

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting
Agenda
Via Zoom*
Thursday February 18, 2021 4:30 PM

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes (January 21, 2021)

Public Comments

Old Business - none

New Business - none

Subcommittee Reports

Town Reports

Directors Report

1. COVID-19 Activity Update

Communications/Other

2. CTMirror.com: Hundreds scrambling for vaccines in Eastern Connecticut after hospitals cancel appointments
3. The Chronicle: Clearing the hurdles of vaccine distribution
4. Journal Inquirer: Tolland vaccine numbers are good: health district

Adjournment

*Next Board Meeting – April 15, 2021, 4:30PM via Zoom**

*In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, this meeting is physically closed to the public. The public may join the meeting via telephone. If you plan to join the meeting via phone, please email Millie Brosseau at mbrosseau@ehhd.org or call 860-429-3325 for the call in information. Meeting materials can be accessed at www.ehhd.org

Eastern Highlands Health District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes - DRAFT
Coventry Town Hall Annex
Thursday, January 21, 2021

Members present: E. Anderson (Andover), R. Aylesworth (Mansfield – 4:34pm), J. Elsesser (Coventry), J. Kelly (Bolton), E. Paterson (Mansfield), M. Rosen (Tolland), T. Nuccio (Tolland), D. Walsh (Coventry), M. Walter (Columbia), E. Weicenzki (Willington)

Staff present: R. Miller, C. Bradshaw-Hill, K. Dardick, M. Brosseau

Others: G. Greenberg, First Selectman, Scotland

J. Elsesser called the meeting to order at 4:33pm

E. Wiczenski made a MOTION, seconded by E. Anderson to accept the minutes with the correction that the motion made by J. Stille was actually made by D. Walsh. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Scheduled Item: EHHD Public Hearing – Proposed FY 21/22 Operating Budget, Proposed FY 21/22 CNR Budget

J. Elsesser called the public hearing to order at 4:34 pm. R. Miller read the notice into the record. (See attached) R. Miller noted that there were no written comments received. Hearing no public comment, J. Elsesser closed the public hearing at 4:35 pm.

Proposed Fiscal Year 21/22 Operating Budget, Proposed FY 21/22 CNR Budget, R. Miller outlined the primary drivers of the budget:

1. A **Salaries** expenditure increase of 4.8%. The increase accommodates merit and promotion increases for eligible staff and an increase in hours for part-time staff.
2. A **Benefits** expenditure increase of 5.4%. The increase accommodates corresponding increases in basic benefits, a 2% increase in the medical insurance line item, and previously board authorized compensation.
3. An increase of 1.3% in the appropriation from the adopted FY20/21 figure is proposed for the **state grant-in-aid**. The state appropriated; and, we have received 102% of the FY20/21 budgeted revenues for this line. At this time, we are anticipating level funding into FY21/22 for local health departments.
4. A total member **town contribution** increase of 3.0%. This includes a per capita rate increase of 3.6%, plus changes in the population estimates.
5. A **fee for service** revenue increase of 5.0%. This is an aggregate of all service fee categories and incorporates estimated projections for the current fiscal year, extrapolates them into FY21/22.

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by E. Wiczenski to adopt the budget as presented. J. Elsesser noted that the state budget is unlikely to reduce aid to health districts. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Town Reports

Columbia – M. Walter reported that a new restaurant, Columbia Kitchen is opening with a ribbon cutting on Friday 1/22.

Coventry – J. Elsesser reported that Husky Pizza is moving into the Former Beebe House; The former “Reids” will be opened by the owners of A Reverie. J. Elsesser informed the board that the paperwork has been submitted to DEEP to tie into the Bolton sewers.

Bolton – J. Kelly reported that Bolton has received a planning grant for the reuse of the Bolton Heritage Farm. They hope to use it as a gathering space.

Tolland – T. Nuccio reported that the senior center still remains closed, and that the COVID testing sites are running well.

Willington – E. Wiececki reported that the senior center has set up a program to help the seniors with vaccine appointments.

Mansfield – R. Aylesworth reported that the Elementary school project is moving forward. They are now faced with the challenge of relocating Little League field.

Directors Report

COVID-19 Activity Update

R. Miller reported on the activities related to COVID-19 in which his office has engaged. These include

- Public Health surveillance in the form of weekly reports issued.
- COVID Testing sites extended through February
- Contact Tracing
- PPE Distribution
- COVID-19 vaccination clinics

R. Miller reported that the district received \$104,787 to reimburse COVID related expenses from the coronavirus relief fund.

R. Miller informed the board that he is working with the state DPH to find large scale mass vaccination sites in Eastern Connecticut.

