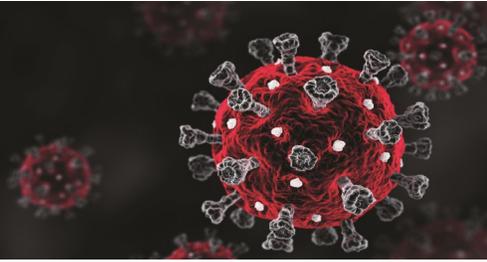


Vax Matters



June 25, 2021



News

COVID Community Corps Efforts Continue to Grow

NJDOH's COVID Community Corps has knocked on more than 150,000 doors to date, in addition to making thousands of phone calls and texts to help get the word out that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and free.



The Corps, with over 1,200 outreach workers and volunteers, go out into targeted communities across New Jersey to educate individuals about the vaccine, answer questions and provide information on nearby vaccination sites and pop-up events.

This past week, Corps members – wearing their signature blue vests – were in Jersey City, Bayonne, North Bergen, West New York, Hoboken, Union City, Passaic, Paterson, Newark, East Orange, Irvington, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick, Piscataway, Old Bridge, Woodbridge, Camden, Gloucester, Vineland, Cumberland, Trenton, Atlantic City, Howell, Middletown, Lakewood, Toms River, Brick and Jackson.

The Corps also will be at the Sussex County Fairgrounds for the Rock, Ribs and Ridges Festival, where NJDOH is hosting a vaccination site on Saturday, June 26, and Sunday, June 27. Walk-up attendees will receive discounted tickets with proof of vaccination, with other incentives offered for those vaccinated on-site.

The Corps also will be in Atlantic City on Sunday, June 27, for a vaccination event during a rodeo at Surf Stadium.

NJDOH Vaccination Ambassadors Enlisted in Effort to Close Gaps

As part of the state's efforts to continue vaccinating as many people as possible, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has designated COVID-19 vaccination ambassadors to work with 11 high-risk counties and their elected officials, community leaders, school districts and faith leaders to bring the vaccine closer to where people are.

Targeted counties include those where more than 20,000 first doses were needed to reach 70% of adults within each municipality in the county as of June 1. Towns within the counties with the largest vaccination gaps also were identified for outreach efforts.

With the increase of COVID-19 variants and efforts to reach vaccine-eligible students before they go back to school, the role of the ambassador is to look holistically at each target county and municipality and build upon existing state, county and local infrastructure and partnerships in this next vaccination phase.

"We're running a marathon, and we're in the last couple of miles, and we're exhausted, and they're going to be the most difficult ones. But they are also going to be the most satisfying ones," said Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli.

The vaccine ambassadors will focus on select municipalities in the following counties: Bergen, Burlington, Essex, Camden, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic and Union.

Key NJDOH staff have been deputized as ambassadors and regularly review municipal data to inform greater interventions; deploy mobile van and pop-up sites (such as Grateful for the Shot events) with vaccine choice and evening and weekend hours; provide resources to priority locations; and provide municipalities, local and county health departments, and community- and faith-based organizations with coverage data to help inform their actions.

Last week, New Jersey reached its milestone target of 4.7 million fully vaccinated individuals who live, work or study in the state.

"But we aren't stopping here," Commissioner Persichilli said. "We want as many people vaccinated as possible."

Canvassing is being utilized in priority locations to help boost vaccination turnout as well as to continue to educate individuals on the vaccines and address any concerns. These efforts will be backed by additional outreach by the New Jersey Vaccine Call Center (see more on page 2) and social media initiatives, such as Facebook Live events.

"Every person vaccinated makes New Jersey a safer place," Commissioner Persichilli said.



A pop-up vaccination clinic with the Mobile Command Center bus took place Thursday in Irvington Park.

Vaccination Progress

- ◆ 9.5M+ vaccine doses administered in N.J.
- ◆ 4.8M+ fully vaccinated people



Find the latest pop-up and mobile vaccination events at covid19.nj.gov/communitycalendar.

New Jersey Vaccine Call Center Expands Outreach Efforts To Boost Vaccination

When first launched in January, NJDOH's Vaccine Call Center was tasked with answering callers' questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines, helping them to register in the New Jersey Vaccine Scheduling System (NJVSS) or to find vaccination appointments at sites in the system.

Since that time, the call center's work has expanded to include targeted outreach via call, text or email to residents the center has contact information for; NJVSS registrants in priority municipalities and throughout the state; Medicaid beneficiaries and those overdue for their second dose.

Other initiatives include reaching out to businesses regarding their interest in hosting a pop-up vaccination site.

The call center, which operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day at **855-568-0545**, provides multi-lingual support services through bilingual agents and 240+ different languages available through Language Line. Additionally the



call center has a dedicated interactive voice response (IVR) system for persons with disabilities to provide special accommodations related to registering, scheduling, or day-of vaccination support.

Call center agents share second dose reminders, and alerts on topics such as upcoming walk-up vaccination events for area residents.

The call center also has a group of Advocacy Agents who are trained to answer vaccination questions with CDC information on COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness, and also have the capability to send out follow-up educational text messages tailored to a caller's specific concerns around COVID-19 vaccines.

Since it launched, the call center has received 3.2 million calls. Many calls were easily handled by the interactive voice response system; 1.4 million were answered by agents. As a result, 68,000 individuals have been registered in the NJVSS and 113,000 appointments have been scheduled to date.

My Vaccine Story

“After a year of this pandemic, young people want to return to sports and their lives and I’m sure parents want the same...but it is not over yet.

Getting vaccinated will help youth get back to sports and help everyone do what we love to do.”

-Carlos Figueroa

Coach with Real Central New Jersey Soccer Club



COVID-19: Five Reasons to Get Vaccinated

1. People who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic, such as visiting indoors without a mask with other fully vaccinated people.

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after getting the second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or two weeks after getting a single-dose vaccine (J&J).
2. While no vaccine is 100% effective, all COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the U.S. have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19.
3. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine also offers protection from getting seriously ill, even if you do get COVID-19.
4. When you get vaccinated, it may help protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
5. The combination of getting vaccinated and following recommendations to protect yourself and others provides the best protection from COVID-19.

Resources

- ◆ NJ Vaccine Call Center: 855-568-0545
- ◆ COVID-19 Vaccine Finder
- ◆ [NJ Transit VAXRIDE](#)
- ◆ COVID-19 Vaccine: Information for You and Your Family
[\[English\]](#) [\[Spanish\]](#)

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