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## **North Country Responds: Regional COVID19 Update 02/12/21**

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC), as the North Country's Regional Public Health Network, is committed to providing the community with regular updates on COVID-19 response in the North Country.

### **What happened last week:**

As many have heard by now, New Hampshire residents interested in receiving the COVID vaccine use VAMS, the federally run "Vaccine Administration Management System," to register for vaccine appointments. Longtime Littleton residents Irene "Muffy" Copenhaver, 77, and her husband Robert, 81, were both affected by the recent VAMS glitch, which allowed the couple to register for a private clinic location that should not have been available to them.

Guidance from a 2-1-1 call lead Muffy to contact the North Country Health Consortium's (NCHC) Public Health Network, where staff were able to connect Muffy and Robert to a February 3<sup>rd</sup> clinic located 2 miles down the road from their home for their first vaccine doses. With gratitude, Muffy praised the Public Health Network (PHN) team and everyone who "dealt with us fabulously," from the initial phone call to receiving her first dose of the vaccine. She acknowledged the challenges so far to the registration process but conveyed appreciation for everyone who helped her along the way.

To date, PHN clinics have administered 1,978 first dose and 1,364 second dose shots of the COVID vaccine. Small increases of vaccine allocation into the region from week to week should, over time, allow for more available vaccine appointments across clinics run by both local hospitals and Public Health Network partners.

In the North Country this week, regional mobile clinics were operated by Gorham Fire & EMS, Littleton Fire & Rescue, Lancaster Fire & EMS, and Woodsville EMS. The Public Health Network

and Woodsville EMS also kicked off clinics for the region's share of the State's Equity Allocation vaccine doses with clinics at three senior living facilities in Littleton and Bethlehem, as well as a qualified boarding school in Haverhill. Twenty-five Northern NH Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers— deployed for roles as vaccinators, registration support, COVID screeners, logistics support, and post-vaccine observers— helped run this week's clinics.

### **What you need to know:**

The Governor's COVID-19 press briefing on February 9<sup>th</sup> shared that there had been a system glitch to the VAMS platform, which has since been fixed. Those who were unable to register for a vaccine due to this error are asked to try again. Individuals who couldn't register for their 2<sup>nd</sup> dose within a week of the intended 4-week spacing between doses are also asked to cancel their delayed 2<sup>nd</sup> dose appointments and reschedule to now-available earlier dates.

Along with 2-1-1, there are local call-line options available to North Country residents. For information related to the following clinic locations, call the following numbers:

- Former Brown School (Berlin/Gorham area): (603) 752-2300
- Upper Connective Valley Hospital (Colebrook area): (603) 388-4259
- Weeks Medical Center (Lancaster/Whitefield area): (603) 788-5656
- Littleton Regional Healthcare (Littleton area): (603) 575-6400

The North Country Public Health Network also offers a call-line for general questions about regional response efforts: (603)259-4369.

New guidance was issued this week from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the safest way to wear masks. These include "double masking" by using a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric and wearing one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask. The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face. Make sure you can see and breathe easily.

Additional ways to make your mask effective, and more information including instructional videos can be found on the CDC.gov website.



Remember, even if you have received a vaccine, you still need to wear a mask!

**Shoutout to partners:**

NCHC would like to recognize our partners at the Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital (UCVH) and 45th Parallel in Colebrook, who together have been conducting vaccinations for Tier 1A public safety and healthcare workers as a component of the efforts of the Regional Public Health Network. The Incident Manager for UCVH is Chelsea Nugent and Medical Direction is provided by Ed Laverty, PA. Currently completing second dose clinics for Phase 1A, UCVH and the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel are also hitting the ground running by developing clinic teams for senior housing facilities in Groveton alongside Groveton EMS. These teams are leveraging part of the region's share of the State's Equity Allocation to vaccinate elderly and chronically ill North Country residents in their residences. 45th Parallel EMS workers are also going door-to-door to register Tier 1B potential vaccine recipients.

The North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) is a non-profit public health organization based in Littleton that collaborates with health and human services providers serving northern New Hampshire. Please direct any questions regarding the regional response to COVID-19 to [COVID19@NCHCNH.org](mailto:COVID19@NCHCNH.org). To reach the North Country COVID Response line for general inquiries, call (603)259-4369 during business hours, M-F from 8 am – 4:30 pm.

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# North Country Responds COVID-19



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Truly a team effort, members of the Northern NH Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) organized by the North Country Health Consortium (NCHC), local senior living sites, and NCHC's Public Health Network staff hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinics at local residential senior living sites. (L to R): Wanda McClure, retired RN as MRC post-vaccination observer, Emily Barton, NCHC staff helping with registration, Stephen Buzzell, MRC vaccinator, Judith Szczepaniak, local senior living facility Administrator, Lynn Sheridan, MRC initial COVID screener, and Adam Cloutier, NCHC staff coordinating the clinic. For more information about local COVID-19 efforts, visit [NCHCNH.org](http://NCHCNH.org).