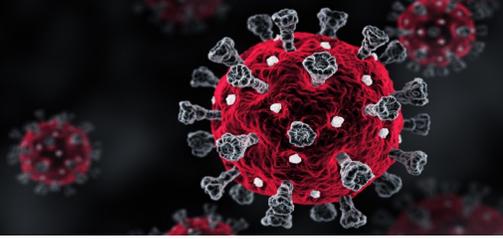


# Vax Matters



Oct. 8, 2021/Oct. 15, 2021



## News

### Pregnant Individuals Urged To Get Vaccinated

COVID-19 cases in symptomatic, pregnant individuals are twice as likely to be admitted to intensive care or be put on a ventilator, and have a 70% increased risk of death.



The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued an urgent health advisory to increase COVID-19 vaccination among individuals who are pregnant, recently pregnant (including those who are lactating), or thinking about becoming pregnant to prevent serious illness, death and adverse pregnancy outcomes.

The advisory strongly recommends COVID-19 vaccination either before or during pregnancy because the benefits of vaccination for both pregnant individuals and their fetus or infant outweigh known or potential risks. According to CDC data, only 31% of pregnant individuals have been vaccinated against COVID-19, and rates vary markedly by race and ethnicity.

NJDOH is producing public service announcements with OB-GYNs to help boost awareness and encourage vaccination among pregnant individuals.

### Teen Virtual Town Hall

Join our virtual town hall at 6 p.m., October 19, as NJDOH special advisor Dr. Meg Fisher discusses COVID-19 vaccines, benefits, and myths vs. facts. This event is especially for teens, but all are welcome! Register at <http://bit.ly/3mBEDHh>.



### Pfizer Vaccine Recipients, Get Your Booster Dose Now

With Pfizer vaccine booster doses now available, plan to get one today if you are eligible as colder weather (meaning more time indoors) and holiday planning approaches.

With the Delta variant accounting for about 99% of all COVID cases and with the occurrence of some breakthrough cases, booster doses offer supplemental protection for you and your family.

You are eligible for a Pfizer booster shot if it has been at least six months since you got your second dose of the Pfizer vaccine and you are:

- Age 18+ and work or live in high-risk settings – such as teachers or healthcare, restaurant or grocery workers;
- Age 18-64 and have underlying medical conditions like asthma, cancer, diabetes or heart conditions;
- Age 65+; or
- A long-term care resident.

While booster doses for those who received the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are not yet available, a federal advisory panel is meeting to discuss authorization next week.

As additional Pfizer recipients become eligible for a booster dose in the coming weeks, be sure to schedule your shot now.

There are over 1,900 vaccination sites across New Jersey – more than 1,300 of which offer the Pfizer vaccine. Many have walk-in availability and extended hours. To find a vaccination site and book an appointment, visit [covid19.nj.gov/finder](https://covid19.nj.gov/finder) or call the state's Vaccine Call Center at 1-855-568-0545.

*(See Booster on page 2)*

### Ambassador Initiative Provides Model Approach

When New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) Commissioner Judith Persichilli deployed key department staff as COVID-19 County Ambassadors in June, the goal was to work across communities and organizations to boost vaccinations in counties with low rates.

Since then, county ambassadors and their community partners have achieved 92% of their goal of vaccinating 70% of adults in all municipalities within those counties, and the initiative has offered many public health lessons going forward.

*(See Initiative on page 2)*



*If you have had the Pfizer vaccine, are age 18+ and work at a job that puts you at risk for COVID-19, you may be eligible for a Pfizer booster dose.*

### Vaccination Progress

◆ 12.3M+ total doses administered

◆ 5.9M+ fully vaccinated people



**Find the latest pop-up and mobile vaccination events at [covid19.nj.gov/communitycalendar](https://covid19.nj.gov/communitycalendar).**

## Don't Forget To Get Your Annual Flu Shot

In addition to the COVID-19 vaccine, the annual flu vaccine is important to protect the health of our communities.

Now is also the time to get your flu shot, which is recommended for everyone six months and older.

The flu vaccine can reduce flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and can help to conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter, making it more important than ever to get a flu vaccine.

It is the best way to protect yourself and others – especially those who are particularly vulnerable to both COVID-19 and influenza, such as older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time, and there are sites offering both across New Jersey.

Flu vaccines are safe and effective and are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, urgent care centers and pharmacies.

Low- or no-cost flu vaccinations will be available through local health departments, Federally Qualified Health Centers and some nonprofit organizations.



I Have The Power To Protect My Family.

Get a Flu Shot.



PowerToProtectNJ.org

## It's Trenton vs. Paterson in Vaccination Challenge

The cities of Trenton and Paterson are going head to head in a vaccination challenge.

Whoever has the highest overall vaccination rate and the highest 12- to 17-year-old rate by the end of the year has to send the challenger a gift that represents their city.

"Both mayors have already done a tremendous job to boost vaccination coverage in their cities," said Commissioner Persichilli in issuing the chal-

lenge to Paterson Mayor Andre Sayegh and Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora. "But we still have more work to do."

What's at stake in addition to boosting vaccination rates?

The winning city's first responders will be fed by the losing side.

You can follow the progress on the dashboard at [covid19.nj.gov](https://covid19.nj.gov).



Commissioner Persichilli joins Paterson Mayor Sayegh during the contest announcement last week. (Photo courtesy of St. Joseph's Health)

*(Booster from page 1)*

For parents of 12- to 17-year-olds, it is important to get them vaccinated now that they are back in school, especially to help protect other younger children who are not yet eligible for COVID-19 vaccination.

Don't forget to get your flu shot as well, which can be given at the same time as your COVID-19 vaccine (*see story above*).

Let's all do our part to protect our families and each other and ensure a safe and healthy holiday season. Get vaccinated, and if eligible, get your Pfizer booster dose today.

*(Initiative from page 1)*

Chief among them: The ambassador initiative has reached across institutional lines to forge collaborations.

The initiative has strengthened the public health infrastructure going forward through building strong partnerships among state and local health agencies, federally qualified health centers, hospitals, community and faith leaders, elected officials, pharmacies and business leaders who have brought vaccine clinics to where people are, particularly in underserved and vulnerable communities.

The targeted counties initially included Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic and Union, with the later addition of Atlantic.

**To date, N.J. reports more than 12 million total vaccine doses have been administered.**

Flexibility and innovation were key in working to reach the goals, as were community outreach and canvassing efforts.

A priority focus of the initiative was making vaccine clinics convenient and accessible to where people live, work and play. School-located and school-endorsed clinics were also important in vaccinating 12- to 17-year-olds.

Work continues in some municipalities that have not yet reached the overall goal such as Lakewood, East Orange and Camden, as well as the ongoing push to vaccinate 12- to 17-year-olds.

As the state continues to work through the COVID-19 pandemic and any other health challenges ahead, the lasting bonds developed through the ambassador initiative have strengthened and solidified a strong public health foundation for the future.