Adjournment

E. Anderson made a MOTION, seconded by D. Walsh to adjourn the regular meeting at 5:50 pm. MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Next Board Meeting – February 18, 2021, 4:30 PM via zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Miller
Secretary

**Eastern Highlands Health District
COVID-19
Response Activity Update
February 15, 2021
(Updates are in red)**

Activation of Public Health Emergency Response Plan

We have transitioned away from bi-weekly planning cycle with a bi-weekly staff zoom meeting to a weekly vaccination team meeting. We participate in twice weekly local public health virtual meetings with DPH.

Public Health Surveillance

We continue to issue weekly reports. In an effort to keep community partners updated on disease prevalence and other response activities.

Due to DPH changes in database reporting formats, and significant increases in the size of the dataset, it has taken more staff time to manage and develop the weekly reports. **Our last report dated February 12, 2021 is attached to this report.**

We continue to support area schools with review of state and county leading and secondary indicators for public schools, in addition to local data, in support of area public school decision making.

COVID Testing

In response to a local area increase in case prevalence the Eastern Highlands Health District coordinated with area partners to establish weekly COVID-19 drive thru test sites in and around the health district. The two sites within the health district include the Mansfield Middle School, and the Tolland High School. I have the following data available for these sites:

MMS 12/9 – 242 tests, 236 negatives, 4 positives, 2 inconclusive – 1.7%

MMS 12/16 – 238 tests, 228 negatives, 9 positives – 3.7%

MMS 12/23 – 207 tests, 203 negatives, 4 positives -1.9%

MMS 12/30- 130 tests, 125 negatives, 3 positives, 2 inconclusive – 2.3%

MMS 1/6 – 193 tests, 184 negatives, 8 positives, 1 inconclusive – 4.1%

MMS 1/13 – 192 tests, 188 negatives, 3 positives, 1 Inconclusive – 1.2%

MMS 1/20 – 230 tests, 212 negatives, 13 positives, 5 inconclusive – 5.7%

MMS 1/27 - 175 tests, 166 negatives, 9 positives – 5.1%

MMS 2/3 – 152 tests, 148 negatives, 1 positives, 3 inconclusive - <1%

MMS 2/10 – 149 tests, 146 negatives, 3 positives – 2.0%

THS 12/13 – 371 tests, 360 negatives, 11 positives – 3.0%

THS 12/27 – 350 tests, 322 negatives, 23 positives, 1 inconclusive – 6.5%

THS 1/10 – 222 tests, 199 negatives, 23 positives – 10.3%

THS 1/24 – 173 tests, 159 negatives, 10 positives, 4 inconclusive – 5.9%

This office will be working to extend the testing schedule through March.

In addition to the above locations the health district supports the promotion of a number of other testing sites in the region. This office will continue to work to make testing events available within the health district.

Contact Tracing

The health district (or the DPH tracing unit) is contact tracing every confirmed case within our Jurisdiction that are not UConn students. We continue to stay updated with bi-weekly modifications to the new state-wide web based contact tracing system called *ContaCT*. Below are updates to the contact tracing program that represent, in part, our efforts to respond to this pandemic:

- During the month of January with state support an average of **220 community cases per week were investigated.**
- During the month of January we investigated or supported the investigation of **approximately 8 public school affiliated cases per week.** Many schools went to distance learning in early January.
- SHaW continues to investigate all positive UConn students. EHHD is tracing all staff and faculty, and non-student residents.
- During January we investigated approximately **4 town governmental affiliated cases per week.**
- The health district currently has 3 staff and 2 MRC volunteers conducting contact tracing each on a part-time basis. **We reached our internal capacity to manage all cases within our jurisdiction. We now routinely rely on state contact tracers to support our daily efforts.**

University of Connecticut Storrs

The fall semester begins January 19, 2021. The testing plan requires pre-arrival test, then a post arrival test for residential students. Then a two week quarantine period using distance learning commences. In-person classes start thereafter. Surveillance testing includes weekly tests for all on and off campus student through February. In-person classes end in late April.

Schools

In the period leading up to school reopening and since, this agency continues to respond to questions from school nurses, principals, and superintendents. The topics include but are not limited to contact tracing, student and staff exclusion guidance, travel advisory guidance, symptom screening criteria, case communications and notifications, confidentiality, interpretation and implementation of SDE mitigation guidance, and many other COVID related matters. We provide thoughtful, researched responses daily.

PPE Distribution

CT DPH tasked local health departments with distributing PPE to local area private healthcare providers. We no longer receive allocations from the DEMHS Region 4 distribution site. However still have a moderate inventory left. To date, we have distributed approximately **130,000 items to 46 area healthcare**, and personal care providers in our jurisdiction. We continue to provide PPE regularly to area providers upon request.

