



BHDDH Message on COVID Vaccines

We know that the DD Community is looking for information and assistance regarding vaccinations for COVID-19. Our staff is working daily with the RI Department of Health (DOH), providing continuous information about participants in our program. We have been advocating for those we serve and while the first tier of vaccinations is still underway, DOH Director Dr Alexander-Scott has stated that some tiers may overlap depending on vaccine volume.

We believe that all at-risk individuals, providers, and staff should be vaccinated and we have strongly and repeatedly advocated for that – however it is a challenge with a very limited supply of vaccine at this time. We expect that as more pharmaceutical firms get their vaccines approved, the timetable will become more generous.

As soon as vaccinations dates become available, we will make information available.

COVID Vaccination

Dr. Philip Chan, one of the infectious diseases physicians and medical directors at the Rhode Island Department of Health, provided an update on RI's vaccination progress thus far.

This has been a challenging year filled with frustration and loss for so many of us, including me. I know first-hand how strenuous it's been on our frontline healthcare providers, who are working around the clock to keep Rhode Islanders safe and healthy. But as we look toward 2021, I am filled with optimism that our vaccination efforts will turn things around.

We are currently using two COVID-19 vaccines in Rhode Island: one made by Pfizer and one made by Moderna. After weeks of scrutiny — extensive clinical trials with tens of thousands of participants followed by teams of FDA scientists examining the vaccine's effectiveness, safety, potential side effects, and manufacturing process and an independent review by Rhode Island's COVID-19 Vaccine Subcommittee — we've found that both vaccines are safe. Both are enormously effective (~95%). This is a huge step forward in the fight against COVID-19!

Because we began planning for this months ago, our vaccination campaign hit the ground running. Rhode Island currently has one of the best state-level immunization programs in the country. We've vaccinated nearly 13,000 people already and have 14,000 doses of the two vaccines coming into Rhode Island each week.

We started off vaccinating high-risk workers in hospitals, and this week started vaccinating residents and staff in nursing homes. We're planning to administer initial doses of the vaccine at all nursing homes by mid-January. This week, we also started clinics for home health and hospice workers, EMS personnel, and first responders.

Once we've protected our healthcare workers, we're going to move to additional populations who work or live in higher-risk settings. We have a major focus on equity. That means not only making sure that the communities and sectors hardest hit have access to vaccine first but also making sure that every person in every neighborhood in Rhode Island has access to a vaccine. Transportation issues or lack of health insurance will not be barriers for anyone. The vaccine will be available to all Rhode Islanders regardless of insurance status, and no one will have to pay out of pocket.

As the vaccine becomes more available in the coming weeks, we will continue to provide regular updates about who can get vaccinated and where. We plan to make vaccines as accessible as possible at local doctor's offices, pharmacies, community clinics, and more. But we are all going to need to be patient. Rhode Islanders will be vaccinated over the course of months, not weeks.

The pandemic has truly been a marathon, and while we've come so far already, we still have a little ways to go. Marathons are the toughest right before the end, but soon the finish line will be in sight. Between now and then, we need to stay focused – wear masks, practice physical distancing – in addition to getting vaccinated when it's our turn. So thank you, everyone, for your patience and diligence during this time. We are getting through this together!

RI Department of Health COVID Information

For more information on the RI Department of Health's COVID vaccination plan, see <https://covid.ri.gov/vaccination> and the Phase 1 Timeline attached to this bulletin.

COVID-19 Info Line: Phone: 401-222-8022 (After hours: Call 211)

Monday – Friday: 7:30 AM - 7:00 PM and Saturday – Sunday: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

RI Police, Health Officials Warn About Coronavirus Vaccine Scams

<https://patch.com/rhode-island/cranston/ri-police-health-officials-warn-coronavirus-vaccine-scams>

Rhode Island police departments and public health officials are urging residents to be aware of potential scams related to the coronavirus vaccine. No one will be asked to pay for the vaccine or provide personal information.

