

Community Weekly

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National Month of Vaccine Action

By Cynthia Morrow, MD, MPH

June is the “National Month of Action” to encourage more people to get vaccinated. As part of the White House’s national effort to have 70% of U.S. adults with at least one dose of vaccine by July 4th, the Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) will offer [numerous clinics across our jurisdictions](#) in upcoming weeks to make it easier than ever for the public get vaccinated to be protected from COVID-19. These clinics are in addition to the increasing number of retail pharmacies and doctors’ offices that are also offering vaccine, free of charge. Walk-in appointments are available at most RCAHD and pharmacy locations, although online pre-registration can speed up the check-in process.

To date, more than 235,000 first and second doses of vaccine have been administered in the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts. The more people who are vaccinated against this deadly pandemic, the better off we all are. COVID-19 has already claimed 495 loved ones in RCAHD- let’s work together to make sure it doesn’t take any more lives. To make it as easy as possible for people to receive their free vaccine, we have worked with community partners to schedule multiple clinics every week for the next month. Clinics are in convenient, accessible spaces, especially in areas where access to vaccine may be more challenging for some of our residents.

We are encouraged that we are making progress in the fight against COVID-19. As recently as early May, we saw around 200 cases of infection locally each week. Now those numbers have dropped to around 50 cases each week, down from over 1400 cases per week at the peak of transmission. Local hospitalizations from COVID-19 infections have dramatically dropped in the last few weeks as well.

It is good news that many people who felt that they needed to wait-and-see how the vaccine rollout fared have now been encouraged enough by the positive results to decide to get vaccinated. As people get vaccinated, confidence in the vaccines is increasing across the country, the state, and our districts.

Companies are doing their part to increase rates by offering additional encouragement for people to get vaccinated, such as Krispy Kreme’s donut offer and NASCAR’s sweepstakes for 2022 Daytona 500 tickets. Lyft and Uber are offering free rides to vaccination sites. Learn more about vaccine incentives at: <https://www.vaccines.gov/incentives.html>. As a local example, more than 80 people took advantage of the offer to get a free admission to a Salem Red Sox game when they got vaccinated on site. Similarly, at Mt. Zion AME Church, everyone getting a vaccine was offered free hot dogs with delicious homemade chili.

Helping to protect yourselves, your families and getting our communities back on track has been reason enough for many to get their shot. If you still have questions before you decide to get vaccinated, please talk to your trusted healthcare provider.

*As we move forward, starting this week, the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health District update will run once every three weeks. We will continue to keep you posted on local trends in public*

*health and the latest in COVID-19 updates. Should the situation in the community change in a way that merits communication more often, we will work to keep you informed.*