Reopen CT Sector Rules

In an effort to support our local businesses a tremendous amount of staff time is expended working with area businesses providing guidance and support on the application and interpretation of Reopen CT, both phase 1, phase 2, phase 3, and now phase 2.1 of the business sector rules; providing modified inspections and infection control guidance for food service establishments (Approximately 170 are currently open, with 40 closed). Since March we have responded to **123 complaints** regarding violations of the sector rules, or the Governors executive orders.

This office issued two cease and desist orders since the sector rules have been in place. One 9/28 to Huskies Restaurant and Tavern, and a second on 11/10 to the American Eagle Saloon and Café in Willington for violations of the Governors executive orders regarding masks, social distancing and other sector rules. Both establishments have since received approval on re-open plans and passed a pre-operational inspection.

Governors Executive Orders and other state guidance - Application and Interpretation

We continue to track and review executive orders and state guidelines as they are issued, providing consultation and interpretation support to recreation departments, first responder agencies, youth services agencies, boards of education, town leadership, and other entities as requested. In addition to numerous phone consultations, and emails, this office and staff participates in regular COVID response staff meetings with a number of member towns.

Public Health Education, Communications, Messaging

EHHD is aligned with the Governor's and CDC Messaging; providing regular public information updates to website, and social media (FB & Twitter).

We push out information and updates on access to testing of general public and first responders.

Agency updates routinely provided to community partners.

We continue to provide consultation regarding the travel advisory to a number of public sector employers.

We are now pushing out information on COVID-19 vaccine access and eligibility to the public and community partners via website, email blast, and news media.

Medical Reserve Corps retention and recruitment

We continue to recruit and vet new MRC volunteers. We currently have 57 vaccinators, and 84 non-clinical volunteers on our roster. About 40% has experience working one of our clinics. We continue to rotate new volunteers through our clinics for experience.

We are activating our MRC volunteers on a monthly basis to support all COVID-19 vaccine clinics within each month. We utilized approximately 30 MRC volunteers per week to support our clinic operations. Many of these are reoccurring volunteers.

We deployed 20 MRC volunteers to support UConn's efforts to test approximately 6000 residential students at the beginning of the fall semester. Three volunteers are currently trained in contact tracing. A combined total of 46 MRC volunteers supported our three seasonal flu clinics that occurred in October and November.

COVID-19 Crisis Response Funding for State and Local Health Departments (COVID grant #1)

Local public health departments are receiving COVID-19 Crisis Response Funding from the CDC. We have been allocated \$29,596. Currently, the funding is reimbursing 100% for over-time, response supplies, and communications. **This grant is fully expended.**

Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) Enhancing Detection grant (COVID grant #2)

The EHHD has been awarded \$384,489 through November 17, 2022 to enhance health district capacity to detect, respond, and prevent COVID-19 illness in the community. This grant is funding additional staffing to support the EHHD response. The DPH approved our application. We have since received our full award of \$153,795 for the first budget period ending May 17, 2021.

Coronavirus Relief Fund

With the Town of Mansfield's assistance, the health district was able to claim for reimbursement **\$104,787** in pandemic response expenses against the Municipal CRF for the period ending December 30, 2020. The expenses claimed are related to regular and program staff time dedicated to the pandemic response during this period. These funds have since been received by the Mansfield Finance Department.

FEMA Reimbursement

This office has initiated the process to seek reimbursement from FEMA.

COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign Planning and Activities

We are currently meeting weekly with DPH and regional vaccination planning partners. Here are the latest salient updates on distribution and administration.

- *As of the writing of this report, the EHHD has administered 2850 doses (of which 420 are 2nd doses) in 28 clinics at the Mansfield Community Center, and EO Smith High School.*
- *The EHHD will be conducting 4 to 5 weekly clinics through the current phase rollout. Clinics will be located in either the Mansfield Community Center, or E.O. Smith High School.*
- *The Governor's advisory committee on vaccine has shifted the priority for local health departments during the initial parts of phase 1b to 65+ individuals. This priority group will likely take many weeks.*
- The Vaccine Administration and Management System (VAMS) is driving the format and through put of the EHHD vaccination clinics. Currently, all EHHD clinics are open to any individual registered in VAMS and eligible for vaccine per the State's phased plan. Consequently, the EHHD clinics are part of a state-wide network of VAMS clinics open to eligible individuals. This clinic format will likely be in place through phase 1b and 1c.
- In an effort to facilitate vaccine access to local eligible persons the EHHD will directly notify local partners when EHHD vaccine appointments are posted in VAMS.

