

# COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

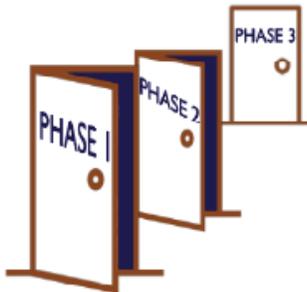
Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 10 – February 22, 2021



“Optimistic.” Hearing this word during the County Executive’s Feb. 17 COVID-19 media briefing conjured up a skywriter’s script, onlookers scanning the clouds to absorb the full weight of this rare assessment. That day, County Health Officer Dr. Travis Gayles and Dr. Earl Stoddard documented their encouraging outlook:

- County transmission rates, the lowest since early Nov., featured a 14-day average test positivity rate below 4%; and a sharply declining 7-day average over the past five weeks (below 11 per 100,000 residents, as of Feb. 22).

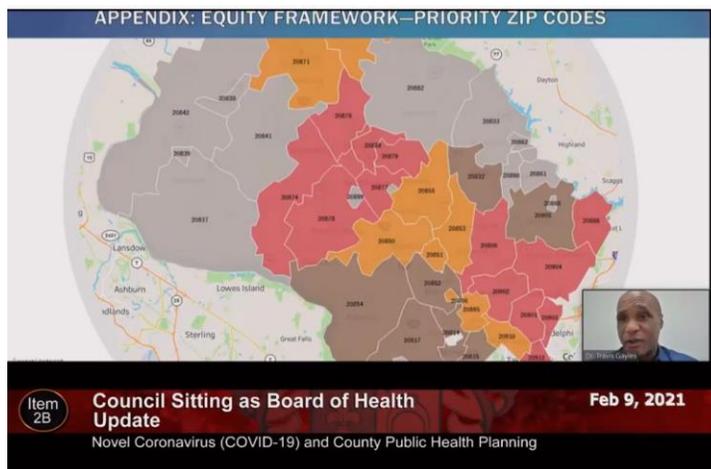


- Over 12% of county residents, including nearly half of those age 75+, have received at least one vaccine dose; as have two-thirds of the 9,000 staff who were prioritized by Montgomery County Public Schools.
- Indoor dining resumed Feb. 14 at 25% capacity, and enforcement patrols reported no violations.
- Launch of Montgomery County’s vaccine distribution dashboard, encompassing age, race, ethnicity and gender.

But with coronavirus variants documented in Maryland (Brazilian, Feb. 17; South African, Jan. 30, U.K., Jan. 12), we have to “avoid complacency,” and continue masking, hand-washing, and social-distancing. Further, with the County Health Dept.’s vaccine allotment averaging only about 4,500 doses per week, currently-eligible residents are advised to pre-register with multiple providers, Gayles said. This month, centenarians were invited to be vaccinated, while over 30,000 pre-registered county residents aged 75-99 years are still awaiting their turn. Like watching a skywriter, patience is required. – Lee Rucker Keiser, MSPH, Editor

## SPOTLIGHT: NEW “EQUITY FOCUS AREAS”

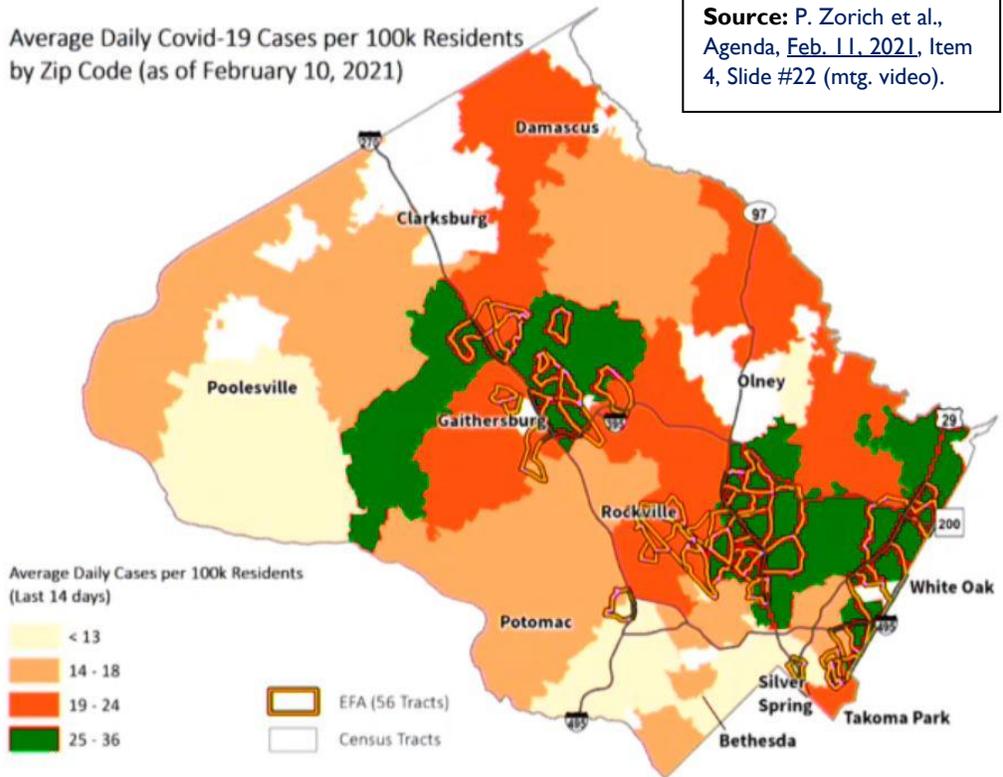
February saw the launch of the White House 12-member COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, chaired by Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith; and Maryland’s Vaccine Equity Task Force, chaired by Maryland Natl. Guard Brigadier



