

# COVID-19: Chairwoman voices frustrations over supply; state's vaccination program to expand next week

Continued from Page 1

Wydysh said the county remains frustrated over the state-run vaccination process and how it is administered.

"I know you are going to hear stories where people think we're helping our friends and family, that you have to know somebody to get in an get an appointment. I can tell you that, here in Niagara County, that is not the case," she said. "I can't get an appointment either."

Wydysh told attendees she has been unable to get an appointment for her elderly parents.

"That is how hard it is right now," she said, noting, "It's been a difficult process; there are millions and millions of people in New York state that want a vaccine and just can't get an appointment yet because there are not enough doses to go around."

"Be patient; know that your county team is working to get as many doses as we can from the state, and to get them to you as soon as we can. We really are trying."

Wydysh told the crowd she faithfully watches Gov. Andrew Cuomo's press briefings on TV. She said the vaccination process begins on the federal level.

"New York state then divides up that allocation and sends it to all the counties, the hospitals, the pharmacies, all of those places that you're hearing are doing the vaccinations," Wydysh said.

Niagara County has administered about 4,500 doses of the vaccine as of Tuesday through its NCDOH-operated PODs. Wydysh said the county began its own vaccine distribution, first to its law enforcement, first responders and essential workers. Per state directives, pharmacies have been assigned to service those aged 65 and older. Hospitals, meanwhile, have been con-

centrating on health care workers.

The eligibility list is expected to expand come Monday.

"Starting Feb. 15, we will be able to take individuals who have comorbidities, such as serious health issues that they need the vaccination for," she said.

To view the list of health issues, determine eligibility status or find state-run vaccination sites, visit [www.ny.gov/vaccine](http://www.ny.gov/vaccine) or call the state's vaccination hotline at 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829). The NCDOH is online at [www.niagaracounty.com/health](http://www.niagaracounty.com/health).

"That's where most of you will be able to find your appointments to get vaccinated," Wydysh said. She noted the county has also been accepting seniors at its DOH-operated PODs "when space is available."

"That's how allocation works. That's state ordered; that's nothing that we can really change," she said.

Though the state's eligibility process will be expanding, Niagara County remains limited as to how many vaccines it is able to distribute.

"New York state tells us they get 300,000 vaccinations a week, but we have 10 million people who are eligible in New York. The numbers just do not work," Wydysh said.

"I can tell you that, for the past three weeks, Niagara County has asked the state for 3,000 doses each week. Two of those weeks we got 400 each week and one week our order was canceled completely," she noted.

Wydysh explained that, under the state program, getting a vaccine is not mandated. Cost is not an issue, either. The problem is what she called "appointment frustration."

"That's been frustrating for us. The county trains for this;

Active coronavirus cases in Niagara County, as of Thursday.

(Image courtesy of the Niagara County Department of Health)

we run mass-vaccination clinics when things like hepatitis are an issue," Wydysh said, referencing an earlier effort in response to a hepatitis breakout in a restaurant and the subsequent vaccination process.

"We were prepared to handle this. We had a 150-page plan; we knew exactly how we wanted to start, how we wanted to roll this out. We had many, many sites across the county that we planned to use. ... The state and the governor had other plans."

"We have to do what the state tells us their plan is, and what our plan is, in it," she said. "We will continue to fight for as many doses as we can get, to hold as many clinics as we can. But it's frustrating on our level, too."

"We're trying to get you the appointments, so please know we're trying to work for you, too."

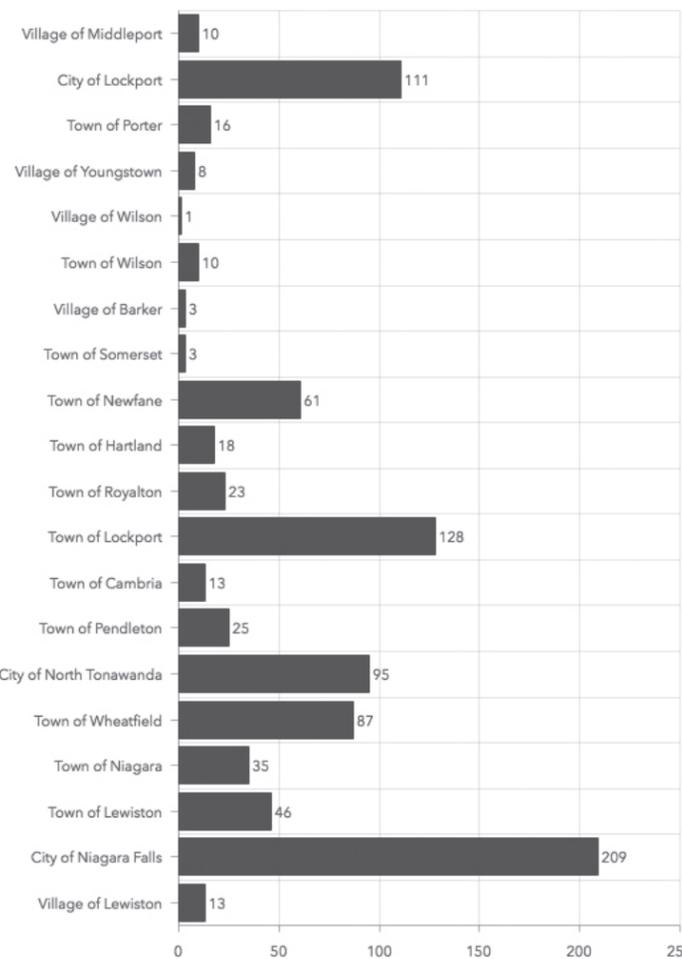
She closed by advising Niagara County residents, "If you are looking for an appointment, call 211. Niagara County contracted with them to be able to help. ... If you call 211, they will take your information over the phone ... and they can help you make that appointment. That is what their job is."

Wydysh said the 211 information line would be able to assist residents with locating vaccination sites and scheduling appointments.

"It's not a perfect system, but instead of checking 20, 30 or 40 websites and phone numbers yourself, if you just call 211 those operators are going to be to help you do that," she said.

Regarding 211, the Niagara County Department of Health said the service "can direct or aid callers in navigating where/how

Active Cases by Municipality



to locate vaccine as well as aid a caller by completing online registration to secure an appointment when online registration is available."

As of Thursday, there were 917 active cases, with 21 people hospitalized.

Speaking of Tuesday's comparable numbers, Wydysh said, "Still too many, but compared to other areas we are doing better now that the holiday surge is done."

Since the pandemic began almost one year ago, Niagara County has reported 14,296 positive

cases (isolations plus recoveries plus deaths), with 13,116 recovered and 263 deceased.

## Cuomo on COVID: Statewide positivity is 3.54% - lowest since Nov. 25

34 consecutive days of decline, down 48% since early January post-holiday peak

Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Thursday updated New Yorkers on the state's progress during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

"Across the state, from hospitalizations to infection rate, our numbers are continuing to decline - a sign of hope to all and proof of the dedication New Yorkers have shown to defeating this beast," Cuomo said. "We are headed in the right direction, but we are not at the end of the tunnel yet. Until the day the war is won and everyone who wants one has the vaccine, we must continue to practice the guidelines we know work: washing your hands, wearing a mask and avoiding gatherings. I know we will remain 'New York Tough' and see that day together."

Cuomo reported a statewide coronavirus positivity rate of 3.54% - that's lowest it's been since Nov. 25, and marks 34 consecutive days of decline. Overall, the positivity rate is down 48% since the early January post-holiday/post-Buffalo Bills playoffs peak

Western New York's positiv-

**COVID-19**  
**Closures & Updates**  
 Go to our website  
  
**wnypapers.com**

ity rate was 3.51%. Per the state tracker, Niagara County was at 4.8% on Thursday, with 90 new positive cases out of 2,364 tests. In Erie County, the rate was 4.4% (388 reported positive out of 12,134 tested).

