

COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 12 – April 29, 2021



Four months into the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, our journey is a seesaw. In late April, we're rising higher with 43% of U.S. residents receiving at least one dose (29% are fully-vaccinated); 42% of all Marylanders, and **52% of Montgomery County residents**. This month, our hard-fought mass vaccination site at Montgomery College-Germantown became fully operational, with free RideOn bus shuttles from the Shady Grove Metro. Well-planned, community-supported vaccine clinics in targeted zip codes occur frequently, to support Montgomery County's Framework for Equitable Access. Further, our 2.4% case positivity rate marks a six-month low; and among neighboring jurisdictions, Montgomery County has the lowest 7-day average case count per 100,000 residents. Such good news indeed raises us higher!



Suddenly, we lurch closer to the fulcrum, due to the two-week pause in the J&J “one-shot” vaccine; and with unpredictable vaccine dose allocations that began just as millions of Marylanders age 16+ became eligible April 12. Taking a cue from several states (see p. 2), and adopted by the Council this week, the County's new reopening roadmap sets its **next vaccination milestone at 60% of residents to receive their first dose**. To get there, the already-vaccinated must forge ahead as ambassadors,

appointment-and-logistics navigators for friends, family, and fellow community members. Regardless of vaccine status, we should respect the CDC's Choosing Safer Activities list, including mask guidance. Otherwise, we risk a seesaw pandemic journey in our new normal.

– Lee Rucker Keiser, MSPH, Editor

SPOTLIGHT: WEEKLY VACCINE ALLOTMENTS

In early April, the MD Dept. of Health announced that first-dose federal allocations for all vaccines would be cut 33%, a “significant decrease with no advance notice” from the Biden Administration. This affects county health departments, plus hospitals, and some grocery stores. Vaccine providers including CVS and Walgreens receive doses directly from the federal government, few of which are publicly reported. However, additional grocery vaccine sites were added this month, including Harris Teeter; with expanded locations across Montgomery County at Giant and Safeway.

Clinic Host	Week of April 26	Week of April 19	Week of April 12	Week of April 5
MoCo Health Dpt.	7020	7020	7020	10,730
Montg. College Germantown NOTE: This mass-vax site can deliver 3,000 doses/ day	4800	4800	5800	(transition week)
Giant / Safeway	100 doses/store	100 doses/store	100 doses/store	100 doses/store

Source: MD Dept. of Health

SPOTLIGHT: PEGGING REOPENING TO VAX RATES

On April 27, Montg. County joined several states that have pegged reopening phases to vaccination rates, described below.



NEW BOARD OF HEALTH REGULATION WITH GUIDANCE ON REOPENING
Effective April 27 at 5:00 PM
 Fifth Board of Health Regulation allows further phased reopening in Montgomery County tied to the percentage of the population vaccinated