- This office is currently working with the Governor's office, Hartford Healthcare, UCONN HEALTH and Trinity Health to find viable regional locations for large scale, high volume mass vaccination sites.
- We have not yet received any details on how or if we will be reimbursed for vaccine administration.
- Details on the current CT vaccination Phase rollout is attached to this report.
- This office will continue to work with member towns and local social services officials to facilitate vaccine access for senior citizens and other vulnerable populations.

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Hundreds scrambling for vaccines in Eastern Connecticut after hospitals cancel appointments

VACCINE INFO :: by DAVE ALTIMARI | FEBRUARY 4, 2021 | VIEW AS "CLEAN READ"



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Mikaela Coady, a physician assistant with Priority Urgent Care of Ellington, gives Lea Trombley, 90, of Vernon, a first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at a clinic at St. Bernard Church in the Rockville section of Vernon Thursday, Jan. 28. The one-day clinic was set up in partnership with the town of Vernon in an effort to reach out to the community to make it easier for seniors age 75 and over to get the vaccine. They dispensed 100 doses.

A large group of elderly residents are scrambling to find clinics where they can get their second vaccination shots after two hospitals in Eastern Connecticut abruptly canceled their appointments this week.

The Eastern Connecticut Health Network, which operates both Manchester Memorial Hospital and Rockville General Hospital, made the decision to “pause” first-dose vaccination clinics because they weren’t getting enough doses from the state and to cancel any second-dose appointments that had not come through their systems originally.

The move has caused a major backlog for second shots and has left people with waiting times as long as 55 days – well past Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines – to get their second doses.

“This whole thing is a mess,” Union First Selectman David Eaton said Thursday.

Eaton said he has received several calls from residents panicked that they could not schedule their second doses of the Moderna vaccine. Eaton said many of them went to Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford Springs for their first dose and were told to go back into the federal vaccine system, VAMS, to schedule a second-dose appointment rather than having it scheduled right then.

Eaton said because Johnson Memorial is the only hospital in the area, its clinics booked quickly, and people discovered on VAMS that they could make second-dose only appointments at either Manchester to Rockville General Hospitals even though they didn’t get their first doses there.

But on Monday, the two hospitals announced they were halting vaccine clinics.

The two hospitals have given about 7,000 first-shot vaccinations, according to ECHN’s President of Business Development Dan DelGallo. They have also given about 3,000 second doses.

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Delgallo said they will complete the roughly 4,000 second doses for people who received their first vaccinations at either hospital.

“If you received your first dose at either Manchester or Rockville General, we will honor all of those second-dose appointments even if VAMS tells you it has been cancelled,” ECHN spokeswoman Nina Kruse said. “The date you received to get your second dose after your first shot was completed will be honored.”

A Wednesday stampede

DPH spokeswoman Maura Fitzgerald said that the state’s vaccination team has been working with the two hospitals to determine who needs the second shots and to find alternative scheduling for them if necessary. State officials believe about 150 people will need to be rescheduled, although DelGallo said he couldn’t confirm that number.

“We are working collaboratively with them (ECHN) to help with rescheduling issues,” Fitzgerald said. “They have been very good partners, and we are working with them to ensure everyone gets their second doses.”

Many of the people whose first-dose appointments were cancelled this week ended up Wednesday at a clinic at the Eastern Highlands Health District, which serves some of the same communities as ECHN. More than 100 people signed up for their first dose overnight, causing long lines and some short tempers at Wednesday’s clinic in Mansfield, Eastern Highlands Health District Director Robert Miller said.

“The timing of all these cancellations and our proximity to that health care provider resulted in a surprise to us. One hundred people signed up overnight, and we didn’t discover that until the morning of the clinic,” Miller said.

“We had to do some real scrambling to get more vaccinators and move the queue indoors, because having people with mobility issues standing in long lines is not ideal.”

Zero availability

In its press release announcing the suspended clinics, ECHN officials said that people could go back into the VAMS system and find other appointments for their second doses only.

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That has proven to be problematic, Eaton said.

“If you go into the system and try and pick a clinic within 50 miles, there is zero availability for these second doses,” Eaton said. “The only place around here is Johnson Memorial, and they are booked up for months.”

Colleen Berment Langer discovered the waiting list at Johnson Memorial Hospital firsthand when her 80-year-old husband tried to schedule his second dose appointment there. He received his first vaccine at the Somers hospital on Jan. 18.

But she said he wasn’t allowed to schedule his second vaccine at the clinic that day and was instead told to schedule it through VAMS. He scheduled it for Feb. 22 but then wondered if he could get a quicker appointment elsewhere and canceled it.

Given the shortage in the second dose vaccine market in Eastern Connecticut, he found nothing, so he rescheduled at Johnson Memorial for March 10 – 51 days after his first vaccine.

