

Weekly Update with Dr. Bissell

February 10, 2021



Press Statement from Dr. Bissell

I'll keep it short today. Looking at the epi curves, you can see how our new cases overall have come down from their highs after the holidays. We are watching for a bump from the Superbowl parties last weekend, but we hope it will be small and short-lived.

You can see how Montgomery County seems to have plateaued. This is from the population increase with the students returning to town and some student gatherings, but not like the significant spikes in the fall. The main thing to note is that, especially in Floyd, Giles, and Pulaski, we see the cases clearly trending downwards.

This has been a very difficult year and we still have a long way to go. We continue to vaccinate our most vulnerable populations and essential workers in Phase 1a and 1b. We need to remind everyone who has had a vaccine to get their second dose at the same place they received their first dose. This is important because second doses are allocated to the first dose location.

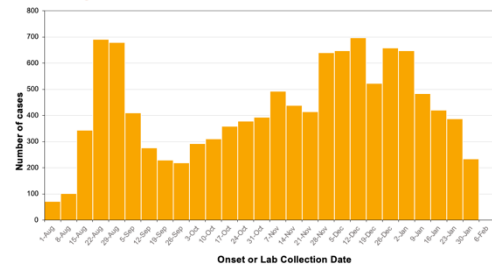
There continues to be much greater demand than supply. We receive about 2,000 doses per week, with about 90,000 people eligible in this phase. We continue to ask for patience and grace while we work to get people appointments. It will take weeks to months to get vaccines to everyone who needs/wants them.

Our local pharmacy and medical provider partners are working with us to follow the state's priorities as we protect the most vulnerable, seek health equity, and support our critical infrastructure. Most of the teachers in our district will have their second dose of vaccines by the end of next week, and most of our healthcare and emergency workers have had their second doses.

CVS pharmacy is offering some additional vaccines through the federal program at a few locations in our district.

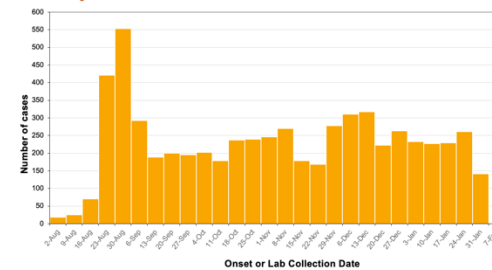
While the CVS system does not interface with the Virginia system, on Monday night we were able to alert many of our residents who had preregistered on our system and are older than 65 to sign up for a vaccine through CVS. While some people had trouble with the CVS connection, a number of residents have reported that they were able to schedule an appointment.

NRHD, COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug - 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



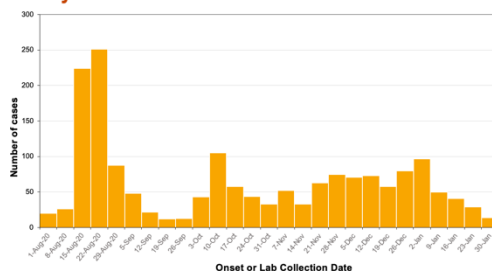
Be committed. Be well.

Montgomery Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug - 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Be committed. Be well.

Radford City, COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug - 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Be committed. Be well.

As more pharmacies offer the vaccine, we have a request: if you get an appointment, please don't accept a duplicate appointment for a 1st dose, even if it is sooner. Processing cancellations has put a strain on our system. If you get an appointment, please honor it. Leave open appointments for people in our community who are among the most vulnerable. Let's cheer every vaccine given.

We do have the new COVID variants in Virginia and, although they have not yet been identified in our district, we can expect that they will become the dominant variants in coming weeks and months. These new variants are potentially more contagious and require that we continue vigilance with the use of masks, physical distancing, and hand washing.

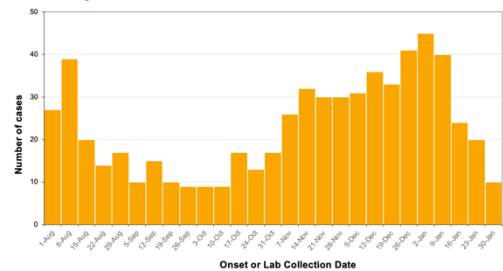
We need to remind everyone that we still have significant levels of community transmission. Our vigilance message extends to those who have been vaccinated, even with two shots. Until we get more people vaccinated to approach herd immunity and have less virus circulating, everyone needs to wear a mask, watch their distance, and wash their hands. Even if you have received both doses of vaccine and wait several weeks, this is not the time for you to mix households without wearing a mask and keeping your distance. Let's keep seeking ways to visit our parents, grandparents, and grandchildren outdoors with masks on and physically distanced. There is a light at the end of this long tunnel, and we need to hang in there together.

Lastly, I'd like to mention that the state is moving to a single pre-registration and scheduling system. If you have signed up on the NRVroadtoWellness.com website, you do NOT need to preregister again on the new state system. We will be merging our existing signups into the state system. In order

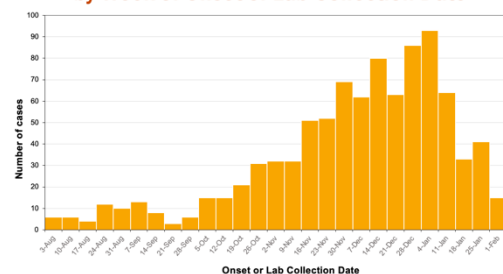
to do this, our pre-registration system will be down this weekend. We will post updates as they are available on the site. Please know that no one across the state will be able to pre-register during this time.

It is still winter, and with that comes the potential for snow and ice. Weather-related vaccine clinic schedule changes will be sent in email and phone messages. Please keep up to date with our vaccine and pandemic information of NRVroadtoWellness.com.

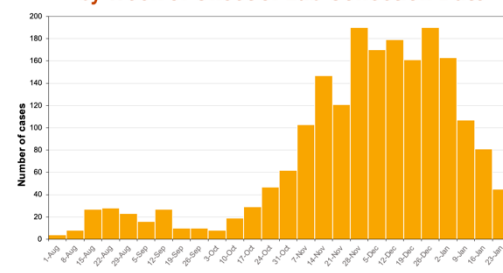
Floyd Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug – 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Giles Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug – 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



Pulaski Co., COVID-19 Epi Curve, 1 Aug – 9 Feb, by Week of Onset or Lab Collection Date



—Dr. Noelle Bissell, Director, New River Public Health District.