



# COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Thursday, January 19, 2023

## CHAIRMAN'S PRESS RELEASE

### COVID-19 NUMBERS STEADY; FLU 'DECLINING'

#### ***COVID-19 cases***

As of this morning, the Columbia County Department of Health reported 71 new cases of COVID-19 this week, continuing the pace seen by the DOH in recent weeks.

County DOH Director Victoria McGahan said it appears that 75 percent of new COVID-19 cases appearing in the Northeast can be traced to the new XBB1.5 variant. "It seems to be highly transmissible," she said.

"We think this variant could be more immune-evasive. If you didn't get the bivalent booster and you haven't had an active Covid infection since about July 2022, then your protection from this variant in particular is probably not as strong as it could be. What they're saying is that this variant binds tightly to the ACE2 mutation of the Omicron variant." said Director McGahan.

As for the flu, Director McGahan said that currently the county seems to be "declining to a more normal place for this time of year. That is encouraging."

#### ***Upcoming DOH COVID-19 vaccination clinics***

The Columbia County Department of Health will offer COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics at the A.B. Shaw Fire Department in Claverack on Thursdays (not on Thanksgiving) from 3-5:30 p.m. throughout the month of January. All vaccines are available on a walk-in basis. For additional information, contact the county DOH at 518-828-3358.

#### ***County vaccination rates***

As of Saturday, January 14, the Columbia County Department of Health had administered 11,300 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Second doses now number 9,575. The vaccine administered is Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson. Note: J&J – a single-dose vaccine – is added as a first shot.

Third shots (boosters) of Moderna or Pfizer now number 4,132. Fourth shots (boosters) of Moderna or Pfizer now number 715. Johnson & Johnson boosters number 65. Pfizer bivalent boosters stand at 455, and 818 of Moderna.

Pediatric first shots number 702, with 671 second shots and 80 boosters.

The total number of Columbia County residents by all vaccine providers, as shown on the NYS COVID-19 vaccine tracker website: 42,367 people with primary series, or 70.7 percent of the county's 59,916 population.

### ***Student testing, home testing and affirmation reports***

The DOH continues to provide testing for students and staff of Columbia County schools who require a negative test to return to school. This will be by appointment only at the DOH Monday-Friday between the hours of 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:45-3:30 p.m. Parents may contact (518) 828-3358 X1251 to schedule these appointments when needed. This testing will still only be for staff/students of Columbia County schools who need a negative COVID test to return to school.

Also available on the county DOH website is information on filing home testing reports as well as affirmation letters of quarantine and/or isolation that may be required by employers.

### ***Disclaimer***

It is the county's intention to issue accurate information regarding the coronavirus situation under conditions that can change by the minute. For the most up-to-date, accurate information, visit the County Department of Health's website at <https://www.columbiacountynyhealth.com> or their Facebook page @: <https://www.facebook.com/Columbia-County-Department-of-Health-469399129790791>. The state's coronavirus website, with up-to-the-minute information, can be located at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>.

Every Thursday afternoon, Columbia County Board of Supervisors Chairman Matt Murell will issue a press release on the coronavirus situation. The releases can be found on the Columbia County website and the Facebook pages of the Sheriff's Office, the Department of Health, and the Emergency Management Office.