

Garrett County taking vaccine to community

Over one-third of Allegany County residents have received at least a first dose

CUMBERLAND TIMES-NEWS

OAKLAND — Garrett County health officials are preparing to take the COVID-19 vaccine to the community.

Over the next few weeks, the county health department is planning clinics in several communi-

ties, all part of the state's GoVAX campaign, an outreach effort aimed at promoting public confidence in COVID-19 vaccines.

"It may seem like there are vaccine clinics popping up everywhere, and that's basically true," county Health Officer Bob Stephens said in a Friday news

release. "As vaccine supply has increased, so has the offer for help from various state and federal agencies. Bringing the vaccine into the communities is the best way to make sure everyone who wants a vaccine is able to get it."

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Garrett: Johnson & Johnson vaccine to resume next week

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Vaccination clinics continue at the MEDCO Building in the McHenry Business Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Appointments can be scheduled at garretthealth.org or by calling 301-334-7698.

A GoVax Mobile Clinic will operate Saturday and again May 4-8 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. at GCC Technologies in the Southern Garrett Business & Technology Park off state Route 135. Registration at garretthealth.org is available, but not required.

The community clinics will begin Tuesday and run from noon to 6 p.m. Walk-ins will be accepted, but scheduling an appointment speeds up the process, health officials said.

The clinics include:

- May 4, Bittinger Volunteer Fire Department, 176 Brenneman Road.
- May 5, Bloomington Volunteer Fire Department, 77 N. Branch Avenue.
- May 6, Friendsville Volunteer Fire Department, 122 Walnut Street.
- May 7, Eastern Garrett Volunteer Fire Department, 401 Finzel Road.
- May 8, Crellin Senior Center, 1859 Hutton Road.

The Maryland Vaccine Equity Task Force will conduct three upcoming community clinics. Each will be held from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- May 8, Kitzmiller Community Center, 288 West Main

Street.

- May 15, Friendsville Volunteer Fire Department.

- May 22, Grantsville Medical Center, 32 Corporate Drive.

"You have so many choices now, so just pick one and get it done," Stephens said. "We need everyone to do their part."

Outdoor masks

Garrett County Public Schools said Friday face coverings would no longer be required at outdoor athletic events, "as long as spectators maintain distancing from other spectators who do not live within the same household.

The move falls in line with action taken Wednesday by Gov. Larry Hogan, who lifted the state's outdoor mask order.

Face coverings are still required for Marylanders at large outdoor ticketed events, indoors at public and private venues, and when using public transportation in the state.

Allegany County Public Schools said Friday there were no changes to its outdoor masking guidelines.

Allegany County walk-in clinics

The Allegany County Health Department will hold a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination clinic from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. May 7 at the

Allegany County Fairgrounds, 11400 Moss Ave. in Cumberland, for residents age 18 and older without an appointment.

Additional walk-in clinics will be held:

- May 4, 9 a.m. to noon at Good Will Fire Company Armory.

- May 6, 9 a.m. to noon at Mount Savage Fire Company.

Vaccination numbers

The Allegany County Health Department reported Friday that 22,646 residents (32.2% of the county population) have received at least a first dose of either the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine, while 17,310 (24.6%) are fully vaccinated. Another 2,134 residents (3%) have received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The county has recorded 6,821 cases throughout the pandemic and 207 people have died from the virus or its complications.

In Garrett County, 9,687 residents (33.4%) have received at least a first dose of a two-dose vaccine, while 7,160 (24.7%) have received both doses. Another 538 (1.9%) have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The county has had 1,981 cases and 62 people have died from the virus or its complications.

School cases

Allegany County Pub-

lic Schools said Friday four cases of COVID-19 were reported in students for the week of April 26-30. There were no staff cases.

Two staff members and 138 students were reported as quarantined.

J&J allocations resume

The Maryland Department of Health will resume allocation of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to health care providers next week.

It will be the first week the federal government has made the vaccine available since lifting a pause implemented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Food and Drug Administration last week.

"The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is one of our most important tools in the ongoing fight to prevent hospitalizations and deaths associated with COVID-19," said Dr. Jinlene Chan, MDH's Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. "By resuming allocations of this safe and effective vaccine in Maryland, we continue to bolster our ability to stay ahead of new cases and emerging variants."

The state will receive 13,600 doses. Hospitals will get 6,800; primary care practices 2,600; independent pharmacies 2,400; state correctional facilities, 1,400; and local health departments, 400.