

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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Dear Community Members:

Nothing about the pandemic has been consistent. Since the beginning, it seems as if as soon as we get comfortable doing one thing, something happens and we're again having to change course. But with the unpredictability of the year, the ever-changing virus has certainly helped public health identify the prevention strategies that work, what doesn't work, and ways to adapt to changes with the virus.

Last week, the Ohio Department of Health rescinded most active orders and moved to a streamlined, consolidated health order. The intent of the new order is to begin the gradual unwinding of the prescriptive mandates set when there were still so many unknowns and instead, ask the public to take personal responsibility in protecting one another. We now have a much better understanding of how the virus spreads versus what we knew a year ago. The new order underscores the most important infection prevention tools we've employed since the beginning of the pandemic: masking, social distancing, and good hand hygiene. Things that we know that if practiced will protect us as we move throughout normal activities. The virus will never be completely gone. But we can get back to normal life with a few modifications in place.

Public focus over the last few months has predominantly been around vaccine. But even though the vaccine is here, that doesn't mean the pandemic is over. Public health continues to work diligently on disease investigation and mitigation as the virus maintains a steady presence throughout our communities. As I've reported the last several weeks, we continue to see fluctuations in new cases in Medina County. Our high incidence rate is much higher than we would like to see. The vaccine is an incredible tool, but it's not our only defense. Sticking to the basic principles of wearing your mask in public and being mindful in your interactions with others, in combination with the vaccine, will help keep us on our path moving forward.

### Clinic Appointment Reminders

The Health Department continues to conduct community vaccine clinics, vaccinating over 2,000 people each week. If you haven't received a vaccine yet and would like to do so, visit our website to learn how to schedule:

[www.medinahealth.org/vaccine](http://www.medinahealth.org/vaccine). A few reminders to keep in mind when scheduling:

- If you've made an appointment for either your first or second dose and need to cancel, please let us know as soon as possible. The COVID-19 vaccine, unlike other vaccines, has a shelf life of just a few hours once opened. An entire vial must be used once the first dose is given. Letting us know you are unable to make your appointment will help us quickly schedule someone else to take your spot.
- If you have any questions about your upcoming appointment, vaccine type, need directions to the location, or anything else, please call the Health Department at 330-723-9688 or email us at [vaccine@medinahealth.org](mailto:vaccine@medinahealth.org). Please DO NOT call the community locations where the clinic is being held. Community partners who are allowing their building to be used for clinics are not able to assist with any of those types of calls.
- When scheduling your first dose, we ask you plan ahead three weeks after your first dose of Pfizer or four weeks after your first dose of Moderna to ensure you will be available for your second appointment. We ask you do not schedule your first appointment knowing you will be traveling out of town or unable to make your second appointment.
- Medina County Health Department community clinics are placed in ArmorVax on Wednesday, Thursday, and/or Friday mornings before noon. If someone cancels an appointment, that slot will appear in the app and be available for scheduling. Those types of single appointments appear as soon as the cancellation is made, which could be anytime.

### Where can I find the latest information?

As information is made available, we will continue to update our website with resources about the vaccine:

<https://medinahealth.org/vaccine>. You are also encouraged to visit the Ohio Department of Health's website for resources related to the COVID-19 vaccine: [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine).