



By [Kristin Nelson](#) | February 12, 2021 at 2:22 PM EST - Updated February 12 at 5:48 PM

COLUMBIA, S.C. (WMBF) – South Carolina is getting some outside help for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

In a letter to the House Legislative Oversight Ad-Hoc Committee that is reviewing the distribution plan, the Department of Health and Environmental Services said that Witt O'Brien's, a leading national emergency management and disaster response contractor, has been engaged to help with the process.

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According to Witt O'Brien's website, the company specializes in crisis and emergency management for governments and corporations.

WMBF News reached out to DHEC to learn more about the contractor and the work that it is doing to help with the rollout.

DHEC explained that the South Carolina Emergency Management Division maintains an all-hazards disaster response general contract with Witt O'Brien's, and that contract has been activated in order to provide assistance to DHEC for the pandemic response.

A spokesperson for SCEMD explained that Witt O'Brien's services have been used throughout the pandemic response. The company has assisted with planning efforts and provided logistical support for personal protective equipment shipments and warehouse operations.



"Currently, two of their experienced Plans and Operations personnel are operating within the DHEC Incident Command, specifically with the Immunizations Branch," DHEC explained.

The health agency added that a third member will be joining the team soon as an information management expert.

The priorities for Witt O'Brien's include supporting efforts to get the vaccine to those who are homebound and homeless.

DHEC has told lawmakers that it is working to implement a system to help the estimated 11,000 South Carolinians who are homebound and are unable to get out to get a vaccine. DHEC hopes to implement the system in March.

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Other priorities for Witt O'Brien's are to coordinate planning initiatives for community vaccine sites, capturing and sharing vaccination best practices for distribution among DHEC regional and private vaccination partners and data collection.

DHEC said Witt O'Brien was awarded a contract with SCEMD in 2017 through normal state procurement procedures of open bid requests and as a proactive step to plan and prepare for emergencies when state and local resources can be quickly overwhelmed.

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