Eaton said many people are frustrated and worried the vaccine will be useless.

“They are going to lose these people whose vaccine is going to expire because they can’t get that second shot, and this is not the group the state wants to lose,” Eaton said.



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Tuesday, February 16, 2021

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Clearing the hurdles of vaccine distribution

MICHELLE WARREN
AND CLAIRE GALVIN
Chronicle Staff Writers

As more of the public is able to get the coronavirus vaccine, local officials are working hard to set up sites where it can be offered, especially for the older population.

While optimism is there regarding the eventual availability of the vaccine, there are logistical hurdles regarding registering for shots that are frustrating those eligible.

Eastern Highlands Health District staff are working with Hartford HealthCare and Trinity Health, as well as the University of Connecticut, to get mass COVID-19 vaccination sites set up in Windham, the Vernon/Rockville area and in Storrs.

"The initial goal is over 500 doses a day, maybe six to seven days a week at these sites," EHHD Director Robert Miller said during the Mansfield Town Council meeting Monday.

Phase 1B, the current phase of the state's vaccination distribution plan, includes people ages 75 and older, as well as frontline essential workers, people with underlying health conditions with an increased risk for severe illness and people in congregate settings.

Right now, only people who are ages 75 and older can sign up for the vaccine.

"We're going to be in phase 1B for many months," Miller said.

More than a million people in the state are eligible to be vaccinated during Phase 1B, according to state officials.

Miller said, depending on the availability of the vaccine, Phase 1B will probably last into the summer at least.

He said the expectation is the next group of people, ages 65 to 74, may be able to sign up for the vaccination in the second half of February.

Mansfield

Staff at the Mansfield Senior Center and Mansfield Public Library are currently working with the elderly population to help them register for appointments.

Appointments are currently being made through the Vaccine Administration Management System, a digital platform.

"Make no mistake," Miller said. "The VAMS (Vaccine Administration Management System) system is complicated. It's challenging."

He said the state is working "very hard" to improve the registration system.

Miller said state officials are also "working feverishly" to ramp up and roll out the 211 feature so people can make appointments for vaccines over the phone.

Mansfield Human Services Director Patricia Schneider said people can sign up for a time to come into the senior center and get in-person assistance with registration.

She said one group that has had a particularly difficult time registering are people who are hearing-impaired.

"There are a lot of challenges around the system," Schneider said.

"Again, in particular, my department and the library are going to be very involved in helping people and are involved at this point."

Mansfield Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth said he has spoken to Mansfield Resident Trooper Sgt. Keith Timme about the possibility of people being scammed.

He said there are many town staffers who want to help "navigate" the registration process.

"People are vulnerable right now for a variety of reasons and they could be subject to or prey to a scam," he said.

On Monday, Miller said the health district had been administering about 600 doses a week based on current capacities and available resources.

Individuals who get the vaccine must get two doses.

Miller said about four or five vaccination clinics have been held at the Mansfield Community Center every week.

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Starting next week, there will also be a large-scale vaccination clinic at E.O. Smith High School one day a week, as well as four smaller clinics at the community center.

"Our first appointment clinics have filled up pretty quickly," Miller said.

He said the EHHD just began the second-dose clinics and those had some kinks, but those are being managed.

On Jan. 22, he said, there were six doses left and EHHD officials were scrambling to find people to administer the doses to before they went bad.

"It's really hard on the staff so we're working hard to come up with a longer list of individuals who can be available on short notice and can respond and can come to our clinics," Miller said.

He said the "on-call" list was utilized to find more people to administer doses and Mansfield Mayor Antonia Moran received one of them.

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"It strikes me that we need to do some outreach and that needs to start for the people who aren't already in our systems for the cold call," Deputy Mayor Ben Shaiken said.

Meanwhile, the health district continues to seek assistance with the distribution of the vaccines.

Miller said there are now more than 100 members in the EHHD medical reserve corps, but more members are being sought.

The link to fill out the form to join the medical reserve corps is available on the EHHD website, www.ehhd.org.

Windham

In Windham, vaccinations were available at the Windham Senior Center on Friday.

Windham Director of Human Services Mary DeMarco said they were able to give out about 80 doses on Friday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

The event was held through the North Central District Health Department, with the help of the Willimantic Fire Department emergency personnel.

DeMarco said this was the first clinic offered by the health department at the senior center.

"We're pretty excited about having them here," DeMarco said. "We were concerned about the 75 and above age group, so that's what we're targeting now."

DeMarco said she believed the seniors are eager to get it done.

"I don't know of any that we have contacted that said "absolutely not, we don't want it," DeMarco said.

In fact, many of the seniors contacted had already gotten the shot, or had already made an appointment to get it.

