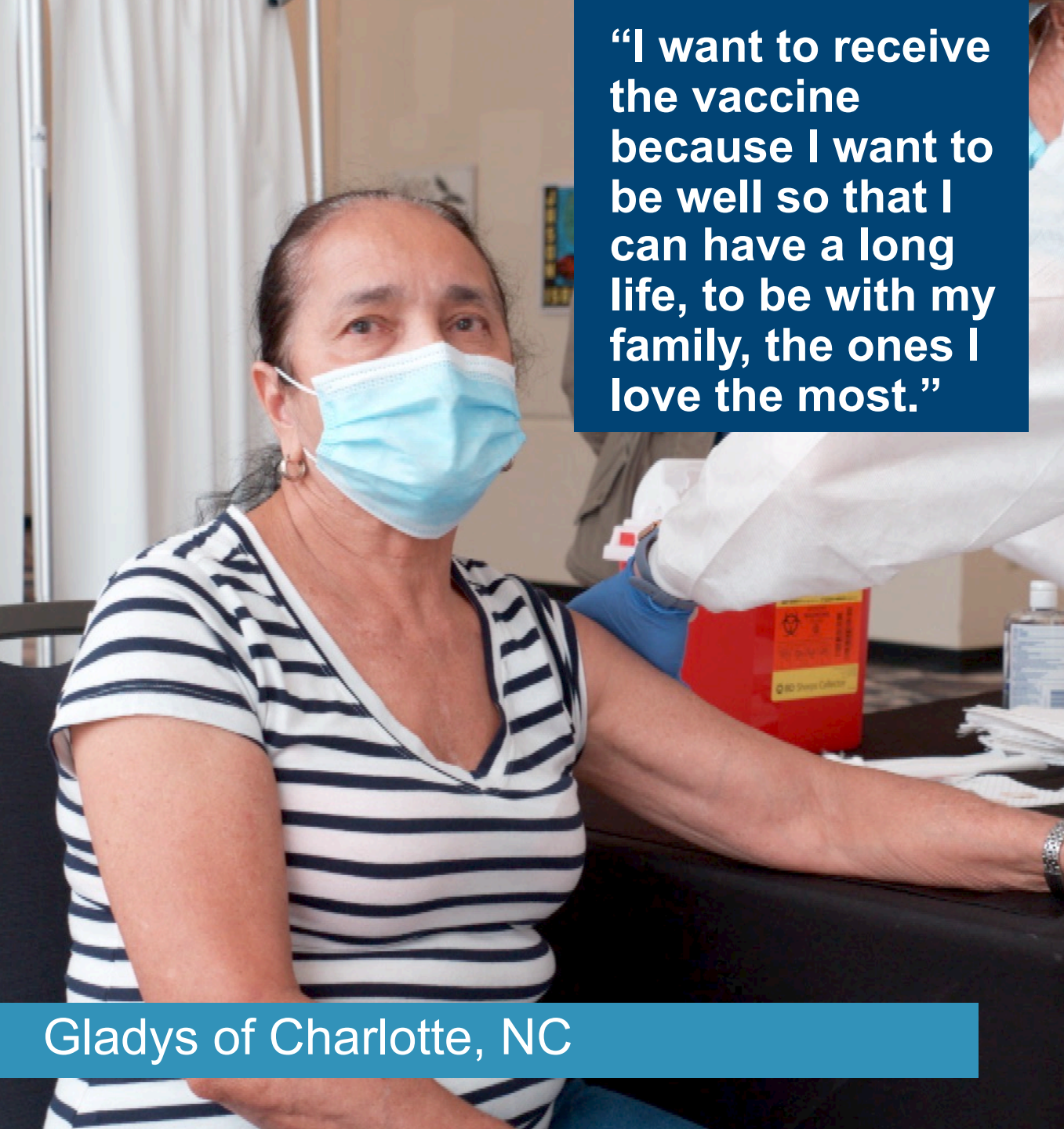# COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations

