

# Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

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## NFMMC to hold offsite vaccination clinics as state expands list

Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center will dispense COVID-19 vaccine to those who qualify at the Niagara Falls City School District Field House on the Niagara Falls High School campus. Although people must belong to an eligible priority group to be vaccinated, the state this week significantly expanded its list of those groups.

"I applaud School Superintendent Mark Laurrie for making this spacious and very accessible facility available to us," Memorial Medical Center President and CEO Joseph A. Ruffolo said. "It vastly improves our ability to serve our neighbors as we strive to defeat the virus that causes COVID-19."

"The Niagara Falls City School District is pleased to continue its unprecedented partnership with Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center to serve our community at the forefront of health and safety," Laurrie said. "We are always happy to support their efforts."

Among those added to the state's eligibility list as priority "1B":

- ✓ People age 65 and older
- ✓ State and local firefighters, both paid and volunteer
- ✓ Law enforcement personnel



in state, county and local police agencies

✓ School district staff including SEE NFMMC, continued on Page 5

Above, Pharmacy Director Michelle Lewis, left, and Infection Prevention and Antimicrobial Stewardship Coordinator Amy Wojciechowski were on hand at Memorial Medical Center to direct Wednesday's event. At right, Chief Medical Officer Vijay Bojedla, M.D., shows off a sign that says, "I got the shot." Vaccine recipients posed for photos with the sign during a COVID-19 vaccination event held Wednesday at the NDC-SD Field House. Bojedla provided medical oversight at the event.



## Greater Niagara Fishing Expo reschedules 2021 show



Organizers of the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo, one of the largest pure-fishing shows in the Great Lakes, recently announced a rescheduling of the 2021 event at the Conference and Event Center Niagara Falls due to COVID-19. They said this difficult decision is based on the continued impact of the COVID-19 health crisis – including safety, uncertainties revolving around the opening of the Canadian border and required quarantines for those traveling from other states, and the complexities in providing a quality experience

and return on investment for attendees, vendors, Conference Center staff and the community. The rescheduled dates for the show are Feb. 17-20, 2022.

"We have been meeting daily and actively monitoring COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations in hopes of putting on a safe show for everyone," said Melissa Gearhart, director of sales for the Conference Center and Show Manager for the Expo. "Unfortunately, due to continued uncertainties, we made the difficult decision to reschedule the 2021 Expo until 2022. Our goal SEE EXPO, continued on Page 5

## Niagara County Department of Health offers COVID-19 point-of-dispensing eligibility, preregistration details

The Niagara County Department of Health (NCDOH) is conducting point-of-dispensing (POD) operations.

"We are happy to announce the start of our mass vaccination campaigns, to offer COVID-19 vaccine to eligible persons in our community," Public Health Director Daniel J. Stapleton said.

PODs will be scheduled Tuesday-Thursday on a weekly basis, dependent on vaccine availability. Primary POD locations have been identified in Lockport, Niagara Falls and North Tonawanda. All POD operations are preregistration only, and sites will be changed to ensure access by

different areas across the county.

"There are two key steps for securing an appointment for COVID-19 vaccine at one of our PODs," stated Elise Pignatoro, director of public health planning and emergency preparedness. First, determine if you are eligible in the current New York state priority group phase, by visiting <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/>. Click on 'Check Eligibility' and complete the form. Upon submission, it will advise if you are eligible or not. Please print out the page that tells you if you are eligible (or save a screenshot on your phone) and bring it with you to the POD. You will also

need to bring proof of eligibility such as an employee ID card, letter from an employer or affiliated organization, or a pay stub, depending on the specific priority status. Second, schedule an appointment at one of the providers displayed after you complete the aforementioned form.

"For Niagara County DOH PODs, vaccinations are available by appointment only by registering via the links provided on our website at: <https://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/Public-Health-Preparedness/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccination>.

"Appointments will be made available for the current number of vaccine doses we have on hand to administer," Stapleton said.

Participants will receive a vaccination card that lists when the second dose should be received. Niagara County Department of Health is administering Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, which requires a second dose of the same vaccine one month later to complete the vaccination series.

"After vaccination, it is still very important that you continue to wear a mask, wash your hands and practice social distancing," Stapleton emphasized.

Visit the "NYS Am I Eligible"

website at: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> to find a location, or call the COVID-19 vaccination hotline at 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829).

For more information regarding the state priority groups for vaccine eligibility, visit: <https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/phased-distribution-vaccine>. As POD operations are scheduled on a week-to-week basis, continue to check the NCDOH website for updates: <https://www.niagaracounty.com/health>.



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