Dr. Nicole Alexander-Scott, the director of the Rhode Island Department of Health, said that no vaccine scams have been reported in the state so far, but they are possible in the coming weeks and months. The department will never reach out to the public directly and ask for payment information or other personal details.

The Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation and the HHS Office of the Inspector General's office released a list of red flags people should watch for when it comes to the coronavirus vaccine, listed below.

- No one should ask you to pay out-of-pocket for the vaccine.
- There are no vaccine "waiting lists" or "early access lists" that people can add their name to.
- Don't trust advertisements for the vaccine from unverified sources, such as advertisements on social media, television, email or by phone.
- Marketers may try to ship "vaccine doses" directly to people for a fee.
- In general, never give out payment information or personal details to unverified sources.

Stimulus Payments

Congress approved the new \$900 billion coronavirus relief bill that includes \$600 stimulus checks for eligible Americans and their dependent children under the age of 17.

The IRS announced that stimulus payments started going out via direct deposit on December 29. Paper checks were scheduled to begin being mailed on December 30. The IRS is required to send all stimulus payments out by January 15, 2021.

Payments will be issued automatically to eligible individuals who meet one of the following:

- filed 2019 federal tax returns
- registered for the first round of stimulus payments through the non-filer portal on IRS.gov by Nov. 21
- receive Social Security (both retirement and disability), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Railroad Retirement Board, or Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits

The IRS reminds taxpayers that the payments are automatic, and they should not contact their financial institutions or the IRS with payment timing questions. For more information about Economic Impact Payments and the 2020 Recovery Rebate, key information will be posted on [IRS.gov/eip](https://www.irs.gov/eip). For answers to questions about the second Economic Impact Payment, see [Questions and Answers about the Second Economic Impact Payment](#).

Check Your Payment Status

You can check the status of your second stimulus payment at [IRS.gov/GetMyPayment](https://www.irs.gov/GetMyPayment). Use Get My Payment to confirm that we sent your second stimulus payment and to confirm your payment type: direct deposit or mail. Data is updated once per day overnight, so there's no need to check back more than once per day.

New COVID-19 Physical Distancing Resource Guide

[Values Into Action](#) is a person-centered services and supports organization in Pennsylvania and New Jersey that has created a helpful resource guide for staying connected and active virtually while safely distancing to avoid COVID-19. The guide includes a variety of resources in different categories including: State & Federal Guides, Resources for Explaining the Importance of Distancing, Physical & Mental Health, Art & Museums, Music & Entertainment, Zoos & National Parks, and Resources for Kids & Kids at heart. While some resources are specific to Pennsylvania/New Jersey (e.g. Food Delivery & Pickup and State Guidance), most are relevant anywhere. View the guide at <https://spark.adobe.com/page/blwU0ofXv3HMx/>



Video on Person-Centered Practices

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dPcpUnwKG4&feature=emb_logo

The Person-Centered Practices team at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) created a [16-minute video](#) that is shown to all new HHSC hires as part of their orientation. In the video, people with lived experiences, their families, and HHSC staff share their personal and professional experiences with person-centered practices and the value of balancing what's important to and important for people. As Terry Wendling, Person-Centered Practices Specialist puts it, "Being person-centered is not just for people with disabilities. It's for all people."

What is person-centered thinking, planning, and practice?

<https://ncapps.acl.gov/home.html>

The [National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems](#) (NCAPPS) has many free resources available on their website to learn more about person-centeredness. The NCAPPS Goal is to promote systems change that makes person-centered principles not just an aspiration but a reality in the lives of people across the lifespan.