April 15, 2021

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"I want to receive the vaccine because I want to be well so that I can have a long life, to be with my family, the ones I love the most."
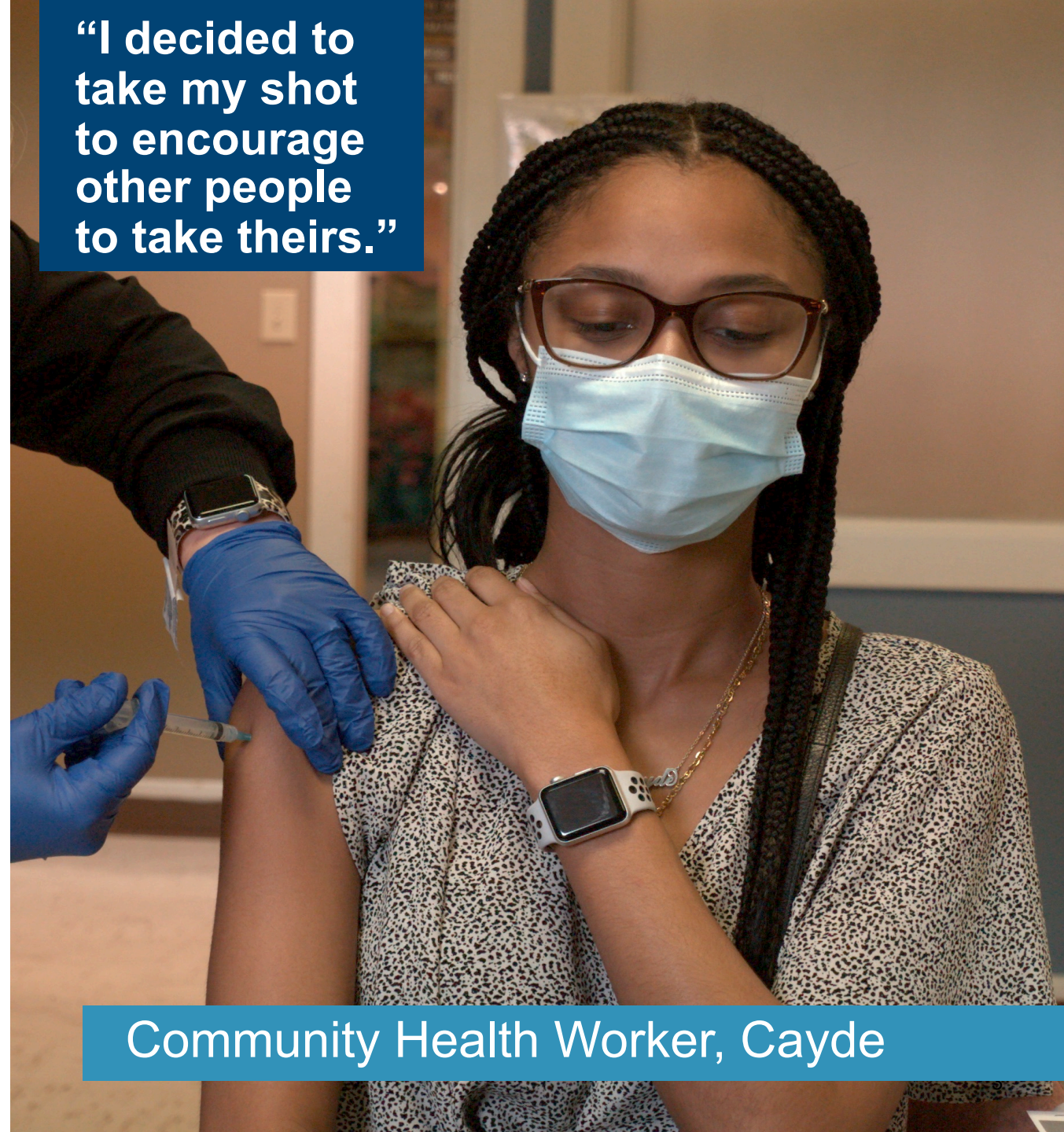
Gladys of Charlotte, NC

Millions of people across the US—and here in North Carolina—have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

North Carolinians are sharing their stories about why they got vaccinated.

What word comes to mind when you think about the COVID-19 vaccine?

"I decided to take my shot to encourage other people to take theirs."

Community Health Worker, Cayde

Veteran, retired CEO of Bank of America and North Carolinian Hugh McColl

Everyone 16+ is now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.

It's free to everyone.

