

Charlotte County update for 12/16/20

Vaccines just part of final battle versus COVID-19

By Hector Flores

As our health care community prepares for the arrival of vaccines against COVID-19 next week, it's important to remember the shots are only part of the final battle versus the pandemic. Early doses of the vaccine will be administered to health-care workers and residents of long-term care facilities. This is in keeping with the longtime strategy of protecting our most vulnerable residents and the people we need to care for those of us who fall ill.

The Centers for Disease Control, the White House Coronavirus Task Force and Florida Department of Health have all cautioned against letting our guard down while the vaccine is getting rolled out. It will be months before enough vaccines are distributed to immunize everyone. Until then, please continue to practice social distancing, hand-washing and avoid large gatherings, especially with the holidays upon us.

Surveys have shown not everyone will get the vaccine even when it is available. It is vital that residents educate themselves about the vaccine because of the misinformation spreading online and elsewhere. The county has created a page on its website containing answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccine and fact-checks addressing common myths and rumors. Visit www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov and click the COVID-19 Update banner at the top of the page, then click Vaccine FAQ in the right-hand menu. We will continue to share information about vaccine availability as we receive it.

This has been an unprecedented year of challenges for our entire community. Many of our family, friends and neighbors have lost loved ones or battled health problems. I have been heartened to see my colleagues and our community rise to these challenges, helping those in need and demonstrating their respect for their neighbors' safety by taking modest, but effective, steps to slow the spread of the virus. Charlotte County has fared better than many of the communities in our nation, in part because of those widespread efforts.

As the New Year dawns, we can finally see some hope for a long-awaited return to a sense of normalcy. Before we get there, though, we must be willing to keep our guards up, follow guidance from the proper agencies and continue to care for each other.

I hope this message finds you healthy and secure and that you enjoy the holidays with family and friends safely and responsibly.

Citizen survey

Charlotte County is asking residents to participate in The National Community Survey. The survey is designed to provide a baseline of how the county government is serving residents, to gauge perceptions of the county, and to make comparisons with peer counties.

The survey is administered by National Research Center (NRC) at Polco of Middleton, Wisconsin and includes questions about quality of life in the community, local policies, demographics, ratings of local government services and resident use of services.

All residents of Charlotte County are eligible to participate. The survey is available online: <https://bit.ly/charlottecounty2020>. The survey can also be accessed via a link on our website www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov — look for the survey banner at the top of the page.

Residents with questions about the survey may contact the Public Information Office 941-623-1092.

Readers may reach Charlotte County Administrator Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.