

FDA advisory panel endorses Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine

By [Jonathan Saltzman](#) Globe Staff, Updated December 10, 2020, 5:43 p.m.

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A vial of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine. VICTORIA JONES/PHOTOGRAPHER: VICTORIA JONES/BLO

A panel of outside experts overwhelmingly recommended the Food and Drug Administration on Thursday clear a COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech for emergency use, setting the stage for the potential rollout of the first such vaccine in the United States to start within days.

After a day-long discussion of clinical trial data, the advisory committee voted 17-4, with one abstention, for emergency use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, saying its benefits outweighed its risks in people 16 years old and older.

With the country surpassing 3,000 coronavirus deaths a day, the FDA is expected to act on the panel's recommendation quickly, perhaps as early as Friday. If the agency accepts the panel's advice, as it usually does, high-risk groups in Massachusetts — including health care workers and elderly residents of long-term care centers — could start rolling up their sleeves next week.