Person-centered *thinking*

- A foundational principle requiring consistency in language, values, and actions that respect the views of the person and their loved ones
- The person and their loved ones are experts in their own lives
- Equal emphasis on quality of life, well-being, and informed choice

Person-centered *planning*

- A methodology that identifies and addresses the preferences and interests for a desired life and the supports (paid and unpaid) to achieve it
- Directed by the person, supported by others selected by the person

Person-centered *practices*

- Alignment of services and systems to ensure the person has access to the full benefits of community living
- Supports are designed to assist people as they work toward their desired life goals

Dignity of Risk and Person-Centered Planning During COVID-19

In this [short publication](#), Nicole LeBlanc, Advisory Group Coordinator, National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS), answers questions about her experience in this pandemic and where she sees opportunities for people to continue to work, live, and play in their communities by being supported in a way that is person-centered.

The National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices and Systems (NCAPPS) is an initiative from the Administration for Community Living and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services that helps States, Tribes, and Territories implement person-centered thinking, planning, and practice in line with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services policy.

The Art of Flourishing: Conversations on Disability

<https://www.thehastingscenter.org/the-art-of-flourishing-events-series/>

The Art of Flourishing: Conversations on Disability is a series of six public events in New York City during 2019 to 2021 that will explore how technologies can be used to promote or thwart meaningful, flourishing lives. Because people with disabilities are especially proficient at living in a world not built for them, they are often experts at negotiating technologies to seek their own flourishing.

The events, organized by The Hastings Center and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, feature a range of scholars, artists, writers, and thought leaders with disabilities engaging in conversations about how they use — and why they may refuse — technology in their work and lives. The events are free and open to the public, and they are accessible to people with disabilities.

Event 1. Belonging: On Disability, Technology, and Community

Exploring how people with disabilities are using—or resisting — technologies to promote their own flourishing.

Event 2. Navigating: On Disability, Technology, and Experiencing the World

The purpose of this series is to explore the theme that people can flourish in all sorts of bodies. To flourish, on our understanding means to exercise the capacities we were born with in pursuit of the goals we find meaningful. None of us needs a different body to flourish, we need different, more supportive environments.

Event 3. Disrupting Ableism with Artful Activism

What will it take to bring about lasting justice for disabled people in the United States? When will *every* body—and *every* voice—be indispensable? Poets and activists Lateef McLeod and D.J. Savarese imagine a society led by people with disabilities and show how disabled communities are already building this world through creative forms of resistance.

Joy Germ Day



On January 8th, National JoyGerm Day annually reminds people across the country that by being positive and treating people with kindness, they can influence those around them and pass that positive attitude on to others.

Laugh, smile, be kind, inspire and spread the one type of germ that is good for everyone to catch!

As the founder of the day says, “May a giant jar of jaunty joy germs rest gently on you and yours.”

There is even a [JoyGerm YouTube channel!](#)



ACTION CALENDAR: HAPPIER JANUARY 2021



MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

 "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony" - Gandhi

- 4** Write a list of things you feel grateful for in life and why
- 5** Look for the good in others and notice their strengths
- 6** Take five minutes to sit still and just breathe
- 7** Learn something new and share it with others
- 8** Say positive things to the people you meet today
- 9** Get moving. Do something physically active (ideally outdoors)
- 10** Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why
- 11** Switch off all your tech 2 hours before bedtime
- 12** Connect with someone near you - share a smile or chat
- 13** Be gentle with yourself when you make mistakes
- 14** Take a different route today and see what you notice
- 15** Eat healthy food which really nourishes you today
- 16** Get outside and notice five things that are beautiful
- 17** Contribute positively to a good cause or your community
- 18** Focus on what's good, even if today feels tough
- 19** Get back in contact with an old friend you miss
- 20** Go to bed in good time and give yourself time to recharge
- 21** Take a small step towards an important goal
- 22** Try out something new to get out of your comfort zone
- 23** Plan something fun and invite others to join you
- 24** Put away digital devices and focus on being in the moment
- 25** Decide to lift people up rather than put them down
- 26** Say hello to a neighbour and get to know them better
- 27** Challenge your negative thoughts and look for the upside
- 28** Ask other people about things they've enjoyed recently
- 29** Use one of your personal strengths in a new way
- 30** Count how many people you can smile at today
- 31** Write down your hopes or plans for the future

