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CHAIRMAN'S PRESS RELEASE

NEW CASES TAKE 'SIGNIFICANT TUMBLE'

COVID-19 cases

COVID-19 positive cases took a significant tumble this week, falling to their lowest weekly level this year, Columbia County Department of Health Director Jack Mabb said today. There were 36 positive cases in the first four days of this week, nearly half of the positive cases reported last week.

"I think it's good news ahead of the Thanksgiving weekend, but people should still stay aware of those around them," said Director Mabb. He is encouraging people to be aware of symptoms in themselves and family members who are gathering next Thursday, and to utilize home tests to determine if those ill individuals are positive for COVID-19.

The good news on the virus's effect on the community is also reflected in hospitalizations, with just six people hospitalized and one in the ICU. The department reported its 159th COVID-19 related death last week, this with an elderly gentleman who lived at home.

Interest in the COVID-19 booster remains, with 54 vaccinated at last Thursday's clinic. The department also administered 21 flu vaccinations that day. Interest in the Monkeypox vaccine is a different story, as only four received the vaccine. "I think those county residents who wanted the two-shot series have gotten it," said Director Mabb. However, the DOH will continue to offer the vaccine at its weekly clinic at 325 Columbia.

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 November and December 1. 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, November 12, the Columbia County Department of Health had administered 11,296 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Second doses now number 9,571. 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 369, and 655 of Moderna.

Pediatric first shots number 690, with 661 second shots and 55 boosters.

The total number of Columbia County residents by all vaccine providers, as shown on the NYS COVID-19 vaccine tracker website:

46,068 have received at least one dose, or 76.9 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.