General Janeen Birkhead. She asked local health departments to appoint equity officers, to help stand up mobile vaccination sites and pop-up clinics “to mitigate the impact of inequality.” In County Council/ Board of Health updates, Montgomery County’s Dr. Gayles and Dr. Raymond Crowel discuss their evolving equity framework, informed by **zip code case data** (left), and by feedback from community partners.

Now, Montgomery Planning’s designation of **Equity Focus Areas** (EFAs), presented to the Planning Board Feb. 11, could perhaps also guide COVID-19 outreach and possibly (Cont., page 2)

future mobile vaccination plans. One-fourth of Montgomery County (56 Census tracts), covering about 276,000 households, represents EFAs, researcher Pamela Zorich and her team explained. Identifying the county’s marginalized populations, this analytical model is a “screening tool” before the planners unveil later in 2021 their Equity Opportunity Index. **Such analysis would appear to be well-aligned with the CDC’s [Social Vulnerability Index](#), a key factor in CDC/FEMA decisions about federally-sponsored, mass-vaccination sites, the White House COVID-19 Response Team said Feb. 19.** The Montgomery Planning map below displays EFA tracts, zip codes, and COVID-19 cases/100,000 residents in the last 14 days.



While residents county-wide face a very limited vaccine supply, residents in EFAs may be more likely to express vaccine hesitancy (as [chronicled by Teo Armus](#) in Feb. in *The Washington Post*), or need transportation to vaccine sites. Continued collaboration with the Latino Health Initiative’s [Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar](#), the [African American Health Program](#), and the [Asian](#)

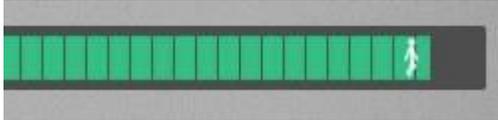
[American Health Initiative](#) is essential to implementing effective equity strategies.

Existing county touchpoints are numerous, including:

1. **Community Hubs** (at BlackRock Center for the Arts, and many church-based hubs); and Educational Enrichment and Equity Hubs (Dept. of HHS’ [interactive mapping](#), previewed by the Council in Jan. 2021)
2. **Food Distribution Sites** (Mont. County Food Council [map](#)); and MCPS-hosted Sites (MCPS [map](#))
3. **RideOn bus routes** serving EFAs, and/or maintaining relatively high pandemic ridership, likely transporting essential workers (RideOn customers’ demographic profile: [OLO Report 2020-10](#), p. 33).

Residents using services at these trusted touchpoints may benefit from receiving culturally-competent, multi-lingual flyers; or seeing community health ambassadors (who could help register eligible persons for a vaccine) on certain RideOn routes and at Transit Centers. Flyers could announce: (a) county-hosted COVID-19 vaccine conversations such as those on Feb. 22, 23, and 25 (see p. 4); and (b) nearby clinic (e.g., new, appointment-only clinic at the East County Recreation Center) or mobile vaccination opportunities. Working with the county’s three minority health programs and other partners, distributing such messages could help set the stage for future personalized outreach to residents needing technical, logistical, or other assistance in obtaining vaccines.

