

Getting Las Vegas casino workers vaccinated key to economic recovery, industry officials say

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 January 2021 05:00 -

[Steve Marcus](#)

People play craps during the opening of Circa in downtown Las Vegas Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020.

By [Bryan Horwath](#) ([contact](#))

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021 | 2 a.m.

Moving resort workers to the fast lane for coronavirus vaccines could be the literal shot in the arm needed to get tourists back to Nevada, casino industry officials said.

Gov. Steve Sisolak and state health officials this week announced that resort employees and other essential workers, ranging from government employees and teachers to food-service and airport workers, would be granted access to what amounts to an express lane to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The groups of essential workers, referred to the “Tier 1 lane,” are outlined in [Nevada’s COVID-19 Vaccination Playbook Version 3](#) .

The strategy “will accelerate the consumer confidence needed to drive the visitor volume our economy depends on,” Virginia Valentine, president of the Nevada Resort Association, said in a statement.

As of 2019, more than 25% of all workers in Nevada were employed in the leisure and hospitality sectors, according to the resort association. Appointments for the Tier 1 lane workers to be inoculated are being accepted [online](#). Vaccines will be given at several locations across the Las Vegas Valley.

Candice McDaniel, a bureau chief with the state Department of Health and Human Services,

Getting Las Vegas casino workers vaccinated key to economic recovery, industry officials say

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 January 2021 05:00 -

says hospitality and food service workers are “essential to our ability as a state to be healthy and to recover.”

The department classifies a hospitality worker as any employee who has “prolonged/sustained customer interaction.” Workers at locals casinos off the Strip and in downtown would also be included in the prioritized group.

It’s clear recognition that protecting resort workers is vital to getting the state’s struggling economy back on track.

Valentine said that having a vaccinated workforce could be a “significant competitive advantage” over other cities and destinations that might not be as vigilant safeguarding their hospitality workers.

“The more Nevadans are swiftly vaccinated, the sooner our transmission rates decrease across the community,” she said. “We believe this will provide peace of mind to visitors and influence their travel decisions against other communities where the rates of vaccination among front staff would be less certain.”

Nevada has suffered record unemployment and a sharp decline in gaming revenue since casinos closed in mid-March for more than two months to help curb the spread of the virus. It’s caused the state to sink into a budget deficit of more than \$1 billion.

Still facing anemic visitor volume, a handful of resorts have yet to reopen and others are operating at reduced capacity, especially midweek.

Las Vegas visitation plummeted from more than 42 million people in 2019 to about half that number in 2020, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

COVID-19 vaccines, however, are offering a glimmer of hope that business this year could return to normal, or at least closer to normal.

Getting Las Vegas casino workers vaccinated key to economic recovery, industry officials say

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 13 January 2021 05:00 -

“The governor’s decision to expedite the front-line hospitality workforce in vaccine eligibility is very encouraging news,” Valentine said. “Protecting the front-line members of Nevada’s economic engine sends a clear message to visitors and meeting and convention organizers that Nevada is the world’s safest travel and tourist destination,” she said.

Additionally, Valentine said the new vaccine strategy would help “reduce the strain on our public health infrastructure, rapidly increasing the number of vaccinations in the community and positioning the state for a faster and stronger economic recovery.”

That will also give a boost to business and convention tourism, which dropped from 6.6 million conventioners in 2019 to 1.7 million in 2020, according to the authority.

Assuming the continued rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines goes as planned, the trade show industry will pick up steam during the second half of 2021, Steve Hill, president and CEO of the authority, [said in an interview](#) last month.

Hill said that once visitation picked up, “I think it will stay.”

Valentine added the vaccination of Nevada’s front-line hospitality workers would likely “provide added consumer confidence to leisure and business travelers who are considering their choices in where to visit or host events.”

Read more <https://lasvegassun.com/news/2021/jan/13/getting-casino-workers-vaccinated-key-to-economic/>