

The Inter-Mountain

Local nursing homes receive vaccines



Submitted photo Sarah Cooper, RPh, administers a COVID-19 vaccine shot to Katina Currence, a CAN, Thursday. Both are employees at Elkins Rehabilitation & Care Center.

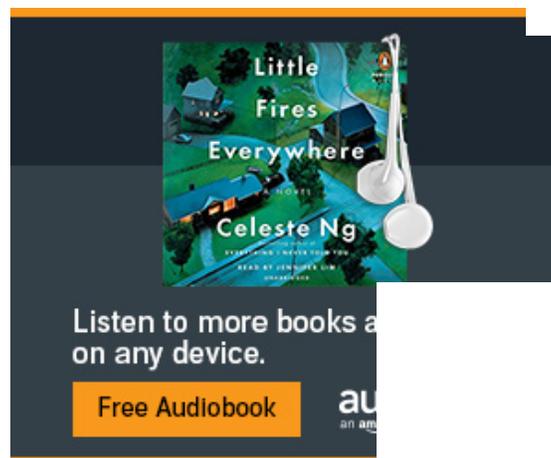
ELKINS — Nursing homes in Randolph County are receiving doses of COVID-19 vaccine, and one facility began administering vaccinations Thursday.

The vaccine arrived at Elkins Rehabilitation & Care Center at 7 a.m. Thursday, as part of Gov. Jim Justice's vaccine distribution plan.

A total of 75 ERCC residents and 40 staff members were vaccinated Thursday, officials said.

Four pharmacists and a pharmacy technician from Mace's Pharmacy in Philippi delivered the vaccine supply to ERCC and prepared it for administration, officials said. ERCC nursing administrative staff administered the vaccinations to residents and staff members.

"This is a wonderful day, and it's something we've been waiting for," said Tara Shaver, ERCC administrator. *"We've really done a fine job of keeping COVID-19 out of the facility as well as we could, but this vaccine will protect our residents and keep them safe from this terrible illness."*



The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses, and the second round of vaccinations will be given 21 days from Thursday, officials said.

Justice said Wednesday he wants all residents and staff at nursing homes and assisted living facilities in the state to be vaccinated in less than 30 days.

Phase One of the state's vaccination plan also includes vaccinating healthcare workers and first responders.

"I hope and pray that Phase 2 will begin in the early days of March," Justice said. "We'll start with all of our population over the age of 60. And then we'll drift down to anyone over the age of 50 that has some level of pre-existing conditions; 97% of the deaths are in excess of 50 years of age."

ERCC has had no cases of COVID-19 among residents at the facility since the onset of the pandemic in March, officials said. A total of four non-direct care staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 since mid-October, Shaver said.

"We think going from the spring until the middle of October without a positive case among our staff members shows just how diligent and determined our employees are in keeping our residents and themselves safe," Shaver said.

Each time one of the non-direct employees tested positive for COVID-19, the area in which they worked was professionally cleaned, disinfected and decontaminated, Shaver said. Staff members are screened for symptoms and a temperature check before entering the building each day and all in-person visitation has been suspended.

"We did everything we could to protect our residents because they are like family to us," Shaver said. "Getting this vaccine administered to our residents and staff will allow us to start getting back to normal and do the things that we love to do."

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