

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Oct. 5, 2021**

Contact: ODH Office of Communications 614-644-8562

**Federal Report Shows Life-Saving Benefits of COVID-19 Vaccines***U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Report Shows COVID-19 Vaccines Are Linked To A Reduction of COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths*

COLUMBUS – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [released a report](#) showing that COVID-19 vaccinations in Ohio may have helped prevent roughly 13,000 new COVID-19 infections, 5,300 hospitalizations, and 1,800 deaths among seniors in Ohio during the first five months of 2021. The study, which was conducted by researchers with HHS’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), reviewed associations between Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) beneficiaries and the proportion of the fully vaccinated population at the county level between January and May 2021. The study also found that nationally, vaccinations were linked to a reduction of approximately 265,000 COVID-19 infections, 107,000 hospitalizations, and 39,000 deaths among Medicare beneficiaries between January and May 2021.

“This report further puts numbers to something I have long said – vaccines save lives,” explained Ohio Department of Health Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA. “COVID-19 has taken the lives of more than 22,000 Ohioans, has hospitalized more than 74,000, and has caused more than 1.4 million infections. The remarkable COVID-19 vaccines can help prevent severe illness and death from COVID-19, and will prevent dangerous variants from taking hold.”

[Ohio data](#) shows that of those who were hospitalized with COVID-19 since January 2021, more than 96% were not reported to be fully vaccinated.

“Our vaccination goals have remained consistent: save lives and slow the spread by protecting Ohio’s most vulnerable individuals,” said Ursel J. McElroy, director of the Ohio Department of Aging. “Understanding there would be potential barriers to getting vaccinated, we worked with partners to remove those barriers, inform people about the vaccine, and make the vaccine accessible.”

From the beginning of vaccine distribution, Governor DeWine has prioritized vaccination of the most vulnerable Ohioans, making those who live and work in specific congregate care settings among the first eligible to receive vaccines, including those in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, state psychiatric hospitals, veterans homes, and congregate care settings for people with developmental disabilities. Ohio also moved quickly and was one of the first states in the country to put in place a vaccine maintenance program for long-term care settings to ensure every staff member and resident has a continuous opportunity to get vaccinated.

While today’s report shows the clear benefit of COVID-19 vaccines for older Ohioans, it remains critically important for those of all eligible ages to choose to be vaccinated. The state recently launched Ohio Vax-2-School, incentivizing Ohioans aged 12-25 who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 to enter to win one of 150, \$10,000 scholarships, or one of five, \$100,000 grand prize scholarships. The scholarships, awarded in Ohio 529 College Advantage plans, can be used at the Ohio college, university, technical/trade school, or career program of the winner’s choice. Pending the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s granting of an emergency use authorization (for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year olds, the program will expand to allow parents

and guardians to enter on behalf of children as young as 5. Eligible Ohioans can enter online now at [www.ohiovax2school.com](http://www.ohiovax2school.com) or by phone at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

“If you haven’t yet been vaccinated, talk to your doctor to get the facts. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and are available at no cost. Choosing to be vaccinated could keep you out of the hospital, and save your life,” Dr. Vanderhoff said.

The HHS report is available at <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/covid-19-vaccination-rates-outcomes>.

COVID-19 vaccines are widely available throughout the state. Many providers offer walk-in appointments, or Ohioans can schedule a vaccination appointment at [gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov](http://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov). Ohioans who want to learn more about the safety, efficacy, and side effects of COVID-19 vaccines should talk to their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist, or visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](http://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine) to learn more.

XXX

***About the Ohio Department of Health***

*The Ohio Department of Health’s mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state’s public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.*