Let's talk about the vaccines and answer your questions.

Tested, safe, and effective COVID-19 vaccines will help us get back in control of our lives and back to the people and places we love.

- Scientists had a head start, and thousands of volunteers helped with clinical trials.

- You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

- After you are fully vaccinated, you can get back to activities like gathering with other vaccinated friends and family without masks.

- You have a spot to take your shot.

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Scientists had a head start.

- COVID-19 vaccines are built on years of work to develop vaccines for similar viruses.

- All available vaccines use technologies that researchers have been studying and working with for decades.

Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett is a viral immunologist at the Vaccine Research Center at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health. Dr. Corbett's team began the first stage of clinical trials. They took the knowledge they gained in the last six years of research and applied it to a vaccine platform in collaboration with Moderna. The vaccine rolled out 10 months later. Dr. Corbett is from Hurdle Mills, NC.

You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

Vaccines safely increase your body's natural ability to fight the virus before the virus attacks you. That's how you win, and the virus loses. Here is how the vaccines work:

Vaccines imitate COVID without giving it to you.

Vaccine

Antibodies
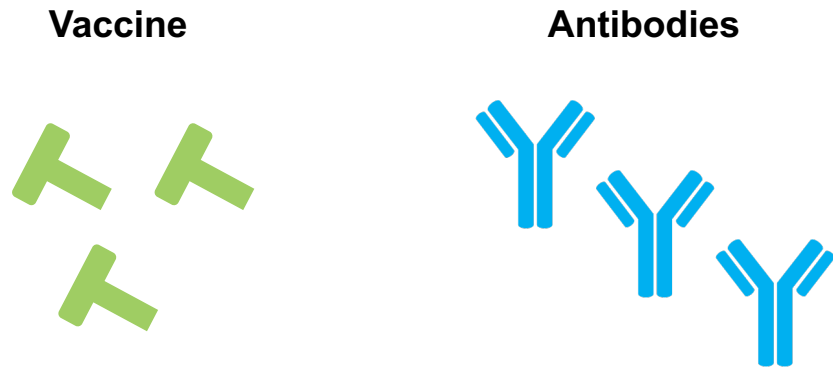
The vaccines give your body instructions (mRNA or DNA) to make a protein that safely teaches your body how to make an antibody to fight COVID-19.

You can fight off the real virus if it tries to attack you.

Antibodies
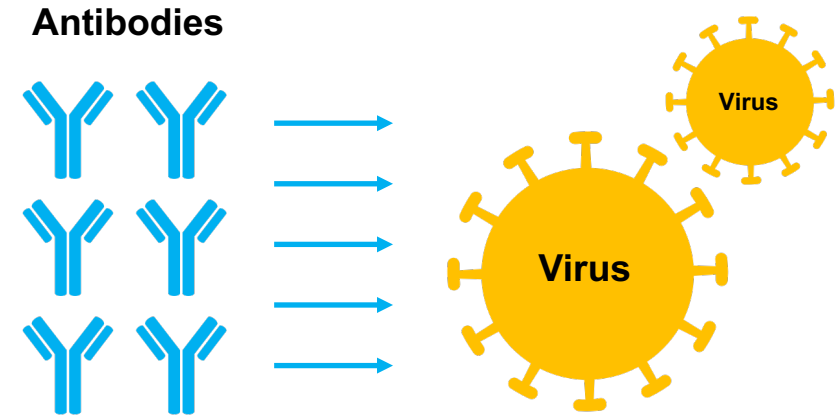
Virus

Virus

After getting vaccinated, you develop the ability to fight off the real virus because your body is strong enough and knows how to win.

The vaccines are tested, safe, and effective.

- All vaccines are rigorously tested for safety and effectiveness.

- More than 100,000 people volunteered in clinical trials to make sure the vaccines were safe and worked to prevent COVID-19.

- They protect you. People who were vaccinated were much less likely to get COVID-19 or be hospitalized or die.

- There were no serious safety concerns in the clinical trials with any vaccine.

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You may experience temporary reactions after your vaccination.

- You could have temporary reactions like a sore arm, fever, headache, or feeling tired and achy for a day or two.

- These temporary reactions are a good sign that the vaccine is working and should go away within a few days.