On Friday, appointments were made via the VAMS system.

DeMarco also said the software was "clunky" regarding getting appointments.

"If the family members can help a senior go through the system, that's the best way to do it," DeMarco said.

Staff at the senior center are also able to help DeMarco said. The center can be reached at 860-423-4524.

DeMarco said she was hopeful another clinic would be offered in the future.

"The more clinics that pop up, the better," DeMarco said.

DeMarco thanked the health department and the first responders that helped Friday.

"It's really running smoothly," DeMarco said. "I couldn't ask for better partners in this."

Local health care agencies are also offering the vaccination, like at Generations Family Health Center in Windham.

Willimantic Generations Chief Quality Officer and Medical Director Danielle DiGeronimo said the site has been following the governor's protocols to distribute the vaccine.

DiGeronimo said the elderly population is a key population to target.

"If they do contract the illness, they're going to have a higher morbidity or mortality rate," DiGeronimo said. "Focusing on them is a great way to reduce that."

DiGeronimo encouraged all to get vaccinated when they're able to.

"It's a safe and effective vaccine," DiGeronimo said. "It's the best and possibly only way that we can mitigate this pandemic."

Follow Michelle Warren on Twitter - @mwarrentc. Follow Claire Galvin on Twitter - @CGalvinTC.

How to get your COVID vaccine

Currently, health care personnel, long-term care facility residents, medical first responders and people 75 years and older are eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Qualifying locals can access the shot at:

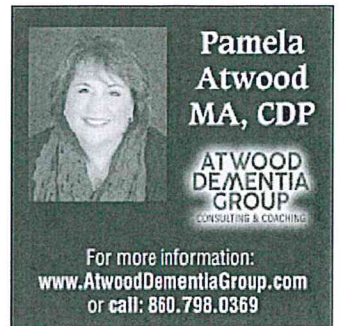
- Windham Community Memorial Hospital through Hartford Health-Care. More information is located at hartfordhealthcare.org/health-wellness/covid-vaccine.



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- Generations Family Health Center, located at 40 Mansfield Ave., Willimantic, is offering vaccinations for current patients. More information is available at genhealth.org/vaccine-news-2021.
- The local health districts are also hosting events to vaccinate those in need. The Eastern Highlands Health District can be reached at 860-429-3325 and the North Central District Health Department can be reached at 860-745-0383.
- Appointments can also be made online via the Vaccine Administration Management System, vams.cdc.gov.

This article appears in our print edition and in our Chronicle e-edition (available at 4 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. Saturday) complete with all photos and special sections.

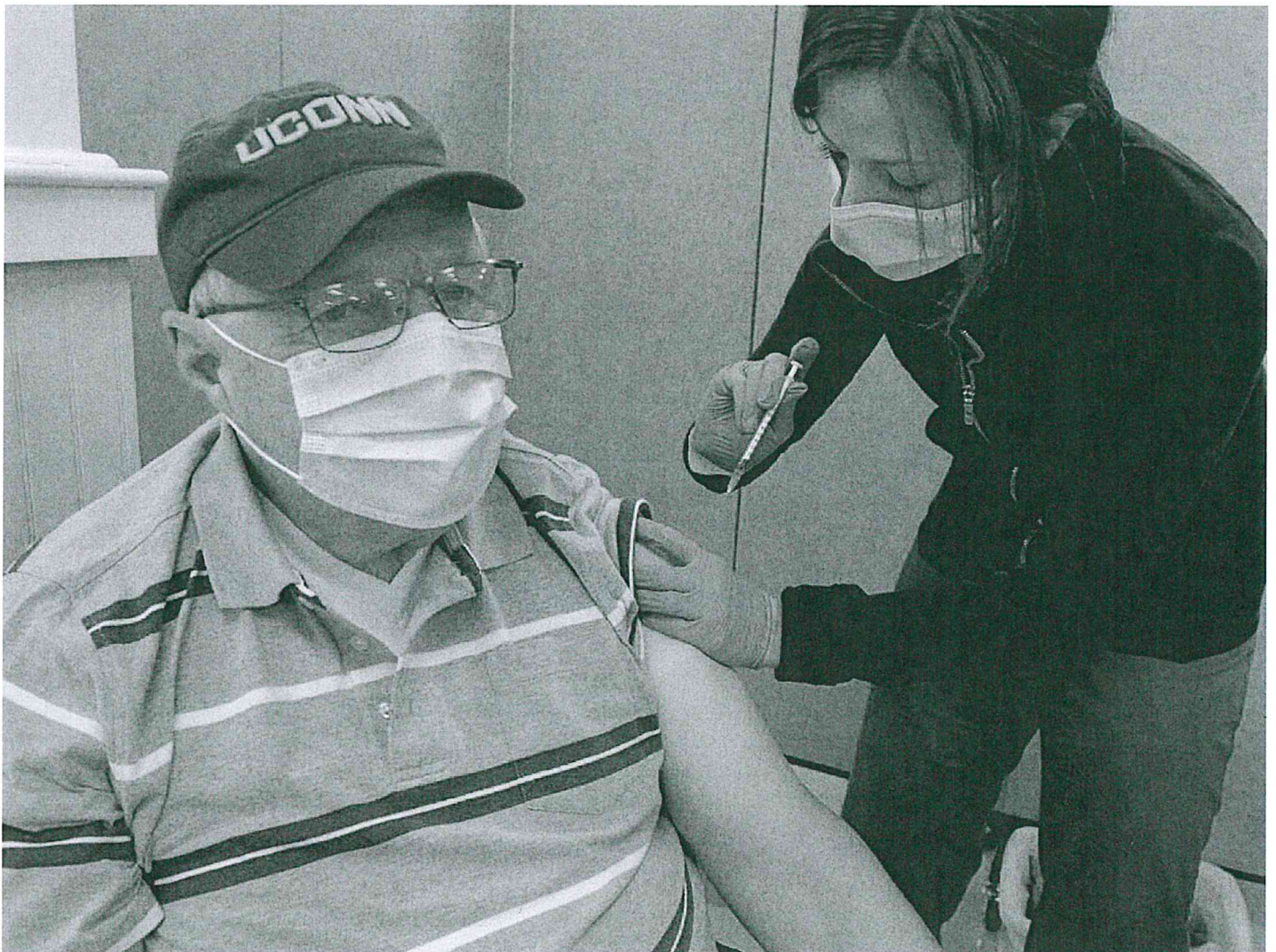
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Tolland vaccine numbers are good: health district

