

COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 13 – June 3, 2021



Maryland's new, daily vaccination lottery may benefit a few dozen vaccinated individuals, but **over 663,000 Montgomery County residents are already public health winners!** As of June 3, 63% of county residents had checked off their first COVID-19 vaccine dose, and 52.8% had fully completed their dose(s). According to CDC data, by May 31, Maryland had vaccinated over 70% of residents age 18 and older, while in Montgomery County that rate is nearly at 75%, County Executive Marc Elrich reported on June 2. Further, less than two weeks after Marylanders as young as 12 became eligible for vaccines last month, over 21,000 Montgomery County youth aged 12-15 – more than half of that total age group – had been vaccinated.



This remarkable progress, combined with record-low 7-day case counts and a 1% positivity rate, enabled the county's May 28 reopening, with nearly all restrictions lifted. Masking remains mandatory, however, for everyone on public transit, in schools, health care facilities, and county buildings. Businesses may choose whether to require masking. Also reopening: libraries, over half of county branches by June 14, the remainder by July 6; and several County Recreation Senior Centers, also on June 14. County outdoor pools, through June 18, are open weekends only from Noon – 7:00 p.m.

Meanwhile, to help provide more convenient access to vaccines, upcoming county Dept. of Health clinics are at:

- Montgomery College-**Germantown** site; free RideOn service from the Shady Grove Metro
- **Silver Spring** Civic Building, from 4:00-8:00 p.m. on June 3-11
- Sligo Seventh Day Adventist Church, **Takoma Park**, June 3
- Southlake Elementary School, **Gaithersburg**, June 4
- Briggs-Chaney Park & Ride, **Fairland**, June 4-13
- Maryland SoccerPlex, **Boys**, June 5 (Call the facility to confirm details: 301-528-1480)

Through July 4, **free transportation** to vaccines is offered by (1) **Capital Bikeshare** and **Lyft**: <https://lyftup.typeform.com/to/k6xYpwVV> and (2) **Uber**: <https://www.uber.com/newsroom/freevaccinerides/>

As summer travel and pandemic-delayed reunions beckon, vaccine ambassadors are needed across the U.S. to reach friends, family members, and neighbors who may have questions, or just need a ride. "Give it your all through July 4!" Biden said June 2, calling for a "month of action" to meet that 70%-goal-for-adults'-first-shot, already surpassed by MD and Montgomery County. (He also announced scaling up a Univ. of MD vaccine initiative, see p. 3 "Spotlight.") Federal **We Can Do This** campaign resources are at:



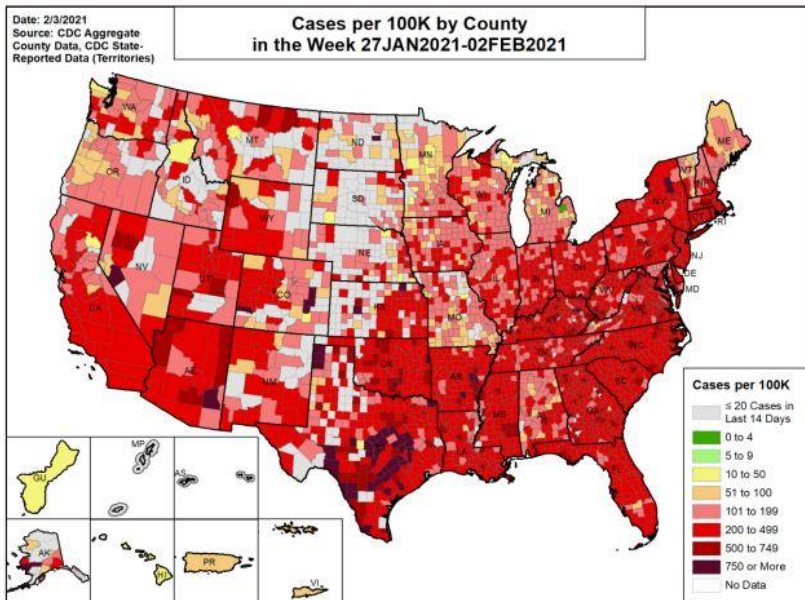
<https://wecandothis.hhs.gov/> Working together, we're all public health winners!

