

Discover & Deliver: Johnson & Johnson Enlists Merck to Help Produce Newly Authorized Single-Dose Vaccine



As we enter month 12 of the pandemic, there are new promising signs of hope. To date, [50.7 million Americans](#) have received one dose of the vaccine and 25.5 million have been fully vaccinated.

In the last week alone, there have been a number of encouraging developments which should help accelerate the largest vaccination campaign in U.S. history.

What's new: This weekend, the Food and Drug Administration [issued an emergency use authorization](#) (EUA) for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The single-dose vaccine can be stored at regular refrigeration temperatures, which should alleviate some of the complex distribution challenges faced with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

While many have compared the overall efficacy of the three FDA authorized vaccines, experts caution that the most important statistics are the rate at which a vaccine thwarts severe disease and death. Johnson & Johnson's clinical trial illustrated that the vaccine was 85% effective against severe COVID-19 and 100% effective at preventing death.

On Monday, the company shipped 4 million doses, with another 16 million doses to be distributed by the end of March.

What's next: Earlier today, the [Biden administration announced](#) that Merck, a long-standing leader in vaccine development, will partner with Johnson & Johnson to manufacture their vaccine. Under the agreement, Merck will use two of its manufacturing facilities to make the

“drug substance” for the vaccine and assist with the “fill-finish” phase, the final step in the vaccine manufacturing process.

The agreement illustrates the continued importance of public-private partnership – made possible by effective intellectual property (IP) protection – to our ongoing response to the pandemic.

Taken together, the innovative scientific community is hopeful that this week’s developments will turbo-charge the U.S. vaccination efforts and soon place us on the path to our new normal.

— **Kelly Anderson, Senior Director, Health and Drug Policy**

Help Steer our Equality of Opportunity Initiative

On Friday, February 26 we hosted our initial Equality of Opportunity Initiative Corporate Steering Committee meeting, joined by nearly 20 businesses from financial services to retail to technology. In addressing systemic inequalities, the Committee brings together the business community’s voices, understand the areas where each of our partners see value and bring expertise, and help continue to chart the path forward.

Why it matters: We know the business community has committed to making changes to address systemic racism, but action is the next step. The Chamber is leading in taking that action. Last June we launched our [Equality of Opportunity Initiative](#)—and since then we have hosted **100+ events**, meetings, and briefings, kicked off **10+ Chamber-wide initiatives**, and endorsed **14 bills**.

Together, the business community can increase our commitment, expand our reach, and double down on efforts to close race-based opportunity gaps.

This work is a movement, and we know there is more to do. The Chamber will continue to pursue solutions to systemic inequalities and there are still opportunities to join us in closing America’s opportunity gaps.

Want to help? There are opportunities for your company to get involved a select group of companies as part of the Steering Committee. To learn more contact Rick Wade, Chamber Senior Vice President of Strategic Alliances and Outreach (rwade@uschamber.com).

Equality of Opportunity Initiative