- You can take over-the-counter medicines, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, to help with the temporary reactions.

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Vaccines are available to all—for free.

- The vaccines are free to everyone, even if you don't have health insurance.

- You do not need a government-issued form of identification to receive a vaccine.

- Some vaccine providers may ask for a way to confirm your identity, so bring an item with your name on it (utility bill, faith ID, work badge, passport, matrícula consular, credit union member card, etc.). **You should not be turned away if you don't have photo identification.**

Your privacy and personal information are protected at all times.

- To follow state law, North Carolina submits year of birth (not date of birth), the first 3 digits of the vaccine's recipient's zip code (as long as that zip code includes more than 20,000 people), as well as the date of submission of the vaccination record.

- We do not send any personal information to the CDC or ICE. Everyone can be vaccinated, regardless of their immigration status, and getting vaccinated will not affect your immigration status.

- Nothing in the vaccine can be tracked—the protein your body makes cannot be tracked and it disappears after it finishes making you stronger.

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What you can do after you are fully vaccinated.

You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after your final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

- You can gather with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask.

- You can gather with unvaccinated people from one other household without wearing a mask, but only if no one from the other household is at high-risk for severe COVID-19 illness.

- You do not need to quarantine or get tested if you have been around someone who has COVID-19, unless you develop COVID-19 symptoms. (If you develop symptoms, you will need to get tested and isolate as soon as possible.)

- You can travel within the United States.

"I was grateful that it's a one-shot dose, so now I am vaccinated, and I'm protected against COVID-19."

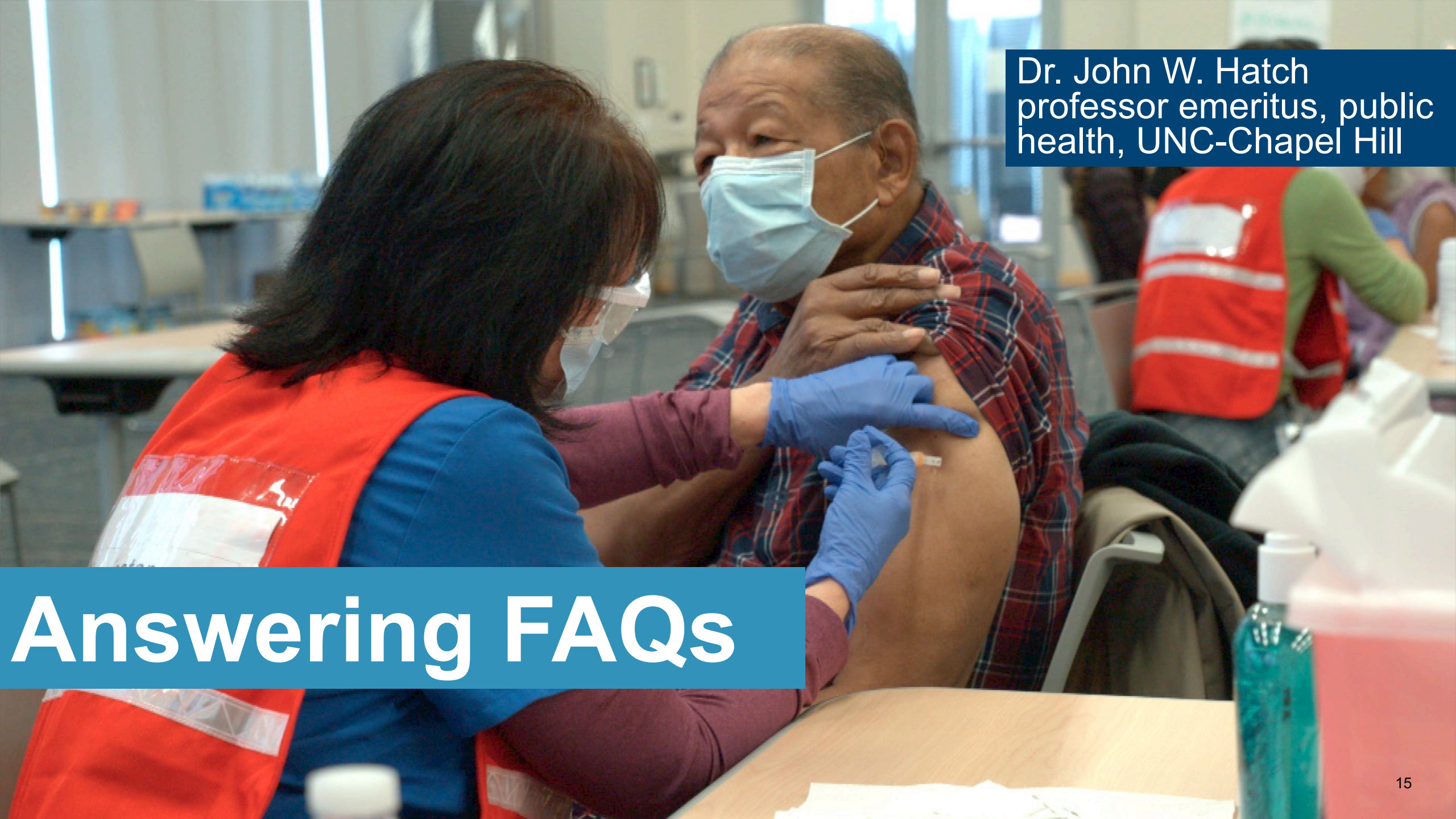DHHS Secretary Dr. Mandy Cohen receives her vaccine

