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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Operation FirstShot Vaccination Effort to Begin in January – Appointments are Mandatory

FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst, Pinehurst Medical Clinic and the Moore County Health Department are scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations for eligible community members this week as part of Operation FirstShot. FirstHealth and the Health Department will begin vaccination clinics next week.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services announced in late December an updated vaccination plan that aligns with new federal recommendations. The next phase of vaccinations will open in groups, starting with Phase 1B Group 1: anyone 75 years old or older regardless of medical condition or living situation.

FirstHealth’s primary care clinics and Pinehurst Medical Clinic are currently calling their 75-year-old and older patient population to schedule them for vaccination clinics that begin on Tuesday, January 12 and will run every Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the month of January. The vaccination clinics will be held at the Fair Barn in Pinehurst.

Those eligible in Phase 1B are required to have an appointment to receive the vaccine. FirstHealth vaccination clinics are only for patients who have scheduled appointments. Due to volume and vaccine availability, FirstHealth’s vaccine clinics will not be able to accommodate walk-ins. Patients are encouraged to wait to be contacted by their primary care physician’s office. Patients will be scheduled for their second dose of the vaccine after they receive their first dose at the Fair Barn location. Second doses will be scheduled 21 days after the first dose is administered.

“We know that COVID-19 represents a real risk to all residents, but especially those who are older. And with cases continuing to rise, accelerating our efforts to deliver vaccines is essential,” FirstHealth CEO Mickey Foster said. “We look forward to collaborating with partners throughout our service area to get vaccine doses to those most at risk.”

The Moore County Health Department will pre-register eligible individuals for vaccine clinics through a portal available on the Health Department website, the Moore County Government website and over the phone. All persons who are 75 years or older who may be uninsured, or do not have a primary care physician or medical home, may pre-register online at www.moorecountync.gov/shot or call (910) 947-SHOT (7468). The online portal and phone line will go live at 1 p.m. on

“To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury.”
<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>

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Friday, January 8. The phone line will be open seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Moore County Health Department will host vaccination clinics on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday during January beginning on Tuesday, January 12.

Phase 1B eligible individuals who pre-register with the Health Department will be contacted by the Health Department staff to schedule an appointment. As with FirstHealth, appointments are required to receive the vaccine and walk-ins will not be accepted. Patients will be scheduled for their second dose of the vaccine after they receive their first dose. Second doses will be scheduled 21 or 28 days after the first dose is administered depending on the type of vaccine the person receives.

“During this dangerous time in our nation’s history, I strongly encourage anyone 75 years of age or older to take advantage of this opportunity to protect themselves and their loved ones by being vaccinated with this safe, highly effective and free vaccine,” said Moore County Health Director, Robert Wittmann.

FirstHealth expects to vaccinate 500 residents per clinic day using the Pfizer vaccine product. The Moore County Health Department expects to vaccinate up to 1,100 individuals per week, depending on the availability of vaccine.

FirstHealth and Moore County Health Department officials stressed that vaccine supplies are extremely limited. Officials stated they have the capacity to vaccinate more people but are limited to the weekly allotment of vaccine received from the State. FirstHealth and the Health Department will continue to follow guidelines from the NC DHHS and will begin to vaccinate additional populations beyond the 75+ age group once the State moves to the next phase.

“We know this process may not be as fast as we’d all like, but our team of professionals is committed to getting COVID-19 vaccines to eligible people who want them,” Foster said. “We ask the public to be patient and know that the medical community is doing everything we can to administer the vaccine efficiently and effectively.”

For more details about vaccination clinics and Phase 1B at FirstHealth, please visit www.firsthealth.org/shot.