

State tops 1 million coronavirus vaccinations

By **DAVID NAHAN**
Cape May Star and Wave

As of Monday morning, there have been more than 1 million COVID-19 vaccines administered in New Jersey. As Gov. Phil Murphy touted the increasing speed of vaccination, he said the goal is to get all 4.7 million adults in the state vaccinated by somewhere between Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

By Monday, Feb. 8, there were 813,216 initial vaccination doses administered and 224,237 second doses.

"This trend is an important one," Murphy said at Monday afternoon's COVID-19 press conference. It took 29 days from the first vaccination Dec. 15 to get to 250,000 doses administered and 10 days to double that to 500,000.

In the past 16 days, New Jersey doubled that again to 1 million doses.

He said that took place even with the scarcity of vaccines and needing to reschedule because of snowstorms.

"This is definitely forward progress showing how we are maximizing the doses we receive from the federal government," Murphy said. He also cited the increased vaccinations

by CVS and Walgreens pharmacies given to older adults and residents in long-term care.

"While this is a significant milestone, we have a good ways to go to reach our ultimate goal of 4.7 million vaccinated adults by the beginning of summer," he added.

He put that timing between Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

"We are definitely on our way but we need much greater supply" to get New Jersey's vaccinated infrastructure "working to its full potential."

He said that was especially true in the six mega sites, including at the Atlantic City Convention Center, which are capable of vaccinating 10,000 to 15,000 people a day but are doing only a fraction of that.

Murphy said the state will be getting increased supplies in the next three weeks, meaning more appointment spots opening up and getting closer to the time when more people, including teachers, will be able to get vaccines.

Education

Related to that, the governor said there is a

"strong movement" toward more in-person education.

Ninety-five districts are now doing in-person instruction, which is six more than on Feb. 1, and 23 more districts have moved away from all-remote learning. There are now 190 districts doing all-remote.

The largest number of districts, 491, are doing hybrid instruction, an increase of 21 since Feb. 1, meaning they have a combination of remote and in-person learning.

Another 35 districts are using mixed methods.

Elections in-person

Murphy said the school and fire district elections April 20 and the municipal elections May 11 will be in-person. He said it has not been decided whether the June primary elections will be in-person but voters can request absentee ballots either way.

Dr. Persichilli offers Q&A

Dr. Judith Persichilli, New Jersey's health commissioner, offered a series of questions health officials have been receiving, along with answers to those ques-

tions, which follow:

- Can COVID-19 vaccine give you the coronavirus? No. Current vaccines don't contain the virus.

- Will the vaccines work against the variants? In most cases yes, they have been found to be good to stop severe illness. Oxford University said a small study suggested the AstraZeneca vaccine offers only minimal protection against the South African variant. The vaccine is not available yet in the U.S.

- Should pregnant women get vaccinated? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends pregnant women talk to their health care providers. They should consider level of COVID-19 community transmission, the patient's personal risk of contracting the virus, and the risks of the virus to the woman and potential risk to her unborn child. Also consider efficacy of the vaccine and the side effects.

Based on current research, Persichilli said, experts believe the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to pregnant women or their unborn children. However, she pointed out, the risks are unknown because the

vaccines have not been studied in pregnant women.

- Are vaccines interchangeable? No. They are not. Safety and efficacy of mixed product has not been evaluated. The first and second doses should be of the same vaccine, either Pfizer or Moderna.

- Why isn't there more vaccine? Production capacity is increasing slowly and Johnson and Johnson submitted its data to be approved to CDC. It hopes to provide 100 million doses by April. It is only one shot and doesn't require refrigeration.

- What is the advantage of Johnson and Johnson vaccine? It is easy to deploy it close to where people live.

- Do I still need to wear a mask if vaccinated? Yes. It is known the vaccine can keep a person from getting sick, but it isn't known if that stops people from contracting and spreading the virus.

- When will there be more visitation at long-term care facilities? The state is still concerned because the facilities are experiencing outbreaks. There were 417 active outbreaks as of Monday. Visitation is tied to level of

spread in the community.

