

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

December 21, 2021

Health Department Gives Thanks to the Community; Recognizes the One Year Anniversary of Administering the COVID Vaccine

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – As we move forward into a new year, we want to take this time to pause and reflect on the successes, difficulties and losses our community has endured during this pandemic.

Until late December 2020, the tools we had to fight this virus were COVID testing, masks, hand washing, and social distancing. In late 2020, the Health Department received news that we would soon begin to administer the COVID-19 vaccine. The sense of excitement—that we were finally reaching a turning point in the pandemic—provided a light of hope in such bleak times.

The Health Department is now close to giving a total of 200,000 vaccines to individuals in Hamilton County, which accounts for over 42% of the total number given, numbers that seemed so daunting in the beginning. This milestone is due to the dedication and commitment of Health Department staff and volunteers, community members coming to be vaccinated, and our partners who saw the need for our community and opened their doors to us. These partnerships allowed us to safely and efficiently provide both testing and vaccine to residents. There are too many partners to adequately list, but they spanned the gamut from local government and faith based organizations, to nonprofits and private businesses. They played a pivotal role in the Health Department being able to react quickly to this virus and provide the community with tools needed to curb its rapid spread.

The past two years have taken a heavy toll on all of us. Nothing in this pandemic has been straightforward or consistent, other than the fact that it required all of us to be flexible and adapt to an ever-evolving situation, sometimes daily. From losing loved ones to COVID-19, to the connections our staff made with residents, only to find out that they passed away from COVID a few days later. This year has not been easy but has proven our resolve and tenacity. We recognize the very real losses and express our condolences to everyone who has lost someone to COVID. Each one of the 744 Hamilton County deaths from COVID as well as the 800,000 deaths in the U.S. is a life gone- a real loss to their friends, family and community.

We understand that COVID fatigue is real and that people are tired and ready for a sense of normalcy, but now is not the time to be complacent. Omicron is another reminder that COVID is still very real and still spreading across the globe. We encourage people to meet this holiday season and enjoy time with loved ones, but as you do, please continue to practice good public health measures like washing your hands, wearing your mask, testing for COVID before you gather, and most importantly, getting your vaccine!

Happy Holidays,

Sabrina Novak, Hamilton County Health Department Administrator