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



Learn more about this month's theme at www.actionforhappiness.org/happier-january

www.actionforhappiness.org

Happier · Kinder · Together

LET'S CHANGE THE WORLD

by Graziella Diamanti



Graziella Diamanti, past Poet Laureate for VSA ARTS Of Rhode Island, showcases her poem, "Let's Change The World"

Let's be kind to one another
Let's lend each other a hand
Let's make everyone feel special
Together we will stand
Let's stop all the fighting
And hurting each other
Let's pray for help
For our sisters and brothers
Let's change our thinking
Let's find a way
Let's change the world
Let's begin a new day
Let's look out for each other
And help those in need
Keep them close to your heart
Let's all do good deeds
Let's pray for world peace
And harmony too
Let's begin the change
It starts with Me and You

Thank you Graziella and the
Frank Olean Center for
sharing this poem!



If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, BH Link is here for you

BH Link's mission is to ensure all Rhode Islanders experiencing mental health and substance use crises receive the appropriate services they need as quickly as possible in an environment that supports their recovery. Call 911 if there is risk of immediate danger. Visit the BH Link website at www.bhlink.org or for confidential support and to get connected to care:

CALL (401) 414-LINK (5465)

If under 18 CALL: (855) KID(543)-LINK(5465)

Visit the 24-HOUR/7-DAY TRIAGE CENTER at 975 Waterman Avenue, East Providence, RI

Stay Informed with Information on COVID-19

Rhode Island Department of Health COVID-19 Resources

Hotline (401) 222-8022 or 211 after hours;

Email RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov

Website <https://health.ri.gov/covid/>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Information

Website cdc.gov/coronavirus

Videos <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/videos.html>

Includes a link to ASL videos

BHDDH Information on COVID-19's Impact on DD Services and the DD Community

Website bhddh.ri.gov/COVID

RI Parent Information Network (RIPIN)

Website <https://ripin.org/covid-19-resources/>

Call Center (401) 270-0101 or email callcenter@ripin.org

Advocates in Action – for videos and easy to read materials

Website <https://www.advocatesinaction.org/>

Website offers BrowseAloud, which will read the website to you

Sign Up for Our Email List

If you aren't receiving email updates and newsletters from BHDDH, you can sign up on our website. From the main BHDDH page at bhddh.ri.gov, select **What's New**, then go to bottom and click on **DD Community Newsletter**. The link to sign up for the BHDDH Newsletter is directly below the title, as shown in the picture at right.



DD Community Newsletter
SIGN UP FOR THE BHDDH NEWSLETTER

Contacting DD Staff

DDD has put extended hour phone coverage in place with a central business hour phone number and an on-call number for nights and weekends.

If you have a vital need, please call the numbers on the next page. If you have any general questions or concerns, please email them if you can, in order to try to leave the phone lines free for those who need to call. We will do our best to address your questions directly or through future newsletters.

401-462-3421

WEEKDAYS DURING BUSINESS HOURS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS
- QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR DD SERVICES

During business hours (Monday-Friday 8:30-4:00), for questions or support
(401) 462-3421
 Para español, llame
(401) 462-3014

401-265-7461

AFTER HOURS ON WEEKDAYS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

For emerging or imminent care related questions, Mon - Fri 4pm-10pm and weekends 8:30am-10pm
(401) 265-7461

401-265-7461

ON WEEKENDS FOR:

- VITAL, NON-MEDICAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Send general questions to the AskDD email address. Please do not email critical issues.
BHDDH.AskDD@bhddh.ri.gov

E-MAIL THE DIVISION

BHDDH.AskDD@BHDDH.RI.GOV

HELP US KEEP THE PHONE LINES OPEN FOR THOSE WHO ARE CALLING WITH A VITAL NEED!

