

COVID-19 Conversations with Community Partners

December 9, 2020

Questions and Answers

1. Does the Health Department have a plan to vaccinate older people?

The Health Department continues to work on vaccination plans. People over the age of 65 with health conditions are in group 1c. That first group has several priority tiers within it. There will be a variety of immunization offerings throughout the community to reach the various groups. The planning priority is getting the initial groups done first.

2. When the deployment of vaccine occurs, it was asked that Northport be a place for distribution.

The Health Department is looking at various locations within the entire county. There are several factors that go into choosing sites. If the community knows of a good location for drive through clinics, please let Michelle Klein know.

3. There will be a community COVID testing happening on Friday, December 11th at the United Methodist Church's community center in Lake Ann between 10 and 2 pm. There was a press release that was issued earlier in the week. Pre-registration is encouraged as it helps the line move forward. More information can be found by visiting <https://honumg.info/LakeAnn>

4. If anyone is interested in helping at our immunization clinics, please contact Michelle Klein to be placed on a list.

5. Any plans for education on the vaccine to encourage those people that are hesitant about getting the vaccine? Studies have shown that effective vaccination rates increase when the public is informed that they have a vaccine dose reserved for them and you are ready to schedule their appointment.

Because the vaccine is still in clinical trials, the Health Department has not received a vaccination information sheet (VIS) to know how to educate the public. We anticipate that the first batch of vaccine is due to arrive sometime this month. We do not know the quantity and our initial target population are those direct care workers, then nursing homes, and move forward from there. The Health Department uses that type of service messaging for other programs and agrees that this type of messaging does increase the client's usage of services.

6. What is the State looking for in regard to the extension of the MDHHS orders?

The State is looking to see if given more time, trends continue to flatten or decrease and the number of patients in the hospitals are stabilizing. If this happens, then it is likely reopening will occur slowly. It is important to note that November was the worst month of cases since the pandemic started.

7. Could you give any kind of overview of how increased positive numbers are impacting schools and the various approaches being used to minimizing the spread?

Every school is different, and each are doing the right approach to meet their needs. The outbreaks that were being seen when school was in session involved the extracurricular activities. The schools are doing a great job in their respective return to in person setting, their measurers are working in preventing the spreading within the school setting. Quarantining, not spread, was/is the biggest issue for the schools.

8. Isn't this area expecting to receive the Moderna vaccine for our population size, which will be the second vaccine scheduled to get FDA approval?

Yes, while this is the case, the Health Department does not want to rely on just one vaccine manufacturer.

9. Will you have weekly updates now that we are in a more serious situation with positive numbers increasing and vaccine will be available soon?

This is a good point, but the issue always comes back to time. We will talk with Lisa Peacock about going back to weekly community calls.

In closing, we would like to thank everyone for their time and efforts in the community safe. The Health Department provides regular updates. If you would want to be added to our emailing list, please contact Michelle Klein at mklein@bldhd.org