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You Might End Up Getting Your COVID Vaccine From a Dentist or Veterinarian

“If you don’t have the labor capacity to give the vaccine, you’ll never get through the pandemic.”

By [Emma Ockerman](#)

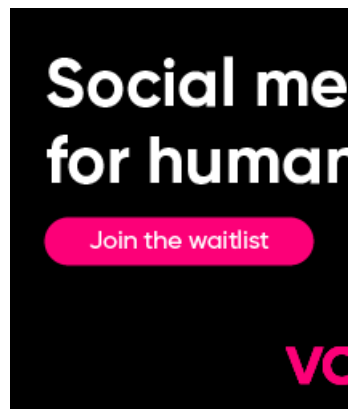
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As states try to pick up the pace in administering coronavirus vaccines, they’re asking a wide range of nontraditional workers to step in. And that means people rolling up to get their shot might find a National Guard member, a dentist, or a veterinarian on the other side of the needle.

As of Wednesday, the U.S. has distributed more than 36 million vaccine doses, but administered only about 16.5 million. There’s a host of reasons for that imbalance, including inadequate planning, but some health officials are grappling with a shortage of people able to give the shot. After all, health care workers are also busy managing the COVID-19 pandemic itself.

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Colorado Gov. Jared Polis issued an executive order earlier this month that allows certain medical workers, including doctors and nurses, to cross-train, supervise, and delegate vaccine responsibilities to a wide range of professionals where appropriate. Dentists, chiropractors, speech-language pathologists, and veterinarians are among the workers that can then take on those “delegated responsibilities” in hospitals, inpatient medical facilities, and outpatient settings if they have the proper training and education.



India is Witnessing a Crisis of Trust in its COVID Vaccines

BY PALLAVI PUNDIR

Nevada’s governor similarly determined dentists, dental hygienists, veterinarians, pharmacy interns, and more could administer the vaccine in the proper settings with the right level of training. (Some positions, including students and trainees, must be supervised while providing the shot, according to a state guidance document dated January 14.)

“We’re seeing bottlenecks in terms of the numbers of vaccinators in multiple states—it’s on the East Coast and on the West Coast,” said Anna Nagurney, a professor of operations management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who specializes in logistics and supply chains. “If you don’t have the labor capacity to give the vaccine, you’ll never get through the pandemic.”

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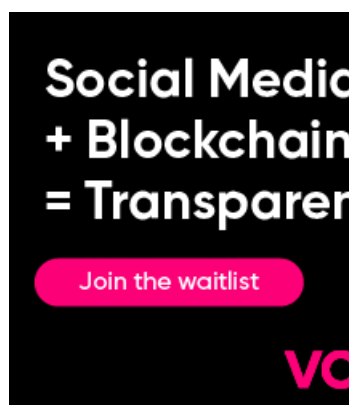
Members of the National Guard are also being called on to administer vaccines in at least 16 states and territories, according to the New York Times.

The effort to rope in as many professions as possible isn't much different from when retirees and students were asked to help battle the virus earlier in the pandemic. Nagurney noted that some European airlines even encouraged flight attendants to retrain as health care workers.

In some circumstances, professional organizations have also backed members' efforts to administer the vaccine. In October, the American Dental Association's House of Delegates passed a resolution offering support to dentists who wanted to give the shots, noting that dentists also have the training to administer injections for anesthesia, and in many states the ability to offer Botox injections or start IVs, if permitted.

One dentist—who happens to also serve in California's State Assembly as a Democrat—announced last week that he was already able to help out in a Northern California city, thanks to an emergency waiver issued by his state earlier this month.

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“Spent yesterday afternoon in #Ukiah giving #vaccinations for COVID-19. Will spend many more,” Assemblymember Jim Wood said in a [Twitter post January 13](#). “Thank you @GavinNewsom for allowing #dentists to do this. Kept fighting the temptation to say ‘are you numb yet.’”

As for veterinarians, they administer vaccines all the time—just to animals. And their profession was among the many that Utah Sen. Mitt Romney suggested be utilized to speed up vaccines nationwide, [according to Reuters](#).

“They know how to give shots, and their patients tend to bite, so they have to be extra careful,” said Nagurney.

But Michael San Filippo, a spokesperson for the American Veterinary Medical Association, noted that while a handful of states have considered allowing veterinarians to administer the vaccine, “plans and programs for vaccinating humans against COVID-19 remain fluid.”

Additionally, it’s important that vets be granted “appropriate authorization and liability protections” if they’re meant to be identified as vaccine providers, San Filippo said in an emailed statement to VICE News. The association is in touch with the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security to learn more about registration and liability protections.

“Veterinarians have consistently responded in times of need,” San Filippo said. “In this instance, veterinarians will need the appropriate authorizations and protections to do so.”

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