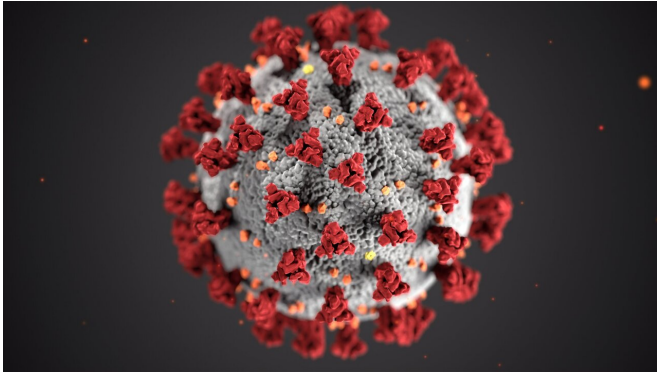


Biden says 100 million US vaccines target will be met this week

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President Joe Biden said Thursday that his goal of getting 100 million coronavirus vaccine doses administered in his first 100 days in office will be met by Friday, far in advance of the original target.

"I'm proud to announce that tomorrow, 58 days into my administration, we will have met my goal of administering 100 million shots to our fellow Americans," he said in a White House speech.

When Biden came into office on January 20, the program to stop the [coronavirus](#) pandemic through national vaccination was only just getting going.

Biden initially said he wanted 100 million doses administered within 100 days but after easily reaching that target he said he would announce a new benchmark next week.

"Eight weeks ago, only eight percent of seniors—those most vulnerable to COVID-19—had received a vaccination. Today, 65 percent of people aged 65 or older have received at least one shot," he said.

"That's key, because this is the population that

represents 80 percent of the well over 500,000 COVID-19 deaths that have occurred in America."

Despite initial skepticism about the goal of getting out a million vaccines a day, [health workers](#) are now injecting between two and three million shots daily.

The accelerating [vaccine rollout](#) is dovetailing with falling infection rates, leading to optimism that the world's biggest economy is headed for a powerful rebound.

However, with Europe in the grip of a new surge in COVID-19 cases and vaccine programs stumbling there, US health officials continue to sound warnings.

"This is a time for optimism but it's not a time for relaxation," Biden cautioned.

"Now's not the time to let down our guard. In the last week, we've seen increases in the number of cases in several states. Scientists have made clear that things may get worse as new variants of this virus spread."

Vaccines for US neighbors

Americans need to take their opportunity to get vaccinated when it becomes available, he said, addressing the large sectors of society that are so far resisting.

Former president Donald Trump only this week called directly on his supporters, who form one of the biggest groups of vaccine opponents, to embrace the shots, saying "it's a great vaccine, it's a safe vaccine."

But with [vaccine](#) production churning out in the United States, the Biden administration says it is now on the point of being able to send surplus of the AstraZeneca version to neighboring Mexico and

Canada.

Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, said that 2.5 million doses were being lined up for Mexico and 1.5 million for Canada. A total of seven million doses are stockpiled.

However, Psaki was vague on the timing.

"We are assessing how we can loan doses," she said. "It's not fully finalized yet. It's what we're working towards, to Canada and Mexico."

"Our first priority remains vaccinating the US population," she said, adding however that "the reality is the pandemic knows no borders."

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