

Fauci says U.S. vaccinations to increase in spring as Biden administration nears doses goal

By **Reis Thebault**

Feb. 7, 2021 at 7:14 p.m. EST

Public health officials and experts injected some optimism into a dreary cycle of news about the coronavirus pandemic in the United States on Sunday, sounding hopeful about the springtime availability of vaccines and doses.

Anthony S. Fauci, the nation's highest-ranking infectious-diseases doctor, acknowledged that the demand for vaccinations "clearly outstrips supply right now," but he said he expects the situation to improve in the coming months.

"I can tell you that things are going to get better as we get from February into March, into April, because the number of vaccine doses that will be available will increase substantially," Fauci said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

He said the stock will come from two sources: the already approved Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which he said are "coming off the line as quickly as we can"; and a vaccine from Johnson & Johnson, which submitted the single-shot drug to U.S. regulators on Thursday.

Full Fauci Interview: Vaccine Shortages 'A Supply-Demand Issue' | Meet The Press | NB...



Koss 2007
Apple Inc. v. Koss Corporation
IPR2021-00255

Fauci's forecast comes as the United States vaccinates more people each day. On Saturday, states administered nearly 2

Biden surprised many, even his own aides, when he said: “I think, with the grace of God, and the goodwill of the neighbor, and the creek not rising, as the old saying goes, I think we may be able to get that to 1.5 million a day.”

But the country is still in a dark place. Even though the number of new infections has been declining steadily for nearly a month, the current average — more than 120,000 cases per day — far outpaces the surges seen in the spring and summer. And still, covid-19, the disease caused by the virus, is killing thousands of Americans each day.

Virus variants have made matters more dire. Research made public Sunday found that the strain first detected in the United Kingdom is spreading rapidly across the United States, doubling in prevalence every 10 days — and even faster in Florida, the third most populous state.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated that the variant, known as B.1.1.7, will become dominant in the United States by late March.

The virus variant’s swift spread has intensified pressure on the effort to vaccinate as many people as possible, as fast as possible. One approach that experts in the United States and abroad have suggested is to use all available vaccine supply on first doses, giving a wider pool of people at least partial protection and delaying the second dose, which boosts the vaccines’ effectiveness.

Michael Osterholm, one of Biden’s coronavirus advisers, has said the strategy deserves further consideration. But on Sunday morning, Fauci said that there’s no time to study it and that the country is better off sticking to the two-dose rollout that was the subject of clinical trials.

“It’s a reasonable idea,” Fauci said. “I’m not putting the idea down. But it’s very impractical to do, it really is.”

On Twitter, Scott Gottlieb, a former commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, echoed Fauci’s optimism about the country’s increasing supply of vaccines, but said leaders may then face another problem: more doses than people willing to receive them.

“I think it’s possible that by April, supply could outstrip demand,” Gottlieb said. “We should start to focus now on that challenge.”

Annie Gowen and Jacqueline Dupree contributed to this report.