Regarding the progress of vaccinations, Niagara County Public Health Director Daniel J. Stapleton said, "The Niagara County Health Department has exhausted this week's supply of the COVID-19 vaccine and, as such, our point of dispensing (POD) site at the Kenan Center in Lockport is closed for this week. To date, the county Health Department has completed over 4,800 first-dose vaccinations and 950 second-dose vaccinations."

"I remind people that we do not

take appointments until we have the vaccinations in hand to avoid having to potentially cancel. This week, once we received a supply of about 400 doses, we opened up those appointment and they were filled within 15 minutes. We do not yet know how much vaccine we will receive for next week and, with that, do not know when appointment scheduling will resume.

"Last, these are just numbers for the Niagara County Health Department's POD. There are PODS being run by other entities. I urge residents to continue checking the state website at

[ny.gov](http://ny.gov) for information on the state POD at the UB South Campus and to contact their local pharmacies as well."

**SCOTE interiors**  
**FURNITURE & Since 1953**  
 QUALITY - SELECTION - LOW PRICES  
 Broyhill • Stanley • Pulaski  
 La-Z-Boy • Lea • Riverside  
**FREE DELIVERY**  
 4419 Military Road, Niagara Falls  
**297-3060**

**THE MARKET IN THE SQUARE**  
 535 Division St. Twin City Highway  
 North Tonawanda • 693-2802  
 OPEN DAILY! **MON - SAT: 7AM - 8:30PM**  
**SUN 7AM - 7PM**  
**VISIT US ON THE WEB FOR OUR WEEKLY SPECIALS**  
**themarketinthesquare.com**  
**LOCAL FAMILY OWNED & INDEPENDENTLY OPERATED**

**Real Help For Your Health**  
 Presented by **Dr. Glenda R. Rose** Chiropractor  
**Healthy Heart**  
 Since 1964, February has been designated as American Heart Month by the American Heart Association. The importance of heart health cannot be stressed enough. People realize that the heart is necessary to sustain life, but few realize that much of their heart's health is largely in their hands.  
 Did you know...your heart beats 100,000 times in one day and about 35 million times in a year. During an average lifetime, the human heart will beat more than 2.5 billion times, pumps 800 million pints of blood or about 1 million barrels - enough to fill more than one oil supertanker. The adult heart pumps about 5 quarts of blood each minute - approximately 2,000 gal. each day throughout the body and takes about 20 seconds to circulate throughout the entire vascular system.  
 According to the CDC, three of the top risk factors for heart disease are high blood pressure, high cholesterol and smoking. Others include diabetes, being overweight and drinking to excess. Some of these "risk factors" have an underlying causative factor-DIET.  
 The **Heart Sound Recorder** (a general wellness cardiac stress monitor) is used at our office to evaluate for nutritional counseling, supplementation and exercise considerations to support the normal physiological processes of the body. This device is not an electrocardiograph, and it is not capable of diagnosing heart conditions nor in any way a substitute for such a device. But, it is an excellent tool for evaluating and demonstrating how nutrition can affect the health of the heart and body in general. **Find out for yourself with our 50% off Heart Month Special. Call 754-9039 to schedule, appointments are limited.**  
**Chiropractic may be used as complementary care to improve heart health that is not available anywhere else.** Chiropractors reduce nerve stress through spinal adjustments affecting the Autonomic (self-governing) Nervous System, which controls heart rate, blood pressure, blood supply to the various parts of the body, including the involuntary muscles of the heart.  
This article is not intended to diagnose, treat or cure any disease or to make any medical claims. It does not supplant competent medical care, or dissuade anyone from seeking competent medical attention for any injury, illness, or other physical condition.