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PRESS RELEASE

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Chester County Health Department Provides COVID-19 Update

Updates on percentage vaccinated, revised masking guidance, vaccine sites and changes to COVID-19 dashboard reporting

WEST CHESTER, PA_ Chester County Health Officials announced today that 83 percent of all eligible Chester County residents (age 12 and above) are partially or fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Taking it one step further, of those age 18 and over (which follows the Governor’s benchmark), 92 percent are partially or fully vaccinated. According to county health officials, these figures indicate that Chester County will exceed the target of 70 percent fully vaccinated before June 28th, the final date that the Governor confirmed for lifting the mask mandate.

These numbers includes data recently received from the Philadelphia Department of Health, of Chester County residents who travelled to Philadelphia to receive the vaccine.

“The people of Chester County are doing their part and the COVID-19 vaccine is working,” said Jeanne Franklin, Director of the Chester County Health Department. “The vaccine is helping us fight this long, drawn out deadly virus, and it is evident in our consistently low seven-day incidence and positivity rates.”

Mask-wearing guidance

Given the low incidence and positivity rates, the Chester County Health Department has revised its guidance on mask wearing for summer camps, and in anticipation of the start of school at the end of August.

“We understand that the CDC and the PA Department of Health are noting that children under the age of 12 should continue wearing masks in certain settings, but we also appreciate that this guidance is covering a national and a state-wide perspective,” added Jeanne Franklin.

“We are looking at the local picture, and we believe that Chester County can remain safe with masks being optional, rather than mandatory, for settings such as summer camps.”

With regard to the return to school at the end of the summer, the Chester County Health Department will continue to monitor all COVID-19 activity through to August and, “if the incidence and positivity rates remain at present levels, then our guidance for school officials will be to start the school year with no extra mitigation measures needed, including masks,” said Franklin.

“Of course, the decision for any COVID-19 mitigation measures is ultimately the responsibility of each school district.”

COVID-19 vaccine clinics

With both vaccine numbers high and vaccine supply readily available, the Chester County Health Department will reduce its COVID-19 vaccine clinics locations over the coming month. The Longwood Gardens drive-thru site will complete operation on June 30th, and the Exton Square Mall clinic will remain open until July 18th. The three senior centers that have served as vaccine clinics will also wind-down operations: Oxford Senior Center on June 21st; Brandywine Valley Active Aging Center (formerly Coatesville Senior Center) on June 25th; and Phoenixville Senior Center on June 29th.

Marian Moskowitz, Chester County Commissioners’ Chair, said, “The support of all three senior centers, as well as the Brandywine and Jennersville YMCAs, West Chester University, Kimberton and Kennett Square Fire Companies, Longwood Gardens and PREIT (owners of Exton Square Mall) has been tremendous. The leaders there all offered their facilities to help in our efforts to take the vaccine to many places in the county, and for that we are grateful.”

Commissioner Josh Maxell noted, “Many community organizations and places of worship helped us in scheduling pop-up and mobile clinics throughout the county. Chester County communities rallied, they encouraged neighbors and friends to get vaccinated, and their commitment has really made an impact.”

As the Chester County Health Department vaccine clinics wind down, health officials will continue to support all other vaccine providers as needed, as well as mobile clinics and at-home vaccines. The vaccine will remain available at no cost for low-income populations and those without insurance, through the Health Department’s regularly scheduled immunization clinics.

“All three vaccines are now readily available at pharmacies, urgent care facilities, and through family medical practices, which means that first and second doses are easily accessible, even if the eligibility age for the vaccine lowers,” said Commissioner Michelle Kichline.

“But if needed, our Health Department can ramp-up vaccine operations again to meet demand.”

Before COVID-19 hit Chester County, the Chester County Health Department coronavirus website began providing information to the public, as well as toolkits and guidance for long-term care facilities, schools, and all other stakeholders. As the pandemic progressed, layers of information were added to the website, including daily dashboard updates, links for COVID test sites, printable resources, and eventually, vaccine appointments.

From today, the Chester County COVID-19 dashboard, found at www.chesco.org/coronavirus, will be updated on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. “Data will remain on the website for the foreseeable future, but with the lower numbers being reported, daily updates are no longer necessary,” said Jeanne Franklin.

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