

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

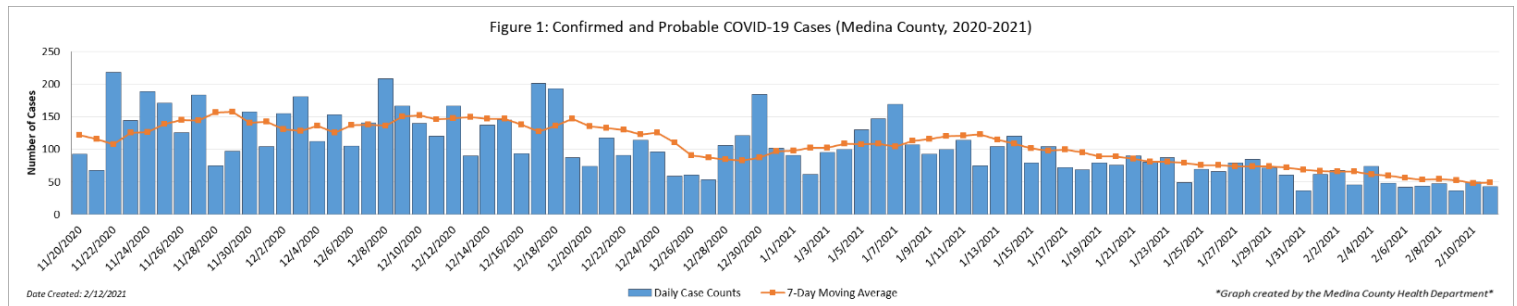


Dear Community Members:

Despite our snowy surroundings, the thought of spring and its promise of sunnier days ahead is becoming more and more real. Medina County, as well as across the state, is experiencing a steady decline and leveling of new cases. I am hopeful that Medina County will have its red designation removed in the Ohio Public Health Alerting System in the coming weeks. Hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and urgent care visits for COVID-19 are all declining. Even with the variant strains, there is reason for hope at the return to normalcy in the coming months.

As we all look to the future together, I want to make it clear that we will never be completely free from COVID-19. We cannot use absence of all disease or illness as our benchmark for resuming interactions and activities; that would be unrealistic. I don't make this point to cause alarm, but instead I want to use it to reassure citizens that the virus can be managed and there are things we can do to live with it.

Declining cases have proved that the mitigations efforts in our schools, businesses, and social lives are working. This week, I gave the green light to the Medina Marathon, and in-person group meetings for 4-H, Girl Scouts, and school groups that had been suspended. Our schools are all open and with the adjustments, I am looking forward to seeing activities safely resume.



What to expect next

County vaccination numbers increase daily with several pharmacy chains, the Health Department, and Cleveland Clinic Medina all administering first and second doses to county residents. However, vaccine supply still remains much lower than demand. After this week, the Governor has announced he will pause in opening up the vaccine to other groups to continue to work through current eligible populations. Any information on what the next phase of vaccines will look like is forthcoming.

If you tuned into the Governor's press conference last week, you'll know he talked about a state-wide platform to help streamline the vaccine scheduling process for both citizens and providers. The purpose of the management tool is to offer one, consistent place to verify eligibility and schedule appointments. Right now, providers across the state offer their own method for enrolling and setting appointments in an effort to make distribution more equitable. Here at the Health Department, we are continuing for now to use ArmorVax for people eligible in the 1B category. There are resources available on our website to help walk citizens through the scheduling process.

Where can I find the latest information?

As information is made available, we will continue to update our website with resources about the vaccine: <https://medinahealth.org/vaccine>. You are also encouraged to visit the Ohio Department of Health's website for resources related to the COVID-19 vaccine: coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine.