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North Country Responds: Regional COVID19 Update 02/19/21

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:

They say, 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail.' When it comes to the importance of planning, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness team at NCHC takes this motto to heart.

Last week, the Public Health Network participated in a variety of planning activities to prepare for upcoming and future vaccine clinics, while also seeing through plans for clinics that had been weeks in the making.

Dalton Fire Department, Woodsville EMS, and Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital (UCVH) and 45th Parallel EMS in Colebrook, held 2nd dose clinics for Phase 1A vaccine recipients. Lancaster EMS and the Berlin and Gorham Fire Departments provided clinics for residents in Phase 1B by going onsite to give 1st dose vaccinations to residents served by Easter Seals and the Berlin Housing Authority, scheduling the 2nd dose clinics to take place in a month. Clinics are also in the works for Northern Human Services (NHS) group homes serving individuals with developmental disabilities. North Country Health Consortium staff went to NHS in Woodsville for an initial site visit, planning to also bring clinics to NHS's Littleton, Berlin, and Colebrook locations. Clinics for 1st doses are projected to take place in the beginning of March.

According to the State, next on deck for vaccination are teachers and childcare workers. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has begun discussing Phase 2 with the Regional Public Health Networks (PHN), asking each PHN to assess their region's capacity to support schools in providing vaccines to their teachers. With talks in their infancy, the State has



not presented a timeline for Phase 2 yet. Next week, members of the North Country PHN will be meeting with local School Administrative Units (SAU's) to start preparing for teacher vaccinations.

The Northern NH Unit Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) hosted an Orientation Training presented virtually to about 30 recent MRC recruits. MRC volunteers are being deployed to assist with vaccination efforts around the region. Deployments can be short-term or long-term. For example, a single MRC volunteer was deployed to serve as a vaccinator at a clinic held by Woodsville EMS this week, and the MRC also has two volunteers deployed to Littleton Fire & Rescue to help ready clinic supplies on an ongoing basis.

Offering an example of the regional unit working with local partners, the MRC is preparing to deploy 12 volunteers — 4 each of vaccinators, post-vaccine observers and registration/front desk staff — every weekend for 11 weeks to fulfill a long-term volunteer request to staff upcoming clinics for Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster.

What you need to know:

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has issued new travel requirements. If you are planning international travel, you will need to: get COVID tested at least 3 days before flying back to the United States (U.S.) and show your negative result to the airline before you board your flight; or be prepared to show proof of a recent positive viral test along with a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you are cleared to travel.

Masks are required at airports and other transportation stations, as well as on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transport going into, within, or out of the U.S. For more information, go to the [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Many people have been hit hard by the pandemic, but there are resources to help. Did you know the DHHS offers links and contact information to resources for mental health on the [nh.gov/covid19](https://www.nh.gov/covid19) website? Click the blue button on the right-hand side labeled “mental health, stress/anxiety management,” where you will access a landing page with places to turn to for help with anything from childcare, financial assistance, crisis support, and substance use.



For frontline workers experiencing emotional fatigue, help is just a call away to talk to a trained crisis counselor or support person through the NH Disaster Behavioral Health Resource Team (DBHRT) program. Counselors are available from 7 am – 9 pm, 7 days a week, through the following numbers:

- (603) 892-8924
- (603) 892-8504
- (603) 892-8086

Shoutout to partners:

In December, Rose Ellms was watching the news on WMUR from her Sugar Hill residence when Governor Sununu came on to talk about the need for volunteers and their pivotal role in supporting the State's vaccine roll out. Rose was so compelled by the Governor's call that she signed up with the Northern NH MRC the same night. An Administrative Assistant by trade, Rose has been working closely under Captain Chad Miller of Littleton Fire & Rescue, the PHN Unified Command's Logistics Section Chief, to offer her keen organization skills in managing and packaging vaccines and ancillary supplies going out to support vaccine clinics throughout the region. Eager to show up and help beyond her initial ask— and with anticipated increases to the vaccine allocation— Rose is also beginning to help train other MRC volunteers in the systems she has created to support logistics requests for regional partners. NCHC would like to thank MRC volunteer, Rose Ellms, for her enthusiasm and all that she brings to the table!

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. 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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CAPTION: Northern NH Unit Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer, Rose Ellms of Sugar Hill, has quickly become a key player in supporting regional COVID vaccine clinics, offering her keen organizational skills to manage clinic supplies to be delivered to partners across the region. Pictured, Rose attended the local Unit's MRC Orientation Training delivered virtually on February 16. To volunteer for the Northern NH Unit MRC, in a medical or non-medical role, and help with COVID Response efforts in the North Country, go to: NCHCNH.org.