



CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

FDA gives full OK to Pfizer doses

Pentagon to make military get vaccinated

By Lauran Neergaard
and Matthew Perrone
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. gave full approval to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine Monday, potentially boosting public confidence in the shots and instantly opening the way for more universities, companies and local governments to make vaccinations mandatory.

The Pentagon promptly announced it will press ahead with plans to force members of the military to get vaccinated amid the battle against the extra-contagious delta variant. The University of Minnesota likewise said it will require its students get the shot, as did Louisiana's major

public universities, including LSU, though state law there allows broad exemptions.

More than 200 million Pfizer doses have been administered in the U.S. under emergency provisions — and hundreds of millions more worldwide — since December. In going a step further and granting full approval, the Food and Drug Administration cited months of real-world evidence that serious side effects are rare.

President Joe Biden said that for those who hesitated to get the vaccine until it received what he dubbed the "gold standard" of FDA approval, "the moment you've been waiting for is here."

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Thomas Robinson, 53, receives a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine from Jorri McDowell at his home in West Pullman on Aug. 13. The Chicago Department of Public Health offers in-home vaccinations through a program called Protect Chicago At Home. VASHON JORDAN JR./CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Will more in Illinois take shot?

By Lisa Schencker
and Madeline Buckley
Chicago Tribune

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's full approval of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine Monday may inspire some unvaccinated Illinois residents to roll up their sleeves, but the bigger impact will likely be in prompting large organizations to mandate the shots, health and legal experts say.

"I think it's more significant than people realize because I believe corporations and schools are really going to move the needle for increasing vaccinations," Dr. Mathew Philip, a primary care physician and senior vice president of clinical innovation at DuPage Medical Group, said of the vaccine gaining FDA approval. "This gives those organizations cover to do that. This is going to get us a lot closer to that herd immunity."

Until Monday, all three COVID-19 vaccines used in the U.S. had been allowed under emergency use authorizations, not full FDA approval. The Pfizer approval comes as COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to rise in Illinois, fueled by the highly contagious delta variant.

Some Illinois vaccine holdouts are already seeking shots. As of Monday, about 59% of Illinois residents ages 12 and older were fully vaccinated, and nearly 76% had received at least one dose.

Two patients contacted Dr. Laura Zimmermann, a primary care doctor at Rush University Medical Center, shortly after the FDA approval Monday morning to let her know they were ready for their shots.

A handful of patients have also told Philip, with DuPage Medical Group, that they've been waiting for FDA approval before getting

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Lightfoot: Mandate for city workers

By Rick Pearson
and John Byrne
Chicago Tribune

Mayor Lori Lightfoot will soon announce a vaccine mandate for city employees, she said Monday, though her administration is still trying to hammer out the details with unions that represent the workers.

"City employees are absolutely going to be required to be vaccinated," Lightfoot said at an unrelated news conference. "We're working through those discussions which have been ongoing now for a couple weeks with our colleagues in organized labor that represent city employees."

"But we absolutely have to have a vaccine mandate," she continued. "It's for the safety of all involved, particularly members of the public who are interacting with city employees on a daily basis. It's important for colleagues to also feel like they have a workplace that's safe. So a vaccine mandate from the city will come, and we'll make specific announcements in the coming days."

More than 30,000 people are employed by the city.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle issued an executive order Friday mandating vaccines for county employees. Chicago Public Schools will also require teachers and other employees to be vaccinated unless they qualify for a religious or medical exemption. Both the county and CPS are giving employees until

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Multiple-organ transplant recipient Phillip Hanks is comforted by his daughter Aliya Hanks as he undergoes an infusion to combat cytomegalovirus at IU Health University Hospital in Indianapolis on Aug. 13. TERRENCE ANTONIO JAMES/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

'WE NEVER KNEW THIS WAS POSSIBLE'

5-organ transplant recipient is following his purpose with faith, family

By Darcel Rockett
Chicago Tribune

Unique, one of a kind — all terms used to describe individuals and their distinctness. But did you know your insides have a doppelganger out there somewhere? For Phillip Hanks of Joliet, it was that person, someone he had never met, who would save his life.

Hanks, a father of six, received a multivisceral transplant — a simultaneous transplant of multiple organs — at Indiana University Health in Indianapolis in late April. He received a new liver, small and large intestine, stomach, pancreas and kidney.

He laughs when he's compared to the star of the show "The Six Million Dollar Man."

"He's very motivated — not just motivated, but very committed to getting himself better, to making himself as well as possible," Hanks' transplant surgeon Dr. Richard Mangus said. "I think he has a lot of things he wants to accomplish in life and he wants to stay healthy to be able to do those things."

At the age of 50, Hanks has already lived a life worthy of a television movie. Growing up the youngest of four siblings in a single-parent home, Hanks said he had to fight bullies to, from and in school regardless of whether he was growing up in suburban Streamwood or on the South Side attending public or Catholic school. Threat-



Hanks, 50, sits with his daughter Aliya, 13, during her birthday party with family and friends on July 21 in Joliet. ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

ened by gangs his senior year of high school, he got his GED, putting college on hold to contribute to the household.

