



North Carolina
Public Health Association

For more information, contact:

Elaine A. Ellis

VP, Communication and Marketing

North Carolina Medical Society

(919) 272-4027 (cell)

eellis@ncmedsoc.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Broad Coalition of Health Care Groups Urge All Eligible to Get Vaccinated

RALEIGH -- As a broad group of organizations representing your community's physicians, physician assistants, health clinics, hospitals and local health departments, we strongly encourage everyone currently eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine to do so as soon as possible. Getting vaccinated with one of the three authorized vaccines is crucial to stemming the severity of the illness caused by the COVID-19 virus and the spread of its more transmissible variants. In addition to the 3 'W's – wearing a mask, waiting six feet apart and washing your hands – *getting a vaccine will help end this pandemic.*

Everyone Will Have a Chance to be Vaccinated

As vaccine supply slowly increases, a growing variety of providers are administering vaccines including at vaccination clinics set up by health departments, health systems and the state, pharmacies, and, increasingly, your doctor's office. Please take just a minute to check [the state's website](#) as well as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) vaccine finder](#) to find a place near you offering the vaccine. These websites will help you determine your eligibility and to set up an appointment.

"We urge you to get a vaccine as soon as you're eligible, keeping in mind our refrain that 'those who would fare worst if they acquire the COVID-19 virus, should be vaccinated first,'" said **North Carolina Medical Society President Philip Brown, Jr., MD**. "Now with three effective vaccines, it won't be long until it will be your turn to get your shot."

To protect those most at risk of acquiring the virus and of serious illness, the state has established vaccine eligibility priorities. As supply limitations ease in the coming weeks, *everyone will have the opportunity to receive a vaccine as we fight this virus together.*

"We have three vaccines that are all safe, effective, and allow you to do the things you love and see the ones you love without getting sick," said **Mike Zelek, MPH, Chatham County Public Health Director and President of the North Carolina Public Health Association**. "If you haven't yet gotten your vaccine or signed up to get it when it is your turn, now is the time."

(more)



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All the Current Vaccines Are Effective

All three vaccines currently available have been shown to be effective in mitigating the severity of the illness caused by COVID-19, which not only means protecting yourself and your loved ones, but also ensuring our health system is not overwhelmed. While there are some differences between the vaccines – for instance, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires just one – if a vaccine is available to you, please take it regardless of brand. *Being vaccinated is the most important thing, not which vaccine you receive since they all offer protection.*

“We all want to get back to close to normal as soon as possible. This is our shot to do just that,” said **Jessica L. Triche, MD, FAAFP, President of the NC Academy of Family Physicians**. “Please sign up as soon as you are eligible and take your shot regardless of the brand you receive.”

As the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes clear, millions of people in the United States have received the authorized COVID-19 vaccines, and these vaccines have undergone the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

“If you are wondering about which vaccine is the best for you, I’ll keep it simple, with all three vaccines being safe and effective, the best vaccine for you is the one available to you at your appointment,” said **Stacie Saunders, MPH, Buncombe County Public Health Director and President of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors**.

Remember, these vaccines cannot give you COVID-19.

“NCCHCA and its members are glad to act as trusted community partners in the delivery of all available vaccines,” said **Chris Shank, NCCHCA President and CEO**. “Getting COVID-19 vaccinations into the arms of all North Carolinians, no matter their income or insurance status, is critical to the mission of North Carolina’s Community Health Centers.”

Getting a COVID-19 vaccine, along with following the 3 ‘W’s public health protocols we all know so well, will bring us one step closer to regaining more certainty for the future and more control over our lives once again.

(more)



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About the North Carolina Medical Society: *The North Carolina Medical Society is the oldest professional member organization in North Carolina, representing physicians and physician assistants who practice in the state. Founded in 1849, the Society seeks to provide leadership in medicine by uniting, serving and representing physicians and their health care teams to enhance the health of North Carolinians.*

About the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians: *The North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians, Inc. (NCAFP) is a non-profit professional association headquartered in Raleigh representing over 4,200 family physicians, family medicine residents and medical students across North Carolina. The NCAFP is a constituent chapter of the American Academy of Family Physicians, based in Leawood, Kansas.*

About the North Carolina Healthcare Association: *Founded in 1918, North Carolina Healthcare Association (NCHA) is the united voice of the North Carolina healthcare community. Representing more than 130 hospitals, health systems, physician groups and other healthcare organizations, NCHA works with our members to improve the health of North Carolina communities by advocating for sound public policies and collaborative partnerships and by providing insights, services, support and education to expand access to high quality, efficient, affordable and integrated health care for all North Carolinians.*

About the North Carolina Community Health Center Association: *The North Carolina Community Health Center Association was formed in 1978 by the leadership of community health centers. NCCHCA is comprised of membership from 42 Community Health Center organizations. NCCHCA is singularly focused on the success of health centers.*

About the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors: *The mission of NCAALHD is to promote health, prevent disease, and protect the environment in order to ensure the public's health in North Carolina through leadership, vision, advocacy, and commitment to the principles of public health practice in our local communities and throughout the state.*

About the North Carolina Public Health Association: *NCPHA is an association of individuals and organizations working to improve the public's health through political advocacy, public awareness, professional development, and the interface between research and practice.*

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