# MoCo VACCINATION SITE NAVIGATION MATRIX

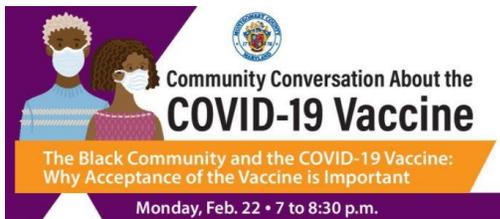
Clinic Host / Location(s)	Websites: Pre-Registration and/or Appointments	Comments / Navigation Tips (as of Feb. 22, 2021)
<b>Montgomery County Dept. of HHS</b> Primary Sites Include: Richard Montgomery H.S. Quince Orchard H.S. East County Rec. Center	Updated vaccine information & pre-registration portal: <a href="https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/">https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/</a> Pre-registration OPEN for Priority Groups I-A, I-B, I-C. <b>Vaccinating: I-A (all tiers), and I-B, age 75+</b> Everyone can complete a COVID-19 Community Survey: <a href="https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/survey.html">https://montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/survey.html</a>	For periodic updates and eventually an appt., <b>pre-register</b> online. For help preregistering, call: <b>(240) 777-2982</b> (daily, 10-6) For updates, text <b>468311 MONTGOMERYVAX</b>
<b>Other MoCo Vax Clinics</b>	<b>Most open to age 65+ and Priority Groups:</b>	<b>I-A, I-B, I-C</b>
<b>Adventist HealthCare</b> Takoma Park Shady Grove / Rockville	<a href="https://www.adventisthealthcare.com/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine/">https://www.adventisthealthcare.com/coronavirus-covid-19/vaccine/</a>	Can be placed on location-specific “Alert Me” wait list; pop-up chat box for help.
<b>CVS Pharmacy</b> 7809 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda 20814 Locations may rotate	Appts. began Feb. 12 at 14 CVS stores across Maryland <a href="https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine">https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine</a> If you lack Internet access, call CVS Customer Service: 1-800-746-7287	Sign in, or create new CVS.com account; or use CVS Pharmacy app. Book at any MD venue on list; consider acceptable distance
<b>Giant Food</b> Bethesda, 20814 Burtonsville, 20866 Gaithersburg, 20878 Hyattsville (P.G. Cty.), 20782 Silver Spring, 20910	<a href="https://giantfood.com/pages/covid-info">https://giantfood.com/pages/covid-info</a>  NOTE: Portal may be undergoing upgrades in late Feb.	Progress meter (at left) is visible, to gauge estimated wait. Upon entry to “waiting room,” then one has 10 minutes to make an appt. for 1 eligible person.
<b>Holy Cross Health</b> Silver Spring, 20910 Germantown, 20876	<a href="https://www.holycrosshealth.org/health-and-wellness/covid-19-vaccine/schedule-appointment">https://www.holycrosshealth.org/health-and-wellness/covid-19-vaccine/schedule-appointment</a>  For persons in Priority Groups <u>I-A</u> and <u>I-B</u> only (age 75+).	Appts. often released 4:00 p.m. weekdays. Must fill registration form <u>each</u> time at sign-up, but openings fill within a few minutes.
<b>Johns Hopkins Medicine</b> -- Suburban Hospital, Bethesda, 20814 -- Health Care Center, Germantown, 20876	<a href="https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/maryland.html">https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine/maryland.html</a>  OPEN to recent Hopkins patients, age 65 and older.	If a Hopkins patient within past 2 years, preregister via Hopkins’ <b>MyChart</b> portal.
<b>Kaiser Permanente</b> Kensington, 20895 Shady Grove, 20850 Silver Spring, 20904	<a href="https://insider.kaiserpermanente.org/covid-vaccine-information-for-maryland-residents/?kp_shortcut_referrer=kp.org/mdvaccine">https://insider.kaiserpermanente.org/covid-vaccine-information-for-maryland-residents/?kp_shortcut_referrer=kp.org/mdvaccine</a>	For <b>KP members only</b> . Age 75+ to be contacted by KP directly; or complete “Vaccine Interest” form. Updates: 1-855-550-0951.
<b>MedStar Montgomery</b> Olney, 20832	<a href="https://covidvaccine.medstarhealth.org/vaccine-form">https://covidvaccine.medstarhealth.org/vaccine-form</a>	“Vaccine request form” is clear and simple
<b>Safeway</b> Rockville, 20853 Wheaton, 20902	Safeway’s portal is shared by many grocery chains. <a href="https://www.mhealthappointments.com/covidappt">https://www.mhealthappointments.com/covidappt</a>	Easy navigation. <u>Hint</u> : enter zip code of either Safeway.
<b>Walgreens</b> 20904, 20906, 20910, 20912, 20814, 20832, 20840, 20850, 20854, 20874	Appts. began Feb. 12 at 92 Walgreens across Maryland <a href="https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19?ban=covid_vaccine_landing_schedule">https://www.walgreens.com/findcare/vaccination/covid-19?ban=covid_vaccine_landing_schedule</a>	Sign in, or create new, Walgreens’ account; then complete screening survey.

<b>State-sponsored clinics:</b> <b>(1) Baltimore Conv. Center</b> Zip: 21201 <b>(2) Six Flags America</b> Bowie Zip: 20721 <b>(3) M&amp;T Bank Stadium</b> Baltimore Zip: 21230	Open to all MD residents per <u>current</u> Priority Groups. <b>Baltimore:</b> <a href="https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/baltimore-convention-center-vaccine">https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/baltimore-convention-center-vaccine</a> For Convention Center <u>only</u> , if you lack Internet access, call 443-462-5511, Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. <b>Six Flags:</b> <a href="https://massvax.maryland.gov/">https://massvax.maryland.gov/</a> <b>M&amp;T:</b> <a href="https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/mtb-stadium">https://www.umms.org/coronavirus/covid-vaccine/get-vaccine/mtb-stadium</a> For Six Flags and M&T <u>only</u> , if you lack Internet access, call <b>1-855-MDGOVAX</b> (1-855-634-6829), 7 am – 10 pm.	<b>Confirm eligibility at:</b> <a href="https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/vaccine/">https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/vaccine/</a> For updates on when mass-vax clinic appts. will become available, text <b>MDREADY</b> to: <b>898-211</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Plan for Dose #1 & #2 appts. at same location.
<b>Specific Populations</b>		
<b>MCPS Teachers</b> (Independent school staff: seek guidance from school administrators)	MCPS Staff vaccination <b>FAQs</b> were updated Feb. 16: <a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/faq.asp">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/reopening/faq.asp</a>	
<b>Veterans Administration:</b> Washington, DC Med. Ctr. Martinsburg, WV Med. Ctr.	<a href="https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/">https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/</a> Reserved for: (1) Veterans who receive care at the VA; and (2) eligible Veterans’ designated family caregivers, who are enrolled in VA’s special caregivers’ program.	For Veterans already enrolled in VA health care, <b>VA will contact eligible persons.</b> Priority: age 75+

Compiled by Lee Rucker Keiser, M.S.P.H., Senior Fellow, Montgomery County Council (Central Office) **Feb. 22, 2021**

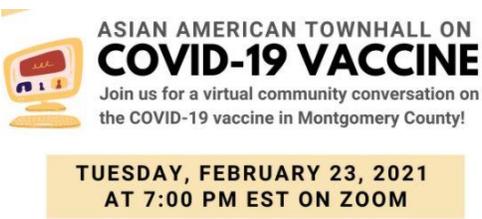
## SPOTLIGHT: MOBILE VACCINATION CLINICS

Our Feb. 2, 2021 [newsletter](#) highlighted mass-vaccination clinics in San Diego, Detroit, and Boston; since then, Maryland’s mass-vax sites opened in Baltimore and Prince George’s County. In Atlanta, transit system [MARTA](#) partnered with the DeKalb County Health Dept. to open on Feb. 19 a mass-vax site at the Doraville Station. Meanwhile, another approach is standing up small, nimble clinics. What if a Montgomery County RideOn bus, staffed with its driver, public health professionals, and volunteers, was transformed into a mobile vaccination clinic serving a few Equity Focus Areas? Examples of mobile clinics dispatched to higher-risk communities include [Boulder County](#) (CO) Public Health; the MedStar Health/ Johns Hopkins Medicine collaboration in [Baltimore](#); and [Contra Costa County, CA’s small roving “strike team”](#) of trained vaccinators serving residents of smaller assisted-living facilities, and those in low-income housing. This mobile concept, including partnering with transit systems, was among recommendations in the Feb. 12 [Vax Transit](#) blog by a former NJ Transit executive. The goal is simply to meet people where they are.



**Community Conversation About the COVID-19 Vaccine**  
 The Black Community and the COVID-19 Vaccine: Why Acceptance of the Vaccine is Important  
 Monday, Feb. 22 • 7 to 8:30 p.m.

For Zoom info, call the Office of Community Partnerships: (240) 777-2570



**ASIAN AMERICAN TOWNHALL ON COVID-19 VACCINE**  
 Join us for a virtual community conversation on the COVID-19 vaccine in Montgomery County!  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2021**  
**AT 7:00 PM EST ON ZOOM**



Thurs. Feb. 25, 7:00 p.m.  
**COVID-19 Vaccines Virtual Town Hall**  
 with County Council & Public Health Leaders

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