WHEN POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND AN E-MAIL FOR:

- NON-CRITICAL CONCERNS about Your Services and Supports
- GENERAL QUESTIONS about Your Services or the RI DD System

FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
CALL 911
 RIGHT AWAY. DON'T WAIT!

For medical or healthcare related emergencies, call your Primary Care Physician or 911






CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

CALL FOR:

- ROUTINE Healthcare Questions
- NON-EMERGENCY Medical Care

FOLLOW YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE
 DON'T go to their office unless they tell you to!

WHO can get vaccinated in PHASE 1 of Rhode Island's COVID-19 Vaccination Program?

Phase 1 Timeline		First Dose	Second Dose
E Q U I T Y		Hospital Staff, EMS, Home Health and Hospice Workers, Nursing Home Staff and Residents December 14	
		COVID Vaccinators, Community Health Center Staff, COVID Specimen Collectors, Urgent Care Clinic Staff, Respiratory Clinic Staff (including clinical settings swabbing for COVID-19), Pharmacists, Corrections Medical Staff and Mental Health Workers, High-Risk Incarcerated Persons (65 and older, immunocompromised, or other high-risk factors), Other Long-Term Care Facility Staff and Residents (e.g., group homes for individuals primarily 65 and older, assisted living, elderly housing with residential services)	
		Firefighters, Law Enforcement, Hard-Hit Communities, COVID Testing Lab Staff, Other Public Health and Emergency Preparedness Workers, School Nurse Teachers, Harm Reduction Staff, Patient-Facing Clinical Students, Community and Family Caregivers, Corrections Officers/Staff	
		Dentists, Primary Care and Other Outpatient Providers, Dialysis Centers Staff, Blood, Organ, and Tissue Donation Staff, Morticians, Funeral Home Workers, Other Death Care Professionals	
		Adults over 75 years of age	

There may be overlap among the groups listed above. It may take several months for everyone in Phase 1 to be vaccinated. Exact timing depends on demand, doses made available to Rhode Island, and other factors. Information on who can get vaccinated in future phases will be shared as soon as possible.

HOW will different groups receive vaccine?

PRIMARY GROUPS	VACCINATION SITE
Hospital Staff	Hospitals
Long-Term Care Residents and Staff	Long-Term Care Facilities via CVS and Walgreens Partnership
EMS, Home Health and Hospice Workers, Firefighters, Law Enforcement	Regional clinics run by municipal partners
Other Phase 1 groups	Community or on-site vaccine clinics; other sites as available

As opportunities become available, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) will communicate through employers, partner organizations, the media, and other channels to let groups know when, how, and where they can get vaccinated.

Working While Disabled—Work Incentives Overview

Registration Now Open!
Work Incentive sessions for SSI and SSDI Beneficiaries

SSI Sessions:

December 9th, 12-1 pm

SSDI Sessions:

December 16th, 12-1 pm
(ASL Interpreter provided.)

Sessions will be offered on Zoom with subtitles in English.



REGISTER ONLINE at <https://bit.ly/2KkUCVQ>

The Sherlock Center provides Work Incentive Information and Benefits Counseling services to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries and those that support them (family, guardian, rep payee, professionals). These sessions will be of value to anyone looking for a basic introduction to disability-related work incentives and/or has related questions. Along with providing an overview of basic SSI or SSDI and related information, these sessions provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about the following topics:

- Ticket to Work
- SSI or SSDI Work Incentives
- Resources about Work Incentive Information
- Access to Benefits Counseling
- Working and Impact on Health Insurance Medicaid/Medicare
- Other questions related to benefits and working

Upon registration please share your questions.

NOTE: These sessions will not address how to apply for SSI or SSDI benefits.

TIP: Unsure if you receive SSI or SSDI? You can confirm which benefit you have at <https://www.ssa.gov/myaccount/>

Presented by Certified Work Incentives Counselors:

SSI Session: Laura Elderkin, SSDI Session: Jeanne Fay

REGISTRATION IS LIMITED! Advance registration is required. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the session. You can access the session by computer, mobile device or listen using a cell or landline phone.

Accommodation requests or registration questions: Contact Elaine Sollecito at esollecito@ric.edu.

Session questions: Contact Vicki Ferrara at vferrara@ric.edu.



H S I

S.T.O.P. COVID-19 FRAUD STRATEGIC TARGETED OUTREACH PROGRAM

Recognize - Protect - Report | COVID-19 Crime

FOR **SECURE** ONLINE SHOPPING

- ✗ DO NOT CLICK ON UNSOLICITED EMAILS OR TEXTS.
- ✗ ENSURE A SECURE BROWSER CONNECTION: HTTPS ONLY.
- ✗ VERIFY WEBSITE TRUST SEALS BEFORE PLACING AN ORDER.
- ✗ OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT WEBSITES END IN .GOV
- ✗ INSPECT THE URL OF THE WEBSITE AND VERIFY THE DESTINATION.

FINANCIAL **RED FLAGS** RELATED TO COVID-19

- ✗ BEWARE OF E-MAILS, TEXT MESSAGES OR CALLS OFFERING GOODS, SERVICES, LOANS, OR DEBT RELIEF.
- ✗ BEWARE OF REQUESTS FOR UNUSUAL PAYMENT METHODS, SUCH AS CRYPTOCURRENCY, PREPAID DEBIT CARDS, GIFT CARDS, MONEY SERVICE BUSINESSES (MSB) TRANSFERS, OR WIRE TRANSFERS.
- ✗ GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DO NOT CALL, TEXT OR E-MAIL: CHECK YOUR MAIL, DO NOT FOLLOW LINKS ON SOCIAL MEDIA, AND USE GOVERNMENT WEBSITES DIRECTLY.
- ✗ GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WILL NOT CALL OR E-MAIL ABOUT ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS AND WILL NOT REFER TO IT AS "STIMULUS" - DO NOT OPEN SUCH E-MAILS OR CLICK ON ATTACHMENTS.

PROHIBITED PHARMACEUTICALS AND MEDICAL DEVICES **RED FLAGS**

- ✗ BEWARE OF WEBSITES OR INDIVIDUALS SELLING PRODUCTS CLAIMING TO PREVENT, TREAT, DIAGNOSE OR CURE COVID-19.
- ✗ BEWARE OF INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING PERSONAL OR BANKING INFORMATION IN EXCHANGE FOR COVID-19 PRODUCTS.
- ✗ BEWARE OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT INFORMATION WRITTEN IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE OR WITH MISPELLINGS.
- ✗ DO NOT BUY PRESCRIPTION PHARMACEUTICALS FROM THIRD PARTY MARKETPLACES OR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

DID YOU KNOW?



Thousands of COVID-19 related web domains have been identified as fraudulent.



Government agencies will not contact anyone to verify or expedite payments.



Bad actors often advertise using photos stolen from legitimate websites to deceive consumers.

ONLINE SHOPPING TIPS

- 🖱️ IF A DEAL SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS.
- 🖱️ BE AWARE OF PRICE GOUGING.
- 🖱️ VERIFY PURCHASES ARE FROM LEGITIMATE, TRUSTED SOURCES.
- 🖱️ REPORT COVID-19 FRAUD TO COVID19FRAUD@DHS.GOV.

FINANCIAL TIP

- 💰 REACH OUT TO YOUR ELDERLY FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS AND WARN THEM ABOUT THESE SCAMS.

PROHIBITED ITEMS TIP

- 🌐 ENSURE YOUR ONLINE PHARMACY IS CERTIFIED BY CHECKING: WWW.SAFEMEDSONLINE.ORG.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
WWW.ICE.GOV

REPORT COVID-19 FRAUD TO
COVID19FRAUD@DHS.GOV



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement



REPORT FRAUD