STATE / POP. & VAX RATES (as of 4/28)	PROGRAM PARAMETERS
California / 39 mil. 1 st dose: 50% Full dose: 37% (11.8 million people)	https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR21-114.aspx Gov. Newsom set June 15, 2021 as the target date for CA to fully reopen, contingent on meeting vaccine supply & COVID-19 hospitalization rate criteria. The <i>Blueprint for a Safer Economy</i> (link above), that has guided reopening since 2020, was modified in early March 2021 to incorporate a vaccine equity metric: ensuring that 2 million doses went to residents of hardest-hit communities. By early April, over 4 million equity doses had been provided, allowing for slightly higher case rates in counties' tier-specific qualifications that govern counties' reopening: https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#county-status
Illinois / 12.7 mil. 1 st dose: 53% Full dose: 29.7% NOTE: 1 st -dose rate of 70% among age 65+ met in late March. 1 st -dose rate of 50% among age 16+ was met April 21	https://www.dph.illinois.gov/statewidemetrics Illinois has a 5-phase reopening plan. On March 18, Gov. Pritzker announced a new "bridge" phase between phases 4 & 5 that would allow for greater capacity limits, effective when 70% of the population age 65+ receives at least their first dose. Advancing to Phase 5 would occur when the rate of 1 st -dose vaccination for persons age 16+ reached 50%. Case counts & COVID-19 hospitalizations are monitored for 28 days before advancing to the next phase. "Bridge" eased restrictions are detailed here: https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/bridge-phase
Kentucky / 4.7 mil. 1 st dose administration to date: 2.3 mi.	<i>Team Kentucky Vaccination Challenge</i> https://chfs.ky.gov/News/Documents/nrvaccinechallenge.pdf Once 2.5 mil. residents receive their 1 st shot, capacity and physical distancing restrictions for most businesses would be lifted. Eff. April 27, outdoor mask requirement lifted, including at venues with 1,000 or fewer people.
Vermont / 624,000 1 st dose: 60% Full dose: 41%	https://www.vermont.gov/vermont-forward#gsc.tab=0 Announced April 6, 2021, the <i>Vermont Forward: Roadmap to Reopening</i> is a 3-phase plan with vaccination goals that trigger "universal" guidance for reopening, except in certain sectors (e.g., organized sports, youth summer camps) that have specialized guidance.
West Virginia / 1.8 mil. 1 st dose: 52% Full dose: 41%	https://governor.wv.gov/News/press-releases/2021/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-West-Virginia-offering-100-savings-bond-to-residents-age-16-to-35-who-get-vaccinated.aspx On April 26, Gov. Jim Justice announced that persons age 16-35 who get vaccinated will each receive a \$100 savings bond. If two-thirds of those adults were vaccinated, that would boost the statewide vax rates above 70%, after which masking and social distancing mandates would ease.

SPOTLIGHT: I/DD COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

One-fifth of Marylanders age 18 and older has one or more disabilities, many of whom have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Maryland's childhood disability rate in 2019 was 4.2%, on a par with the national rate. Persons with **intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)** were prioritized early in Maryland's plan for vaccine eligibility. Getting vaccines in arms relied on a strategic foundation of collaborative networks with MD's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), county agencies, I/DD community partners; and integrating vaccine providers. The County Council recognized MoCo I/DD leaders on April 27.

Indeed, by early April 2021, the DDA reported that over 115 vaccine clinics had been held for I/DD persons, family members, and Direct Care staff. One example is The Arc Prince George's County, in partnership with Giant Pharmacy, that coordinated a pilot vaccine clinic in February for persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities; Montgomery County participants and families were also invited to attend. Implementation efforts by Maryland, and by five other states, are profiled in a *State I/DD Successes issue brief on vaccinations*. Mutual elements of success appear in an April checklist to optimize the vaccine experience for persons with disabilities, covering: (1) accessibility, (2) communication, and (3) appointments.

To help support ongoing vaccine efforts; and to further support Maryland I/DD communities prepare for reopening activities, **two online surveys** may be of interest:

The Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies Survey: <https://disasterstrategies.org/survey-accessible-covid-19-vaccine/> This survey focuses on vaccine distribution. Right: this organization's **Co-Exec. Directors, Shaylin Sluzalis & German Parodi**, who spoke at CDC's Vaccine Equity conference in Feb. 2021.

MD Developmental Disabilities Admst:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DDAIndividualFamily2021>



Further, new research from Johns Hopkins University's Disability Health Research Center presents results of their 2020 virtual focus groups with nearly 40 adults (age 18+), recruited through disability advocacy groups and social media. All participants expressed difficulty accessing COVID-19 testing and regular medical care; and obstacles in receiving COVID-19 information, such as lack of captions or alternative text, lack of information relevant to the disability experience, and overwhelming or confusing information. Participants also noted the pandemic's effect on transportation access, acknowledging their distrust in ride-share services, public transit and paratransit. While COVID-19 brought "accommodations that many participants wanted in the past, such as telework and telehealth," they expressed doubt that such accommodations would continue post-pandemic. The disability community must be full partners in public health policies and response, the authors said. *Disability and Health Journal* (March 30, 2021): <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1936657421000492>

Editor: Lee Rucker Keiser, MSPH
Sr. Fellow, County Council Central Office
E-mail: lee.keiser@montgomerycountymd.gov