Eventually, he would go into information technology after encouragement from his mother to take electronics courses at Olive Harvey College. Fast forward past a bad first marriage to a meet-cute in a Jewel store where Hanks met his current wife Tiva, a first grade teacher in South Holland. Oh, and the former IT director is still recuperating from his previous transplant.

That's right, previous transplant. The 2021 multivisceral transplant was a redo.

The first was a liver transplant in 2007 after Hanks developed hepatitis C from

what physicians believe was a re-sterilized needle used in one of his two tattoos.

Hanks' recuperation from the 2007 surgery didn't go smoothly, according to Tiva Hanks.

The new liver had an extra valve that his old liver did not and when he was in recovery, he began to bleed internally through it. That pushed him into renal failure.

"They put him on dialysis, and he was in an induced coma for about a week. He had all kinds of issues," Tiva Hanks said.

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Tom Skilling's forecast High 91 Low 75

Chicago Weather Center:
Forecast on Page 16

\$3.00 city and suburbs and elsewhere
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Illinois

from Page 1

vaccinated.

“Despite over 200 million doses of Pfizer being given, people still feel like this is an experiment because it has emergency use authorization attached to its name,” Philip said.

Patients have also told Dr. Lee Francis, an internal medicine physician and the CEO of Erie Family Health Centers, that they wanted to see the FDA grant the vaccines full approval before taking their turns.

About 31% of unvaccinated U.S. adults surveyed in June by the Kaiser Family Foundation said they would be more likely to get vaccinated if one of the vaccines gained full FDA approval.

Still, local experts say the FDA’s approval is likely to be most influential when it comes to organizations mandating the shots, rather than changing the minds of large numbers of unvaccinated individuals.

“I think it will help a few people, move them toward wanting the vaccine, but I think the biggest benefit will probably come from the comfort bigger organizations have in mandates,” said Dr. Jeffrey Linder, a primary care doctor at Northwestern Medicine and chief of the division of general internal medicine and geriatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

Already, a number of organizations have reacted. Shortly after the FDA announced its approval Monday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said she would require the vaccine for city workers, and the Pentagon said it would require shots for members of the U.S. military. President Joe Biden urged U.S. employers to require their workers to get shots, in a speech shortly after FDA approval was announced Monday.

Many — but not all — Chicago-area hospitals have announced vaccine mandates for workers in recent weeks, as have several large, Chicago-based employers, including United Airlines. Cook County and Chicago Public Schools are also requiring shots for workers.

Employers were already allowed to mandate the vaccines, even before they gained full FDA approval, though they must consider exemptions for medical or religious reasons. The FDA’s approval, however, might make some organizations feel more at ease requiring their employees to get shots, said Margo Wolf O’Donnell, co-chair of the labor and employment law group at law firm Benesch in Chicago.

“Many employers have been waiting for this moment, for the vaccine to receive full approval,” O’Donnell said. “If you want a mandate, it’s easier, it seems, for your workforce to accept it if your vaccine is fully approved.”

Those vaccine mandates may be especially powerful in boosting Illinois’ vaccination rate, as many individuals continue to decline vaccines, even with full FDA approval.

Zimmermann, with Rush University Medical Center, doesn’t think the FDA’s approval will alter the opinions of all unvaccinated individuals.

“While I think this is going to help, the FDA’s Pfizer approval is not going to be a panacea,” Zimmermann said. “I don’t foresee it opening the floodgates.”

Larry Work, 65, of Wheaton, decided not to get vaccinated, and his mind was not changed by the FDA’s approval.

Work said he is concerned about possible side effects and believes the FDA’s approval was politically motivated. He also said he has recovered from COVID-19 and believes he has immunity, though his doctor has told him to get the vaccine.

“I have a lot of questions. I have a lot of questions about the approval, even,” he said.

Patients have a number of reasons for not getting vaccinated that have little to do with FDA approval, Zimmermann said.

Some of her patients are wary of any type of medical intervention because of past negative experiences with health care systems, she said. Others are relying on misinformation. Some

worry that if they’re allergic to other medications they’ll be allergic to the vaccines, which Zimmermann said is not the case.

Many others want to wait and see how the vaccines affect those who’ve already taken them. Zimmermann tells patients that plenty of people have already been vaccinated without major problems.

“You can say now over 200 million people have gotten the first dose of the vaccine, and if the vaccine were really harmful, those would be the folks flooding our hospitals,” Zimmer-

mann said. “Instead, what we’re seeing is the folks flooding hospitals in places like Florida are those who are unvaccinated.”

The state reported 4,203 new confirmed and probable coronavirus cases Saturday, 2,007 on Sunday and 3,003 on Monday. That’s up from the first half of July, when the state was reporting fewer than 1,000 new cases each day.

In Illinois, 2,064 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 as of Sunday, more than double the number in hospitals on Aug. 1.



Sergio Sida-Valdez of Alivio Medical Center applies a bandage to Erick Hernandez after he received a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at a Chicago Department of Public Health vaccination event in Chicago on Aug. 8. **VASHON JORDAN JR./CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

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