

COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 9 – February 2, 2021



“I am so excited! I feel as though I won the jackpot,” exclaimed an 89-year-old, retired MCPS substitute teacher for over 40 years, after driving herself to an Adventist clinic for her COVID-19 vaccine. “Very well staffed at Quince Orchard High School,” reported another newly-vaccinated 76-year-old friend. They were eager to share their experiences, while marking their Feb. calendars for dose #2. Even my Gaithersburg cousin, who pre-registered through the county’s newly-simplified vaccine portal, said, “I feel good about filling out the form!” Statewide, the average daily rate for shots given is nearly 25,000/day, representing a 70% increase since mid-January, Governor Hogan reported Feb. 1.

However, many residents’ frustration with the vaccine rollout is mounting. At the Jan. 26 Council meeting, Councilmember Craig Rice observed that many older residents are blessed with time, high-speed Internet service, multiple access tools; and friends-and-family navigators, any one of which could technically ease appointment on-ramps. But these are advantages that essential workforce members may lack, further reinforcing systemic inequities in vaccine distribution. “The whole system is set up inequitably from the start,” Rice said. After navigating on his mother’s behalf on Jan. 25 – launch day for a state-run pilot at designated Giant Food stores – Rice’s four-hour queue time on the Giant website did not yield an appointment for her.

Thankfully, February opens with several positive developments that may soon benefit many residents:

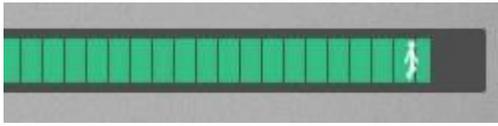


- For the next three weeks, **dose allotments will be 16% higher** in each state, per week, the Biden administration announced Jan. 26. Accordingly, Maryland will soon launch several mass-vaccination sites. (See related article, p. 3)

- Since federal vaccine distribution began last Dec., states and counties were increasingly frustrated by the barely-1-week dose allotment heads-up. **States will receive 3 weeks’ notice**, the White House COVID-19 Response Team (left) said Feb. 1.

- The Biden administration will support ramped-up manufacturing of a self-administered, over-the-counter **COVID-19 home diagnostic test kit** that provides highly-accurate results to a user’s smartphone in 20 minutes or less; details in a Feb. 1 Dept. of Defense [press release](#).
- New clinical trial results from **two more COVID-19 vaccine candidates** would appear promising: **(1)** Johnson & Johnson/Janssen’s COVID-19 vaccine yielded 72% efficacy among U.S. trial participants, the company announced Jan. 29. This is a single-dose vaccine, with no ultra-cold storage requirements. On Feb. 1, CDC Director Rochelle Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., said that if this vaccine receives Emergency Use Authorization by FDA, then CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices would issue evidence-based guidance about optimal population-based use of the Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J vaccines. **(2)** Montgomery County-based Novavax reported 89% efficacy in its COVID-19 vaccine U.K. Phase 3 trial, with a positive showing against new strains from the U.K. and South Africa (where they also have trials ongoing). Novavax previewed these trial results on Jan. 28, and will soon submit data to peer-reviewed publications. Meanwhile, their U.S. phase 3 “PREVENT-19” trials began in late Dec. 2020.
– Lee Rucker Keiser, MSPH, Editor