Persichilli noted there is no out-of-pocket cost to get vaccinated. People have to live, work in, or study in New Jersey to be eligible.

She also said there were 31 cases of the U.K. variant of COVID-19 in New Jersey, including one case in Atlantic County and 12 in Ocean County. She did not report any cases in Cape May County.

Statewide numbers

The governor and health commissioner pointed to improving numbers statewide, showing New Jersey is far off the peaks from several weeks ago. It is still high, but the metrics are "pointing in the right direction," Murphy said.

As of Monday there were 647,194 positive COVID-19 PCR tests and 77,534 positive antigen tests. There were 2,218 new PCR tests and 516 new antigen tests on Monday.

The rate of transmission statewide has dropped to 0.85 with 2,814 patients in the hospital including 540 in intensive care.

The state's death toll is at 22,011, including 2,187 deaths considered "probable" as they relate to COVID-19.

Number of active COVID-19 cases falls in Cape May County

By **DAVID NAHAN**
Cape May Star and Wave

The number of active COVID-19 cases has fallen in Cape May County over the past week and close to 14,000 vaccinations have been administered.

Officials said studies are showing Cape May County has the lowest number of coronavirus cases per capita and the best vaccination rate by population.

On Friday, Feb. 5, the county Department of Health administered 352 doses of the vaccine, bringing its total to 6,106, but that number is more than doubled when adding in the other entities providing the vaccines. All told as of Friday, there were 13,972 doses - including first and second doses - administered in the county.

The department reported a 30 percent drop in coronavirus cases comparing the period of Jan. 28 to Feb. 3 with the seven days prior.

As of Sunday, there were 405 active cases county-

wide, seven in long-term care and four among non-residents, all in Cape May.

Of the 428 cases in the communities, there were 81 in Lower Township, 88 in Middle Township, 74 in Ocean City and 59 in Upper Township.

Other active cases included Wildwood (23), Dennis Township (24), Wildwood Crest (15), Cape May (10), Woodbine (7), Sea Isle City (6), West Cape May and Avalon (3 each), and Cape May Point (1). There were no active cases in Stone Harbor and West Wildwood.

Of the 38 new cases re-

ported Saturday, 13 were in Ocean City, eight each in Upper Township and Middle Township, and four in Lower Township. There were 34 new cases reported Sunday, including 12 in Middle Township, 10 in Lower Township, three in Ocean City and none in Upper Township.

The Department of Health announced the death of a 78-year-old Ocean City man Saturday, an 82-year-old man from Middle Township on Friday, a 75-year-old woman from Avalon on Thursday, a 90-year-old man from Ocean City on Wednesday,

Feb. 3, and a 69-year-old Middle Township woman and 78-year-old man from Wildwood on Feb. 2.

As of Sunday, 169 county residents have died because of the coronavirus since the pandemic began in March 2020, including 93 in long-term care and 76 in the various communities.

In the nearly 11 months

since the pandemic began, there have been 51 deaths in Lower Township (33 in long-term care), 32 in Middle Township (half in long-term care), 22 in Ocean City (14 in long-term care), 23 in Dennis Township (19 in long-term care), 16 in Woodbine (11 in long-term care), six each in Upper Township and Wildwood, three each

in Cape May, Wildwood Crest and North Wildwood, two in Sea Isle City and one each in West Cape May and Avalon. There have been no fatalities in Cape May Point, Avalon or West Wildwood.

Keeping things in perspective, Cape May County remains among the New Jersey counties least affected by the coronavirus.

TIDES: Feb. 10-17, 2021

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
10	6:52	7:18	12:12	1:04
11	7:38	8:03	1:02	1:49
12	8:21	8:46	1:49	2:31
13	9:01	9:26	2:34	3:11
14	9:40	10:05	3:17	3:48
15	10:19	10:43	3:59	4:25
16	10:58	11:23	4:42	5:01
17	11:38		5:27	5:37

MOON PHASES

New moon, Feb. 11 • first quarter, Feb. 19

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