– Lee Rucker Keiser, MSPH, Editor & Senior Fellow, County Council

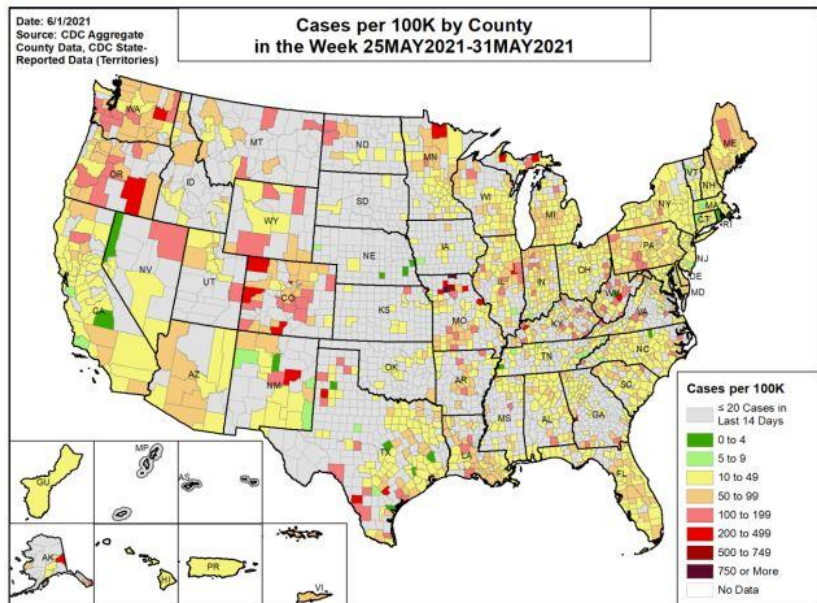
SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19 CASES THEN & NOW

These CDC COVID Data Tracker maps are clear evidence of U.S. vaccines' effectiveness – and our overall success in distributing them. Top: COVID-19 cases per 100,000 by county, late January 2021. Bottom: cases from late May 2021. **The current incidence rate is about 10% of what it was four months ago.** Source: (daily) Community Profile Report, Feb. 3 and June 1. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#community-profile-report>

Incidence Rate in the Last 7 Days: 294.0 per 100,000



Incidence Rate in the Last 7 Days: 33.7 per 100,000



SPOTLIGHT: “SHOTS AT THE (BARBER) SHOP”

On June 2, when President Biden detailed his month-long effort “to pull all the stops... and get 70% of adult Americans vaccinated” by July Fourth, he gave a shout-out to an initiative with Maryland roots: **Shots at the Shop**. Some local barbers and stylists – trusted members in their communities – have become key advocates for the COVID-19 vaccines. Particularly in communities of color, this trust is the foundation of existing public health outreach programs such as the *Health Advocates In-Reach and Research (HAIR)* campaign.

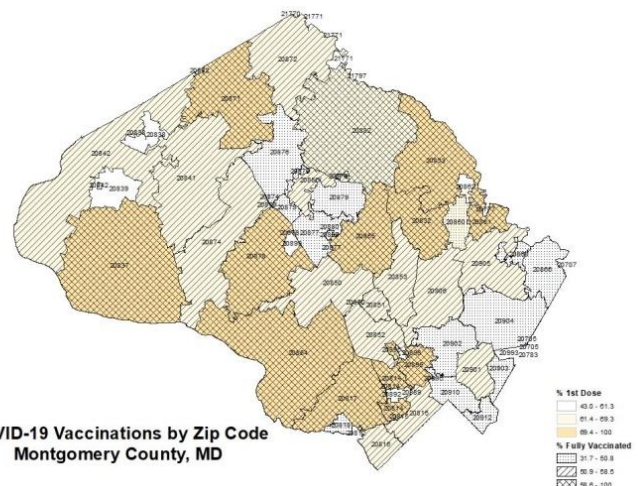


This so-called “HAIR” initiative was developed 15 years ago by the University of MD School of Public Health’s **Center for Health Equity**. Center Director Stephen B. Thomas, Ph.D., said that he hopes the new *Shots at the Shop* program “is the beginning of truly recognizing the role that barbers and stylists can play in promoting health and preventing disease.” **Photo:** Dr. Thomas (in hat), K. Randolph, F. Spry, M. Brown, who are Hyattsville, MD-based HAIR advocates; source: <https://sph.umd.edu/news/community-vaccine-clinic-hyattsville-barbershop> (May 13, 2021)

For this month’s national roll-out, a short U. of Maryland training course, developed by Dr. Thomas, his team and other health experts, will enable participating barbers and stylists to become volunteer community health workers. Upon completion of the course, some shop venues can become COVID vaccination sites, with a \$1,000 stipend to each shop from SheaMoisture, a hair product company.

Last month, Cleveland, Ohio’s Public Health Dept. partnered successfully with the Urban Kutz barbershop to provide vaccines to customers and community members on several occasions. From Maryland to the Midwest and beyond, a June 2 national *Shots at the Shop* town hall (YouTube) featured Dr. Thomas, the Black Coalition Against COVID, and other experts: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoFsDTqoZmg> **To connect Montg. County barbershops with this opportunity, contact the U. of MD Center for Health Equity, (301) 405-8859, <https://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/maryland-center-health-equity>**

According to the Montgomery County Dept. of Health’s June 2 vaccine update, **Latino and African American men aged 19-34 years “make up the largest unvaccinated group” in our county**, making the *Shots at the Shop* launch especially timely, if shop uptake aligns with vax uptake geographic data. At right: [vaccination progress by Zip Code](#) (Dept. of Health, May 28). Lightest shading = lowest rates.



SPOTLIGHT: COVID-19's TOLL ON MENTAL HEALTH

As Montg. County DHHS Director Raymond Crowel, M.D. observed on May 26, while celebrating reopening milestones and the national reduction of cases, it is important to remember that masks and physical distancing represented “visible signs and signals that we were protecting ourselves and others.” As these mitigation strategies become less prevalent, reopening “will cause some anxiety,” he said during County Executive Elrich’s media briefing last week. Dr. Crowel also noted that depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence “have gotten worse during the pandemic,” a trend confirmed in several new reports (titles have hyperlinks):

Kaiser Family Foundation: [“Mental Health Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Update,”](#) April 14. Nearly 7 in 10 women aged 18-29 reported a negative mental health impact. Also from KFF:

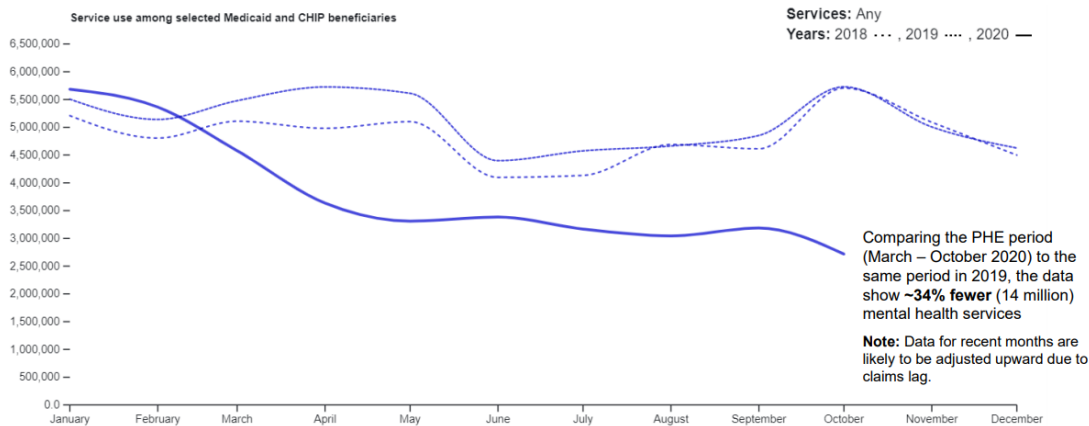
[“Mental Health and Substance Use Considerations Among Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic,”](#) May 26.

