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Subject: COVID-19 Case Count and Vaccine Update
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Legislators,

We have now had 602,774 laboratory confirmed cases in North Carolina. This included 10,028 newly reported cases with a percent positive rate of 13.9%. There are 3,960 people hospitalized with COVID-19. Sadly we have 7,328 confirmed deaths for North Carolina.

Below are comments from Sec. Cohen at today's media availability about our current situation:

> *In the 10 months that we've been fighting this pandemic, this is the most worried that I've been for our state. We continue to set new records. We reported over 10,000 cases yesterday and again today. Our tests that are positive remain in the double digits.*
>
> *And most worrisome every day we have a new record high of people hospitalized with COVID-19 and a record high of those needing intensive care. Many hospitals have stopped non-urgent procedures to free up staff or have opened additional COVID units.*
>
> *The situation is so critical that last week the federal government said that if you were with people that you don't live with, you should assume you became infected and were a danger to others.*
>
> *Earlier this week, I issued my first ever Secretarial Directive with immediate actions for North Carolinians to take to save lives and slow the spread of the virus.*
>
> *It calls on North Carolinians to stay home. You should only leave home for essential activities such as going to work or school, for health care, to care for family members or to buy food. If you are over 65 or at high-risk for developing serious illness use delivery services or alternative pick-up methods for food and retail.*
>
> *Do not gather with people that do not live with you – do not go to another person's home indoors and do not have others over your home indoors. When you do leave home for essential activities, always wear a mask and keep distance from people.*
>
> *Given the level of viral spread, there is a high risk that you have COVID right now and do not know it.*
>
> *I know this is hard. We will get through it. We now have even more research that shows the 3 Ws work. Remember those Ws - wear a mask anytime you are with people you don't live with, wait apart from others, and wash your hands often. And we have a new tool to combat this virus - vaccines.*

Vaccine Update:
We are working hard to get vaccines to people as fast as possible. Our local health departments and hospitals have been ramping up quickly, putting their vaccine plans to work. Already, 180,000 doses have been given. In the last 24 hours alone, 20,000 shots went into arms.

Remember - vaccine supplies are very limited. While some people want to be first in line to get their shot, we knew going into this that others have very legitimate reasons to be hesitant. Understandably, communities who have faced longstanding and continuing racial and ethnic injustices in our health care system may feel greater distrust towards vaccines. All vaccine providers have the responsibility to ensure equitable access to vaccines, which means that they take intentional actions to reach and engage historically marginalized communities. We are partnering with trusted community leaders and organizations to provide accurate information to all North Carolinians. We need your help. As you share information with the public, please share these important facts.

First, scientists had a head a start. These vaccines were built upon years of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses. Like all vaccines they were rigorously tested for safety and effectiveness. More than 70,000 people volunteered in clinical trials for two vaccines to make sure that they were safe and worked to prevent COVID-19. There were no serious safety concerns noted in the clinical trials. To date, the vaccines are 95% effective in preventing COVID-19.

You cannot get COVID-109 from the vaccine. You may have temporary reactions like a sore arm, headache, or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.

You can get accurate information about vaccines from our website, YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov. You can also find contact information for local vaccine providers.

It will take many months to vaccinate everyone who wants it. Keep practicing the 3 Ws —wear a mask, wait six feet apart, wash your hands—until everyone has a chance to get vaccinated.

Our full data dashboard can be found at the link below:
https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/

Below is the link to all of the community testing sites across NC.
https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/about-covid-19/testing/find-my-testing-place/pop-testing-sites

Thanks,
Matt

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