

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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Dear Community Members:

It's always disheartening for me to use this space to talk about difficult news. Whether it was during times of rising cases or reporting on vaccine frustration, updating the valued members of this community on the challenges we are facing together is never easy. However, as we head into a new month, I am feeling optimistic that the COVID-19 crisis continues to improve. As I say in many of my weekly updates: each week brings something new, and this week is no exception. My hope is that as we move into spring, my weekly updates will serve as a source of positive and encouraging news.

### **An update on vaccines**

Yesterday during his weekly press conference, Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health announced the next groups to become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Beginning March 4, Phase 1C will include some additional qualifying medical conditions not included in Phase 1B, as well as certain occupations including child care services, funeral services, and law enforcement and correction services: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination-program>. Phase 2 eligibility also begins this week for citizens 60 years of age and older.

One of the biggest concerns we've heard since the beginning of the vaccine roll-out was how the State can open up eligibility groups when there are still people not yet vaccinated in previous ones? I understand how this can be frustrating. Demand remains high in Medina County but there are other areas of the state with different circumstances. Ohio's strategy strives to create an equitable process to address different needs in each community. Being able to move on and open up groups means more and more people are receiving its lifesaving benefits.

First dose supply of the vaccine goes up and down each week and this week supply is up. The Health Department is excited to protect 840 citizens with their first dose and 870 citizens with their second dose. We are now receiving Moderna, Pfizer, and the newly approved Johnson & Johnson vaccine. With all three brands available, we are hopeful vaccine supply will continue to increase. As we begin to move to all ArmorVax appointments you will be able to select the brand that you prefer at a location you select. All three brands are safe and effective.

If you are 60 years of age and older you can prepare to schedule your vaccine by using ArmorVax. Clinics are added to this system on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday morning based on confirmed supply. Information on using ArmorVax can be found on the vaccine portal on our website: [www.medinahealth.org/vaccine](http://www.medinahealth.org/vaccine). The Health Department will work directly with employers in the newly eligible occupations to schedule employees. As with previously announced groups, the demand in the northeast region means that there will be some lag time between the date eligibility begins and when vaccine is available to schedule for new groups.

### **What's next for spring and summer?**

Cases continue to decline and very soon I expect Medina County will drop to orange/level 2 in the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. Spring is a busy season for planning late-spring and summer events. We hope to see regular activities resume with modifications. The Ohio Department of Health will soon be providing guidance on safely moving forward and planning these activities with some modifications such as continuing to mask, social distance, and some reduced capacity.

### **Where can I find the latest information?**

As information is made available, we will continue to update our website with resources about the vaccine: <http://www.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](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine).