

June 18, 2021

## "I trust the vaccine, but not the virus"

In interviews this week, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD, has focused on encouraging those who have not yet gotten fully vaccinated to do so – and the sooner the better.

Vermont is the most vaccinated state in the U.S., Dr. Levine pointed out, however, even a low incidence rate of cases is not zero, and the virus still has cards to play. "I trust the vaccine, but I do not trust this virus," said Dr. Levine, noting that in some parts of the world fewer than two percent of the population has access to the vaccine. What this means is there is still significant opportunity for the virus to mutate into variants that can threaten the health of people in Vermont who have not yet been vaccinated.

Dr. Levine cited the increase in cases associated with the Delta variant, first identified in India, as an important reason to get vaccinated. This variant – which accounts for about 10% of cases in the U.S. and more than 90% of new cases in the United Kingdom – is showing traits of being far more contagious and potentially more dangerous than the more common strains circulating. Three cases of this variant have been identified in Vermont.

National data is showing that most serious illness and hospitalizations are occurring among people who are not vaccinated against COVID-19.

Dr. Levine appealed to Vermonters who have not yet gotten their shots to visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) for answers to their questions about the vaccine, "or talk to a friend, a loved one or your doctor, and find *your* reason to get vaccinated."

[Find a vaccine near you](#)

## **First in the nation to reach 80% vaccination rate, Vermont looks ahead**

Twenty-four hours after he announced Vermont had reached its goal of 80% of Vermonters receiving at least one dose of vaccine, and lifting all state pandemic restrictions, Governor Phil Scott said the state is “not letting up.”

At his Tuesday press conference, the Governor said that although our strategy will evolve as we move into a new phase, “the people we vaccinate tomorrow are just as important as those we vaccinated yesterday.” Gov. Scott said his administration’s goal is to continue the work of meeting people where they are, making shots as accessible as possible.

The Governor also announced that the State of Emergency – which has been in place since March 13, 2020 – would be allowed to expire at midnight on Tuesday. In its place is a separate Executive Order. The Order includes provisions to maintain the National Guard’s Active State Service status, extend Vermont’s access to Federal funding for expanded emergency housing and feeding programs. The Order also serves as a bridge allowing restaurants and bars to continue serving drinks to go. Legislation passed this year provides for this but does not go into effect until July 1.

[Read the press release](#)

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## **Wide range of vaccination options continue to be available**

Human Services Secretary Mike Smith announced that nearly 60 vaccination clinics are planned this week throughout Vermont. People can visit [healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine](https://healthvermont.gov/MyVaccine) to find one of the many nearby, fast and free vaccination opportunities available.

In addition, most pharmacies are offering walk-in vaccinations. Ask your local pharmacist or simply walk into a CVS, Hannaford Food and Drug, Walmart, Walgreens, Price Chopper/Market 32, Rite Aid, Shaw’s Supermarket or Costco.

New vaccination options are being added regularly, so if one doesn't work out, keep checking back. It's easy to find one that fits your schedule and preferences.

[Find a vaccine location near you](#)

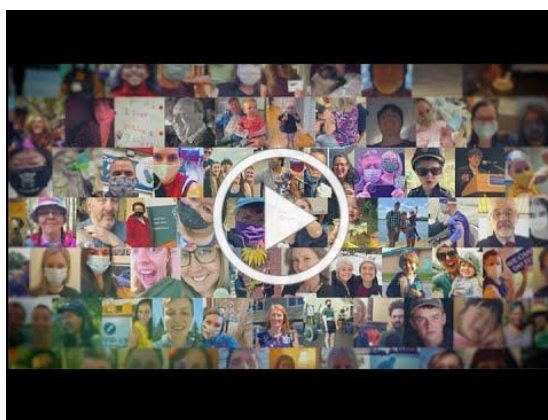
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## **New Health Department videos showcase why Vermonters ultimately got vaccinated**

The Health Department has launched a new ad campaign featuring Vermonters who came to walk-in clinics and agreed to share their reasons for getting vaccinated.

The videos — which are now airing on TV and radio, as well as on YouTube and other streaming channels— are unique in that, at first, the people featured weren't "all in" on getting vaccinated. They still had questions or wanted to see how other people they knew did.

These Vermonters describe their concerns and how or why they overcame them, some by doing their research into the vaccines, and others deciding to move forward in order to protect their loved ones.



Find more videos like these on our YouTube channel, including Commissioner Levine discussing vaccine safety and effectiveness, and many more on other important public health topics!

[Visit Health's YouTube Channel](#)

## New on healthvermont.gov

### Vermont Vaccination Data

Find Health Department vaccine data, including vaccination rates by county, age, sex, race and ethnicity, at the [COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard](#).

Data is updated Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Visit [COVID-19 Current Activity](#) for up-to-date information on COVID-19 positive cases across Vermont.



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