By Michelle France
mfrance@journalinquirer.com
Feb 12, 2021



Edward Lashetski of Tolland, gets his Covid-19 vaccination shot from nurse Carri Meier, during a clinic, Thursday, January 28, 2021, at St. Bernard Church in the the Rockville section of Vernon. 108 people over the age of 75 received their first of the two Moderna shots, the second one due on February 25. Vernon now has procured a trailer to bring supplies to

locations to through several congregate settings in Vernon and surrounding towns to make it convenient for people to get their vaccinations. The Vernon effort is through a partnership with the Eastern Connecticut Health Network, Urgent Care Centers of Connecticut, and the North Central Health Department.

Jim Michaud / Journal Inquirer

TOLLAND – The town is ahead of state average in administering COVID-19 vaccinations among eligible residents, according to Eastern Highlands Health District Director Robert Miller, however, it could be doing better as not all appointment slots are being filled.

During Tuesday's virtual town council meeting, Miller provided the council with data on how the district is navigating the pandemic and it's strengths and weaknesses in vaccinating residents.

Miller said that as of Feb. 4, the town has seen about a 34% drop in the prevalence of COVID-19 cases over the two-week period, aligning with the downward trend of cases statewide.



COVID

WHAT: Tolland is above state average in administering the COVID-19 vaccine

VACCINE: The Eastern Highlands Health District is administering the Moderna vaccine. Call 860-896-4568 to schedule appointments.

"The town of Tolland was really challenged by an acceleration of cases there about a month ago and luckily that has definitely subsided over the past number of weeks," he said.

Hospitalizations are now under 1,000 statewide and virus positivity rate is under 4%, Miller said Tuesday, but dropped to 2.3% today, adding that it's the lowest it's been for months.

Still, Tolland remains under "red alert" by the Department of Public Health, Miller said. Municipalities that fall under red alert are identified as having 15 or more cases per 1,000 residents.

Miller said Tolland continues to partner with Vernon to alternate testing sites between the high schools.

The health district has been holding three to five vaccine clinics weekly, he said. At the clinics, about 400 to 500 doses are being administered weekly. About 2,000 residents have received their first dose and about 300 have received their first and second dose of the vaccine, Miller said. Of that latter number, 110 are Tolland residents with 46 over the age of 75, he said, adding that Tolland is doing well in terms of vaccine coverage for the senior population, which was last reported at 76.5% on Feb. 3 and has likely increased since. The state average is at 43.2%, he said.

"Keep up the good work with whatever you're doing in the town of Tolland getting those seniors covered," Miller said.

Improvement could be made in filling appointments, he said.

A Feb. 3 clinic, which had 300 doses to administer, had only 150 appointments filled, Miller said.