MoCo VACCINATION SITE NAVIGATION MATRIX

Clinic Host / Location(s)	Websites for COVID-19 Vaccine Pre-Registration and/or Appointments	Comments / Navigation Tips (as of Feb. 1, 2021)
Montgomery County, MD Department of HHS Primary Sites Include: White Oak Rec Center Richard Montgomery H.S. Quince Orchard H.S.	Updated vaccine information & pre-registration portal: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/ Pre-registration OPEN for Priority Groups I-A, I-B, I-C. Vaccinating: I-A (all tiers), and I-B, age 75+ Everyone can complete a COVID-19 Community Survey: https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/survey.html	To receive periodic updates, and eventually an invitation for an appt., pre-register online. For help with pre-reg form, call: (240) 777-2982 NEW! Text: MONTGOMERY VAX to 468311 (for updates only)
Other Local Clinics	Most open to persons age 65+ and Priority Groups:	I-A, I-B, I-C
Adventist HealthCare Takoma Park Shady Grove / Rockville	https://www.adventisthealthcare.com/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine/	Can be placed on location-specific “Alert Me” wait list; pop-up chat box for help.
Giant Food Bethesda, 20814 Burtonsville, 20866 Gaithersburg, 20878 Hyattsville (E-W Highway, P.G. County), 20782 Silver Spring, 20910	https://giantfood.com/pages/covid-info 	Began Jan. 25; queues of 4-5 hours that day. Progress meter (at left) is visible, to gauge estimated wait. If admitted, then one has 10 minutes to make an appt. for one eligible person.
Holy Cross Health Silver Spring, 20910 Germantown, 20876	https://www.holycrosshealth.org/health-and-wellness/covid-19-vaccine/schedule-appointment Open to Priority Groups I-A and I-B	Appts. released at 4:00 p.m. some weekdays. Must fill registration form <u>each</u> time at sign-up, but openings fill within a few minutes.
Johns Hopkins Medicine -- Suburban Hospital, Bethesda, 20814 -- Health Care Center, Germantown, 20876	https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/maryland.html OPEN to recent Hopkins patients, age 65 and older; and certain pre-selected MCPS employees, who will hear directly from Hopkins (per MCPS staff <i>Bulletin</i> , Jan. 27).	If a Hopkins patient within past 2 years, preregister via Hopkins’ MyChart portal. <u>Coming in Feb.</u> : Community members’ online & phone registration.
Kaiser Permanente Kensington, 20895 Shady Grove, 20850 Silver Spring, 20904	https://insider.kaiserpermanente.org/covid-vaccine-information-for-maryland-residents/?kp_shortcut_referrer=kp.org/mdvaccine	For KP members only . Age 75+ to be contacted by KP directly; others may complete “Vaccine Interest” form. Updates via message, call: 1-855-550-0951.
MedStar Montgomery Olney, 20832	https://covidvaccine.medstarhealth.org/vaccine-form	“Vaccine request form” is clear and simple; but it does not guarantee an appt.
Safeway Rockville, 20853 Wheaton, 20902	Safeway’s portal is shared by many grocery chains. https://www.mhealthappointments.com/covidappt	Expected to start Feb. 1. Easy navigation. <u>Hint</u> : enter zip code of either Safeway.
State-sponsored clinics, including: Six Flags (Upper Marlboro), Baltimore Conv. Ctr., M & T Bank Stadium	Open to MD residents eligible per state’s <u>current</u> Priority Groups; online appointment sign-up coming soon at: https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine	May start in mid-Feb. Confirm eligibility at: https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/vaccine/

Matrix compiled by Lee Rucker Keiser, M.S.P.H., Senior Fellow, Montgomery County Council (Central Office), Feb. 1, 2021

SPOTLIGHT: MASS VACCINATION CLINICS

In mid-February, Maryland plans to launch large-scale community vaccination sites (for persons in the current, open Priority Groups) at **Six Flags America** (Prince George’s County) and the **Baltimore Convention Center**; and later the M&T Bank Stadium. Below are examples of similar clinics in operation across the U.S.

San Diego: With a goal of providing 5000 vaccinations daily, SD County stood up on Jan. 11 a vaccination site

(right) at the Padres’ parking lots adjacent to Petco Park. Within two weeks, they had performed over 58,000 vaccinations. The County’s “mass-vax” partners are Univ. of California-San Diego Health, and the “community-minded” San Diego Padres. Partners’ roles – including calculations to optimize workflow and vehicle spacing – are discussed in a Jan. 28 article, **Rapid Implementation of a Vaccination Superstation**, in *JAMA (Journal of the AMA)*:



<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2776038>

On Feb. 2, San Diego will open another superstation at a La Mesa shopping mall; and a smaller clinic (able to provide up to 500 doses daily) at a college in San Ysidro.

Boston: At Fenway Park (starting Feb. 1) and Foxborough, MA’s Gillette Stadium (since Jan. 18), COVID-19 vaccine administration is managed by CIC Health, a health tech company. Fenway will provide 500 vaccinations per day, working up to 1250/day. For each location, their online *Vaccination Guide* is clear, logical (e.g., “I’ve arrived at Fenway Park, now what?”), and simple to follow: <https://www.cic-health.com/fenway>



Detroit: Since Jan. 13, Detroit (pop. 664,000) has operated a drive-through clinic at the TCF Center’s (formerly Cobo Hall) underground parking lot. Hours: 8 a.m.-7 p.m. weekdays. Appointments are made by telephone – not online – with 80 operators standing by. The clinic grew from 400 appointments/day, to 1,000/day the following week. Meanwhile, on Jan. 28, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan announced that the city’s weekly vaccine allotment

will soon triple to 15,000 first doses, up from 5,100 doses. Many city residents are at greater risk, versus suburban residents, for COVID-19: midtown Detroiters’ average life expectancy is 69 years; two-thirds of older adults live in medically-underserved areas, and 39% of older adults have at least three chronic conditions, according to Wayne State University’s [2020 analysis](#) of Detroiters’ premature deaths.

