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## **North Country Responds: Regional COVID19 Update 03/05/21**

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:**

Have you noticed COVID vaccine clinics popping up? These one-off clinics, which are providing between two days to a week's notice, are made possible due to the State's multi-prong approach for increasing shots into arms, while avoiding waste. With vaccines nearing expiration, State partners will contact local entities involved with COVID vaccination efforts, such as participating hospitals, to offer them a one-time allotment if they can pull off an emergency clinic to use up the doses before they expire. Littleton Regional Healthcare hosted a Sunday clinic on February 28 and North Country Healthcare offered clinics the weekend of March 6 through each of their clinic locations at Weeks Medical Center in Lancaster, Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital in Colebrook, and the former Brown School in Berlin.

Last week, The North Country Public Health Network was informed of the statewide strategy to provide vaccines to homebound residents. This plan to expand vaccine access to homebound individuals is part of the State's Equity Allocation initiative. According to the Strategy, someone may be homebound because the person's doctor advises that their health or illness could be worsened by leaving home, if the individual requires help or the assistance of another person and/or medical equipment to leave home, or they have difficulty leaving home and are typically unable to do so. Lack of transportation, especially in the North Country, is also a relevant factor to being considered homebound. The North Country Public Health Network is collaborating with local agencies that serve homebound individuals, including home health and human services providers, to identify those clients that would like to receive vaccination at home. A meeting next



week between the PHN and regional homebound agencies will kick off the development of a process to bring vaccinations to these individuals.

In the North Country this week, regional mobile clinics for Tier 1B vaccinations were operated by Berlin Fire Department together with Gorham Fire & Rescue and Lancaster EMS teams to provide vaccines to residents of congregate living facilities within their respective catchment areas. NCHC staff members and a team of regional Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers brought clinics to Northern NH House of Corrections in Berlin and Northern Human Services, Woodsville.

Deployments for the local MRC unit this week included about 30 volunteers covering roles as vaccinators, COVID screeners, registrars, post-vaccination observers, and materials managers. South of the Notch, 7 of these MRC members were deployed to the State-hosted drive-thru mass vaccination clinic on March 6- 8 at the NH Motor Speedway in Loudon. This clinic was projected to vaccinate 12,000 people over the course of 3 days with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which was recently issued Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to join the current COVID vaccine lineup as the first one-dose/appointment product.

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

If you qualify for COVID vaccination in Tier 1B and are waiting for your appointment or do not have an appointment yet, look out for pop-up COVID clinics that may come up at a location convenient to you, register quickly!

Are you, or are you assisting, someone who is unable to leave home or has difficulty doing so without assistance, and are not connected to a home health or human services agency? You can still get a COVID vaccination! The 2-1-1 Call Center is taking calls from individuals who would like to get vaccinated, but face barriers due to a homebound situation. Dial 2-1-1 to talk to a representative who will collect your information and provide the referral to the North Country Public Health Network to connect you to a vaccination option.



### Shoutout to partners:

This week, our partner shoutout goes to our dedicated partners at Northern Human Services in Woodsville! At the Northern Human Services (NHS) clinic last week, COVID vaccinations were provided to clients served by NHS, as well as their family members, their caregivers, and NHS staff. Working the clinic for the day was a mix of Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, NCHC Public Health employees, and Northern Human Services' (NHS) own staff members. The mixed group assumed roles as pre-vaccination COVID screeners, registrars, vaccinators, and post-vaccination observers. Some NHS staff members were there to both get a first dose of the vaccine themselves as well as to be a familiar face for NHS clients who would potentially be nervous to get a shot. NHS staff waited in the corridors and in the observation room to greet and catch up with clients, some of whom they had not seen in-person in months. Regarding getting vaccinated themselves, NHS staff described feeling “relief” and “ready for things to get back to normal,” so they could start seeing their clients in-person again.

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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CAPTION: Sabrina Coleman, Registered Nurse and dedicated staff member of Northern Human Services waits in the post-vaccination observation room at the Woodsville clinic to hand out “I got my COVID-19 vaccine” stickers to NHS clients who have just gotten a shot. In another region-wide team effort, the North Country Health Consortium’s North Country Public Health Network continues to coordinate with partners and roll-out vaccine clinics. For more information about NCHC and local efforts, go to [NCHCNH.org](http://NCHCNH.org).