many vaccines we get from the state," said Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia.

Recent allocations have not been plentiful, so for now the county is only taking appointments for second doses.

San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa says the vaccine pilot program at an SFO parking garage has been successful, an estimated 12,500 shots given over four days. 4,000 shots alone will be given on Friday.

Canepa believes he could more than double that if more doses could be secured.

"We believe we could test at capacity both garages, 10,000 a day," said Canepa.

In Marin County, a new drive-thru vaccination site will open Sunday in the parking lot of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, providing 200 vaccinations per day by appointment. Officials say the site could eventually give 1,500 doses per day.

Meantime, Jose Ruiz will wait his turn for the shot. He's been reflecting on quite a year.

"It's been scary, it's been challenging, we're honored to provide the service," said Ruiz.

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