

Perna: Whole-of-America Operation Warp Speed Effort ‘Remarkable Feat’

By C. Todd Lopez DOD News 30 December 2020



Photo By: Lisa Ferdinando, DOD

RELATED LINKS

[DOD Announces COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan](#)

[DOD Officials Announce Distribution Plan for Initial Batch of COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

[DOD continues to increase COVID-19 test capacity](#)

[Military medicine confronts an invisible enemy](#)

With two vaccines for COVID-19 —one from Pfizer and one from Moderna — now available to Americans following emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration, Operation Warp Speed has been moving quickly to get those doses out to everyone who needs them, OWS's chief operating officer said.

"We are really doing well, in my opinion, in the distribution," Army Gen. Gustave F. Perna said during a briefing today from the Pentagon. "Over 14 million doses of vaccine have been distributed to date. And every day we push more vaccine."

Operation Warp Speed stood up just seven months ago, in May, to help bring a vaccine for COVID-19 to the American people. Since then, Perna said, OWS has been instrumental in the development of two vaccines, and Americans are now receiving those vaccines.

Perna also said OWS worked to develop manufacturing capacity for the vaccines while they were still in development — including the construction of new manufacturing facilities.

The general also explained other efforts OWS has undertaken since it stood up, to further the goal of getting vaccines and therapeutics to the American people.

"We've issued 18 Defense Production Act ratings, which allows us to prioritize materials, supplies and equipment essential to the U.S. government contracts," he said. "It puts them at the front of the line."

Also part of the OWS effort, Perna said, was the development of a system that can connect existing vaccine tracking systems across the U.S., to, among other things, ensure anybody who receives the first dose of a vaccine will get the correct second dose when needed.

"We developed and launched a new data system that connects hundreds of existing systems at the state [and] local level, to allow us to have visibility so that we can see ourselves across the entire United States," he said.

The OWS team has also ensured state and local governments are involved every step of the way in how vaccines would be distributed, Perna said.

"We've executed extensive planning, starting with the CDC putting out their playbook in September, and then extensive coordination with the state health officials every day, every week and every month since, and it continues as we go forward," he said. "We dedicated regional planning teams that are ... available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at the CDC, in support of the state and local governments."

In October, OWS announced a partnership with CVS and Walgreens where those two pharmacy chains would provide free-of-charge vaccination services to long-term care facilities across the U.S.

"Over 906 clinics [have been] conducted to date, as we ramp up to 4,000 a week," Perna said.

Now, he said, OWS has also entered into a partnership with 19 additional pharmacy chains to expand the capacity of distribution throughout the U.S.

Already, OWS has distributed more than 14 million doses of vaccine to over 10,800 locations around the U.S., and a total of 2 million doses have been

administered in the last two weeks.

"[It's] really a remarkable feat," Perna said. "Everybody collectively should be very proud — the federal government, industry, academia, state and local governments, it has been a whole-of-America approach.

U.S. Army War College News Archives