

April 2, 2021

THE SUMTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES UPDATE ON COVID-19 VACCINE ACTIVITIES



Media Contact:

Lauren McCurdy
DLCHD60PIO@flhealth.gov
352-569-3102

Bushnell, FLA - The purpose of this press release is to provide an additional update concerning COVID-19 vaccination activities in Sumter County.

Concerning vaccinations, 64,002 people over the age of 65 have received a vaccination in Sumter County. The total population of over 65 adults in Sumter County is approximately 80,000 persons. Therefore, we have an estimated vaccine coverage of 75-80% among this age group. While there is no standard definition to classify "herd immunity" as concerns COVID-19 and this percentage varies depending on the infectiousness of the disease being referred to, this level of vaccine coverage concerning COVID-19 indicates substantial and significant coverage of our elders. Our hospitalization data is also improving, with a census of COVID-19 patients at both University of Florida Hospitals in the low thirties; a decrease of roughly 75% from the hospital census at the peak of the outbreak.

Accordingly, I have endorsed proposals that previous limitations, largely concerning recreational and civic activities, be progressively relaxed. Persons who are 3-4 weeks post second dose (or 3-4 weeks past their first dose if they received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine), should feel comfortable that they are protected. This said, I recommend that when in crowds or indoor activities, you continue to wear a face covering. I also recommend a face covering if traveling through airports, or other forms of mass transportation and at destinations where the vaccination coverage is less than the local situation here. Finally, I recommend that upon return from travel, you should self-monitor for several days and not participate in civic or recreational activities if you are knowingly ill. Those who are ill with COVID-19-related symptoms should consider COVID-19 testing, regardless of their vaccination status.

The Sumter County Health Department has given 9,777 vaccinations. Upon completion of the second doses for those scheduled in April, we will likely exceed 10,000 vaccinations given. Additionally, almost 80,000 doses have been distributed by the Sumter County Health Department to various community partners who are planning expansion of their vaccination activities to include younger age groups, consistent with the Governor's recent Executive Order https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/orders/2021/EO_21-79.pdf

I know that many persons yet to be vaccinated would prefer the ease of the single dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Unfortunately, I do not know when or if the Sumter County Health Department will receive Johnson and Johnson vaccine. The Sumter County Health Department currently has the Moderna vaccine, which is also highly effective. I recommend that persons now eligible for vaccination receive a vaccine as soon as possible, as we still have COVID-19 cases occurring in Sumter County.

The Florida Department of Health recently reported an increase in the number of COVID-19 deaths in Sumter County residents from 242 to 257. This increase reflects an iterative and dynamic process of verifying and classifying deaths as COVID-19-related (or not) by the Sumter County Health Department and the Florida Department of Health's central office in Tallahassee. As the circumstances surrounding an individual death become clear, previous deaths may be attributed to COVID-19 infection (and occasionally, vice versa). This verification/classification process takes time - from when someone unfortunately passes away to understanding the cause(s) of death and, in this context, reporting COVID-19 deaths to the public. The increase in deaths do not reflect a recent outbreak but rather, the processes just mentioned.

The Sumter County Health Department will continue our disease surveillance activities county-wide and will focus our efforts to complete second doses for those vaccinated by us. We will also be expanding our vaccination efforts throughout the county and to younger age groups.

My office may be reached at 352-569-3102 if there are questions regarding this press release.

Respectfully,

Sanford Zelnick D.O., M.S.

Director

Sumter County Health Department

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.