[Photo credits: San Diego: health.ucsd.edu TCF Center: detroitmi.gov]

SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNICATION & VACCINE HESITANCY



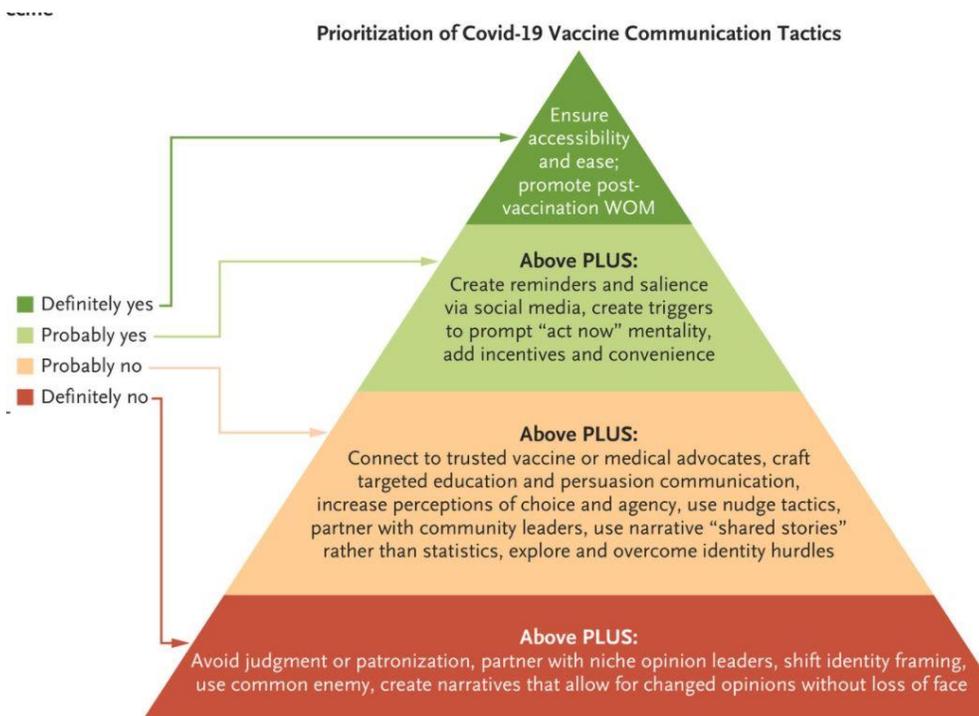
Maryland unveiled its #GoVaxMD campaign on Jan. 29, to help boost support for and understanding of the COVID-19 vaccines. In a 2-minute [launch video](#), Maryland vaccine “ambassadors” share why they got vaccinated, and how the vaccine can help. As vaccine acceptance evolves, three new studies are important for future campaigns.

First, the Census Bureau’s *Household Pulse Survey*, released Jan. 27, found that 24% of respondents who had not yet been vaccinated said they would “probably not” or “definitely not” get a COVID-19 vaccine. Persons aged 18-44 had the lowest likelihood, relative to older persons, with only 41% saying they would “definitely” receive a vaccine.

Further, only 47% of Hispanics, and 30% of non-Hispanic Blacks, said they would “definitely” get a vaccine. Based on insurance status, among persons not yet vaccinated, 56% of insured adults said they would “definitely” get a vaccine, while barely one-third (34%) of uninsured adults said they “definitely” would. The hesitant group reported concerns about side effects and safety; and expressed a need for the vaccine to go to others first.

Second, a CDC report of skilled nursing residents and staff – among the first to be offered on-site U.S. vaccines in Dec. 2020 and Jan. 2021 – found that while over three-fourths (77%) of residents were vaccinated, a median rate for staff members was only 37.5%. This Feb. 1 [CDC MMWR](#) study did not assess reasons for vaccine hesitancy. But it noted that traditionally, staff members “serve as a trusted source of information for patients and residents,” therefore it would be especially important to boost their COVID-19 vaccination rates.

Third, as S. Wood and K. Schulman recommended in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#) (Jan. 6, 2021), “by combining relevant strategies for various persuasive tasks, we can develop a comprehensive plan, incorporating multiple actions and tactics to promote vaccine adoption.” Their triangle diagram, below, is a practical guide to meeting people where they are, to help encourage sleeve-rolling for those shots-in-the-arm.



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