American Psychiatric Association: [“APA 2021 Public Opinion Poll,”](#) May 2. This online survey of 1,000 adults age 18+ found that 43% said the pandemic has had a serious impact on their mental health. Respondents under age 30, and Latinos, were more likely to say they are more anxious now, versus in 2020.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, HHS: [“Medicaid & CHIP and the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency,”](#) May 14. (43 pages)

Preliminary 2020 data show mental health services for children under age 19 declined starting in March and continue to be substantially below prior years’ levels through October

Mental health services among children under 19 dropped from 145 per 1,000 beneficiaries in February 2020 to a low of 72 per 1,000 beneficiaries in October 2020






Medicaid is the largest U.S. payer for behavioral health services. Among this report is the chart at left, showing CHIP children’s utilization of mental health services dropped by half from Feb. – Oct. 2020.

Mental Health America: [“Suicide and COVID-19: Communities in Need Across the U.S.,”](#) May 30. This is based on data from over 725,000 individuals who took a depression screening test (PHQ-9) in the U.S. in 2020.

In Montgomery County, many of the Council’s final FY 22 budget actions (May 27) support new or strengthen existing mental health programs, such as mobile crisis response teams, a wellness center at Seneca Valley High School, and expanded services for MCPS students. Details in the Council’s May 27 [press release](#).

SPOTLIGHT: SAMPLE OF STATES' VAX INCENTIVES

STATE or CITY	INCENTIVE(s) / DATE STARTED	VAX RATES (as of June 1)
Detroit	<p>Good Neighbor Program (May 3): persons age 18+ who pre-register, help make 1st-dose appts. for friends/neighbors, and bring them to scheduled vaccination appointments, will receive a \$50 prepaid debit card per shot for each appointment.</p> <p>GOOD NEIGHBOR PROGRAM</p>	<p><u>Detroit</u>: 35% 1st dose (age 12+) <u>State of Michigan</u>: 54% (age 12+) 1st dose, 47% full (age 12+)</p>
Illinois	<p>(May 13) Local health depts. are providing 50,000 one-day, Six Flags Great America tickets (valued at \$4 million), to newly-vaccinated residents. Mobile vax units will be on-site June 5-6.</p> 	<p>56% 1st dose (age 12+), 42% full</p>
Ohio	<p>Vax-a-Million (May 18): Opt-in program for: (1) youth age 12-17 who received at least 1st dose are eligible to win one of five, 4-year full scholarships to any Ohio college or university; (2) age 18+ who have received at least 1st dose can enter to win one of five \$1 million prizes. Weekly drawings started May 26.</p> 	<p>45% 1st dose, 40% full</p>
Oregon	<p>(May 21) Take Your Shot, Oregon will feature a single drawing on June 28, with: one \$1 million winner, five \$100,000 Oregon College Savings Plan winners, and 36 \$10,000 winners. Oregon residents who have received at least their first dose are automatically entered to win.</p>	<p>53% 1st dose, 44% full</p>
New York	<p>(May 26) Get a Shot to Make Your Future for newly-vaccinated 12-17-year-olds: starting May 27, full 4-yr. scholarship to NY state, City of NY, or community colleges; 10 winners per week for five weeks. ADD details: https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-vax-and-scratch-program-be-extended-new-sites-next-week</p>	<p>53% 1st dose, 46% full</p>
Calif.	 <p>(May 27) Vax for the Win: Californians who've received at least one dose are automatically entered to win: (1) on June 15, ten \$1.5 million winners will be selected; (2) on two June Fridays, 15 persons will each win \$50,000; (3) the next 2 million Californians who start (by May 27) and finish their doses will each receive a \$50 gift card.</p>	<p>63% 1st dose (age 12+) 51% fully-vaccinated</p>

NOTE: Maryland's "VaxCash" promotion features daily drawings, for persons age 18+, from May 25-July 4. One of the first winners was a Towson resident who works at Giant Food; her prize: \$40,000.

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