



Spectrum Health
Lakeland

Joint News Release

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Berrien County COVID-19 Vaccination Update

Vaccine supplies remain limited, residents urged to have continued patience

(Benton Harbor, MI) --- The Berrien County Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland continue to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to [those who are eligible](#) and interested as quickly as possible. Aligning with state benchmarks, the collective goal is to distribute at least 90% of the vaccines allocated within seven days of receipt. To date, more than 7,000 vaccinations have been given to health care workers, emergency medical and first responders, and long-term care residents, as well as those who are at highest-risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to risk factors, such as age or exposure due to occupation.

Over the past week, both Spectrum Health Lakeland and the Berrien County Health Department have run large-scale mass vaccination clinics distributing COVID-19 vaccinations to approximately 1,000 people per day. Both the hospital and health department plan to further expand capacity to operate multiple large-scale vaccination clinics each week, as vaccine supply allows.

There remains an overwhelming desire for COVID-19 vaccinations in Berrien County, particularly amongst those over the age of 65. To date, more than 19,000 older adults have expressed interest in being vaccinated via the Berrien County Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland vaccine surveys.

“While it is encouraging to see so many eager individuals who are ready to be vaccinated, the demand for the vaccine is far outpacing the supply coming into Berrien County,” said Nicki Britten, health officer, Berrien County Health Officer. “Vaccine allocations are unpredictable; recently the total number of vaccines delivered to Berrien County ranges between 1,000 to 2,500 doses a week. At the rate that vaccines are being allocated, it will take time to move through all those who are eligible and interested in getting the vaccine.”

Because vaccine supplies continue to be limited and are allocated to Berrien County by the state one week at a time, vaccination appointments continue to be opened and filled within the span of each week. To make the most efficient use of scarce vaccine resources, all clinics operated by both Spectrum Health Lakeland and the Health Department are by appointment only and not open to the general public at this time.

The most efficient way to indicate interest in receiving a COVID-19 vaccination appointment is to complete the [pre-registration wait list available](#) on the Berrien County Health Department website (for

those over the age of 65 and employers of essential workers) or complete the survey available via [Lakeland MyChart](#) located under “questionnaires” in the My Record section. The Health Department and Spectrum Health Lakeland will be using these lists as the primary means of confirming eligibility and notifying community members when they are able to schedule a vaccination according to the communication preference they selected, either phone or email. Individuals on these waitlists will not receive a “confirmation” email or notification of their status on the list, but rather must wait until either organization has vaccine availability to schedule them for an appointment. Completing either survey does not mean individuals will be scheduled for an appointment immediately; individuals should anticipate that it may be several weeks before they receive notification of appointment availability.

Both agencies are collaborating with community organizations such as senior centers, Area Agency on Aging and PACE to reach homebound individuals, and have specialized outreach methods for reaching those with limited internet access. People are encouraged to assist their family and friends with the online pre-registration process, particularly those over the age of 65 who may be without internet access or email.

Planning is underway to provide vaccinations to additional groups who are now eligible under the prioritization guidance issued by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, including childcare providers and pre-K through high school staff within the next few weeks. Other essential workers not currently eligible as well as people between the ages of 16 and 64 with health conditions that puts them at higher risk for serious COVID-19 complications, can expect to receive vaccinations by [late-spring or early-summer](#).

Spectrum Health Lakeland and the Health Department are asking for continued patience as planning is ongoing and appointment availability continues to expand. More information about the process for vaccination in Berrien County is available at bchdmi.org/COVID19 or spectrumhealthlakeland.org/COVID19.

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