



# News Release

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## **Vaccine Distribution Effort Includes Steps to Ensure Equity** *Nearly 22% of Frederick County Receives 1<sup>st</sup> Dose*

FREDERICK, Md. –More than 1 in 5 Frederick County residents have now received at least one dose of vaccine to protect against the COVID-19 virus, and 12.7% of residents are fully vaccinated, County Executive Jan Gardner announced today. As vaccine availability ramps up in the coming weeks, public health experts and community partners are working together to ensure hard-to-reach populations have access to vaccinations. Of particular concern are ethnic and racial groups who historically suffer poorer health outcomes, as well as people who live in rural areas. According to the most recent Frederick County Community Health Assessment, people of color experience higher rates of every health indicator, from cancer rates to infant mortality.

“It is important that everyone in our community have access to health care, especially during a pandemic,” Executive Gardner said. “People without access to care are often in poorer health, which makes them more likely to get severely sick or die when new viruses emerge. We are working with key partners to make sure vaccinations are available to all residents in an equitable manner.”

In Maryland, a disproportionate number of Black residents have died from COVID-19. In Frederick, Hispanics make up only 10.5% of the population but nearly 14% of all confirmed cases of the virus.

To address the disparity, Frederick County has taken a number of steps to ensure everyone has access to the COVID-19 vaccination effort. Vital public health information is presented in multiple formats and languages. Outreach efforts include trusted community members. And community vaccination clinics are being scheduled by the Frederick County Health Department in collaboration with the faith community, as well as with cultural and ethnic organizations.

Because race and ethnicity have been tied directly to disparities in all health indicators for which sufficient data exists, Executive Gardner joined Public Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, and County Council President M.C. Keegan-Ayer in signing a joint declaration of racism as a public health crisis. President Keegan-Ayer represents Council District 3, the most culturally and ethnically diverse district in Frederick County.

As of today, there have been 17,593 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Frederick County residents. Two additional deaths were recorded this week, bringing the local death toll to 280. The county’s positivity rate stands at 5.06%, and the seven-day average of new cases for every 100,000 people is 14.81; both statistics increased over the previous week. Hospitalizations dropped to 18 coronavirus patients, with two people in intensive care. Statistics are updated daily at [FrederickCountyMD.gov/CovidStats](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/CovidStats).

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