



This Month in Public Health

in Seneca County
May 28, 2021, Edition



WE'RE CELEBRATING... We're now one of 51 accredited local health departments in Ohio!

I'm excited to share the news that **the Public Health Accreditation Board awarded accreditation to the Seneca County General Health District last week. YAHOO!**

This achievement marks 5-6 years of hard work, especially by former Health Commissioner Beth Schweitzer and former Accreditation Coordinator Laura Bogard. Achieving this distinction is not a one- or two-person process however; it takes an entire team of Health District staff working diligently to assess the agency's strengths and weaknesses, comparing current operations and performance against national standards, and making numerous changes to do things better and have a greater impact on the health of our county. It also requires stronger relationships with community members and partners- which takes both time and effort to build and maintain.

As the Ohio Department of Health acknowledged (and I know from my own experience as a health commissioner over the past 10+ years), achieving national accreditation is a "major lift" anytime, but especially so during the middle of a pandemic. Our public health staff truly are warriors and life-saving heroes, although they don't receive nearly the same level of the public acknowledgement or appreciation that other "frontline" responders do.

We'll be releasing an official announcement within the next week or two, and we're planning some special ways to celebrate this major accomplishment. We wanted to share our special news with all of you in advance!

What's the Current State of COVID-19 in Seneca County?

-  We went from **ORANGE** to **YELLOW** in Ohio's Public Health Advisory System this week- but then the Ohio Dept. of Health announced Thursday afternoon that the System was being cancelled. What a bummer!
-  We had the 4th lowest rate of new cases in the state for the past 2 weeks! We previously had 35 new cases in Seneca County from 5/6 to 5/19/2021 (a rate of 63.4 new cases per 100,000). For 5/13 to 5/26/2021, the rate dropped to 39.9 new cases per 100,000. GREAT NEWS!
-  38% of residents have begun and 34% have completed their COVID-19 vaccination series (as of 5/28/2021). In comparison, 45% of Ohioans have started and 40% have finished the COVID-19 vaccination series. This type of disparity between rural and urban counties is being seen in many parts of the state (and nation). Certainly we can do better!
-  We vaccinated 33 teens ages 12-17 this week using Pfizer vaccine (19 last week). More openings are available for teens on June 2 and 3!
-  COVID-19 vaccines are available in Seneca County at multiple locations; the kind of vaccine varies by site.
 - Visit [GetTheShot.coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://www.gettheshot.gov) to find a vaccine provider and available appointments. Most locations also welcome walk-ins.
 - Vaccine providers in Fostoria:
 - Community Health Services – 4481 N US 23, Fostoria
 - Kroger Pharmacy – 126 W High Street, Fostoria
 - ProMedica Physicians Family Medicine- Fostoria – 455 W 4th St #100, Fostoria
 - Vaccine providers in Tiffin:
 - Kroger Pharmacy – 790 Market St, Tiffin
 - MercyHealth Tiffin Hospital – 45 St Lawrence Drive, Tiffin
 - Seneca County General Health District – 71 S Washington Street, Suite 1102, Tiffin (Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson)
 - Tiffin Community Health Center – 1344 Seneca Avenue, Tiffin
 - WalMart - 2801 W State Route 18, Tiffin

What changes on June 2?

Many state health orders will be lifted, although it doesn't mean the pandemic is over.

- Going away are the facial covering protocols, social distancing guidelines, and capacity restrictions for indoor and outdoor events.

It will be up to individual businesses, offices, and employers to decide what steps they will take to protect their staff and customers. The Health Department can assist by answering questions and providing suggestions. Posting clear signage can help everyone understand your policies.

What doesn't change on June 2?

CDC recommendations for unvaccinated persons have not changed, since you remain at significant risk for getting COVID-19:

- ✓ Wear a mask that covers both the nose and mouth.
- ✓ Stay 6 feet apart from people that don't live with you.
- ✓ Avoid crowds and poorly-ventilated indoor spaces.
- ✓ Wash hands often with soap and water; use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available.
- ✓ Get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you have questions about what's best for you, contact your personal doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant to discuss your concerns.

Pandemic health orders that will remain are related to 1) nursing homes and assisted living facilities, which have federal safety protocols they must follow, and 2) data collection related to the pandemic.

What else can I do to protect my family, friends, and co-workers?

If you're not vaccinated (and even if you are), we encourage you to monitor yourself for symptoms. We have COVID-19 antigen home test kits that you can keep on hand so that you can easily test yourself. Mild COVID-19 symptoms often mimic seasonal allergies (runny nose, cough), so using a home test kit can help you quickly find out if you do or don't have COVID-19.

- Free test kits can be picked up at the Health Department during business hours; they come packaged 6 per box, so you can have some on hand for family members too.
- The test is done at home under the direct visual supervision of a telehealth provider (so you need to have access to a smartphone and computer/tablet with webcam).



What is

doing after June 2?

- ✓ We've reopened our building to the public.
- ✓ Since we provide personal healthcare services (and can't tell which customers are or are not vaccinated), we will continue to require masks for entry to the building and in our clinic areas. Services will continue to be provided at the door for those unable or unwilling to wear a mask.
- ✓ Vaccinated staff and customers can choose not to wear a mask except when providing or receiving clinic services. Consistent with CDC guidance for healthcare settings, clinic staff is expected to wear a mask when providing services that require them to be within 6 feet of customers/patients.