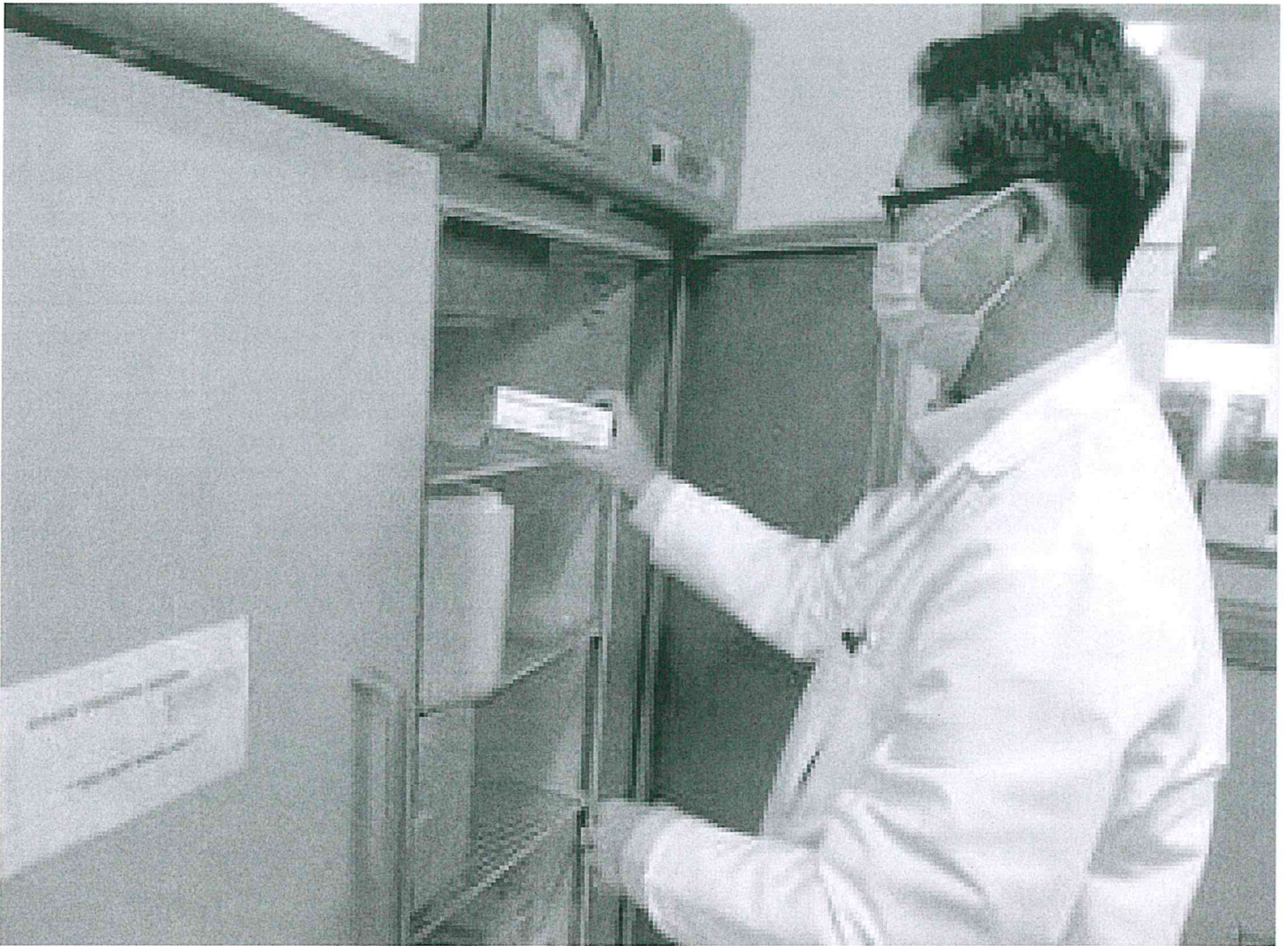
"I was a bit disappointed at our ability to fill those appointment slots," Miller said.

Registration to get the shot has been a problem for many.

Town Manager Michel Rosen said Tolland has partnered with Vernon to offer another avenue to sign up for a shot when they are eligible by calling 860-896-4568 to schedule appointments.

The call center is staffed by volunteers Monday through Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For updates on the towns of Coventry and Tolland, follow Michelle France on Twitter: @MFranceReport, Facebook: Michelle France, and Instagram: @MFranceReport.



Vernon call center can help with vaccine appointments

Vernon expanding vaccine efforts with mobile clinic, call center

Michelle France

Town Reporter

Michelle covers the towns of Coventry and Tolland. Michelle joined the June 2019. She is a UConn alum, and she enjoys reading, cooking, and yoga, and watching her children pursue their passions.