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North Country Responds: Regional COVID19 Update 03/19/21

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC), as the North Country's Regional Public Health Network, is committed to providing the community with regular updates on COVID-19 response in the North Country.

What happened last week:

In the continued effort to coordinate vaccinations for homebound North Country residents, including senior citizens, the Public Health Network (PHN) has been receiving self-referral lists from the State 2-1-1 call center, and patient and client lists from regional home health and human services partners including AV Home Care Services, Tri-County Community Action Program, Granite State Independent Living, and the Grafton County Senior Citizens' Center. PHN staff have been calling individuals on these lists to determine their interest in vaccination and identify any accommodations needed to make accessing vaccination easy, including connection to transportation services and scheduling in-home vaccination appointments. The PHN has been working with other established vaccine-providing partners in the region, including Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital (UCVH), Littleton Fire & Rescue, Androscoggin Valley Hospital (AVH), Regency Homecare, and Coos County Family Health Services (CCFHS), to connect these individuals to an accessible vaccine appointment. So far, the initiative to vaccinate the region's homebound population has reached approximately 975 people for first dose shots.

We are now almost two weeks into the launch of Phase 2A (school and childcare staff), while Phase 1B (65+ and medically vulnerable) continues. This week, clinics for Phase 1B groups were conducted by 45th Parallel EMS, Lancaster EMS, Berlin and Gorham Fire



Departments, as well as the Public Health Network team. These partners provided vaccinations for residents at age-restricted housing facilities and to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Gorham and Littleton, Easter Seals in Lancaster, Northern Human Services in Berlin, and the Berlin Housing Authority. Phase 2A clinics for K-12 school staff and childcare workers were hosted by AVH and Coös County Community Health Services, Gorham Fire & Rescue, Weeks Medical Center and Littleton Fire & Rescue, covering school Districts and childcare centers across the region. Ongoing staffing support was provided by 22 members of the Northern NH Unit Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), who covered 29 clinic shifts across deployments.

What you need to know:

Phase 2B opened on Monday, March 22nd. If you're 50 years of age or older or were qualified in Phase 1 but have not yet been vaccinated, you are now eligible for your COVID vaccination and can schedule an appointment by going online to vaccines.nh.gov or calling 2-1-1.

If you are a childcare worker in Phase 2A who does not have a designated clinic, you can also get a vaccine appointment via the vaccines.nh.gov website or the 2-1-1 call line.

Good news, we are seeing an increase in vaccine allocation coming into the region! This is reflected in more available appointments, and an expedited process on the user end for securing a COVID shot.

If you are qualified for vaccination or your phase is coming up, vaccine provider partners across the North Country are standing by and ready for you— #SleeveUp! Do your part and get your shot! Do you have questions about the vaccine or side effects? Go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the facts or reach out to your trusted healthcare provider with your questions.



Shoutout to partners:

Our shoutout this week goes to Ammonoosuc Community Health Services (ACHS), another partner who has stepped up to be a COVID vaccine provider in the North Country!

ACHS is the first Federally Qualified Community Health Center (FQHC) in the State to be designated by the US Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) as part of their Health Equity Vaccine program, which strives to ensure equal vaccine access to the country's most vulnerable populations.

The HRSA Vaccine program for ACHS' service area focuses on creating increased vaccine availability for seniors over 65 years and those who live in rural areas. Kicking off the program with a vaccine clinic held at their Woodsville site on March 6, ACHS now has clinics lined up throughout March and April at their Woodsville, Whitefield, and Warren locations. If you are qualified in the current phases to get vaccinated, you can make an appointment at one of Ammonoosuc Community Health Services' available locations/time slots by registering online: vaccines.nh.gov, calling 2-1-1, or contacting an ACHS patient navigator by calling (603) 444-2464.

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) is a non-profit public health organization based in Littleton that collaborates with health and human services providers serving northern New Hampshire. Please direct any questions regarding the regional response to COVID-19 to COVID19@NCHCNH.org. To reach the North Country COVID Response line for general inquiries, call (603)259-4369 during business hours, M-F from 8 am – 4:30 pm.

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Longtime White Mountains Regional High School (WMRHS) cafeteria staff member, Jody Whiting, holds up her new “I got my COVID-19 vaccine” sticker as she waits out the post-vaccination observation period in her vehicle at the Saturday drive-thru clinic for K-12 school staff at Week’s Medical Center. While she has done her part to feed students remotely and at school throughout the pandemic period, Whiting can’t wait for things to get back to normal! Learn more about local vaccination clinics and other COVID response efforts at NCHCNH.org.



As a Northern NH Unit Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer, a recent deployment brought retired Weeks Medical Center physician, Dr. Wendy Muello, back to her old stomping grounds to provide K-12 school staff vaccinations for the White Mountains Regional and Groveton school districts on Saturday, March 13. To learn more about the Northern NH COVID-19 Response by the North Country Health Consortium go to NCHCNH.org.