Keep practicing the 3 Ws until enough of us are protected by the vaccines.

If you leave home, know your 3 Ws!

WEAR a cloth mask over your nose and mouth.

WAIT 6 feet apart. Avoid close contact.

WASH your hands or use hand sanitizer.

@NCDHHS   #StayStrongNC

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine and following the 3 Ws is everyone's best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.

- Until enough of us are protected by the vaccines, we need to keep protecting each other. Keep practicing the 3 Ws when in public or visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households.

- Getting as many people as possible vaccinated to get us back in control of our lives and back to the people and places we love will take some time—encourage others to get vaccinated so we can get there sooner!

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Dr. John W. Hatch professor emeritus, public health, UNC-Chapel Hill

Answering FAQs

Will I be able to choose which vaccine I take? Which one is best?

- The best vaccine is the first one available to you—all are tested, safe, and effective and the FDA continues to monitor vaccine safety.

- All available vaccines are extremely effective in preventing hospitalization and death caused by COVID-19 with no serious safety concerns.

- The Pfizer vaccine is approved for people age 16 and older, while the Moderna vaccine is approved for adults 18 and older.

Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

- Pregnant and breastfeeding women may receive any of the available vaccines.

- Pregnant women can talk with their doctors about their vaccine decision. You do not need to take a pregnancy test before you get your vaccine.

- Women who are breastfeeding may also choose to get vaccinated. The vaccine is not thought to be a risk to a baby who is breastfeeding.

Should I be concerned about the impact of the vaccine on my fertility?

- No. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends vaccination for all eligible people, including those who may want to get pregnant.

- Women in the clinical trials successfully became pregnant following vaccination and there have been no safety data to suggest that the vaccines impact the ability of a woman to get pregnant.

- Similarly, the Society for Male Reproduction and Urology recommends that men who want to be fathers should be encouraged to get vaccinated when they are eligible.

Are there fetal cells in the vaccine?

- None of the vaccines contain fetal cells or fetal tissues.

- Fetal cells were used in research to develop all of the vaccines. Vaccines commonly use fetal cells in development.

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not require the use of any fetal cells to produce the vaccines.

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Are children able to get the vaccine?

Children below the age of 16 are not yet eligible to receive any vaccine.

• The Pfizer vaccine can be given to teenagers aged 16+. Their clinical trial for adolescents age 12-15 showed high levels of success in preventing COVID-19, but it is still pending FDA approval. Clinical trials are underway to test if the vaccines are safe and work to prevent the illness in children as young as age 5.

• Moderna's vaccine is currently approved for people 18+. Clinical trials are underway to test if the vaccines are safe and work to prevent COVID-19 illness in younger adolescents and children.

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Do people who have had COVID-19 still need to be vaccinated?

- Yes. The vaccine works to protect you against a future infection. You don't need a COVID-19 test before vaccination.

- It is safe to get vaccinated with any of the authorized vaccines if you have been infected in the past.

- If you were treated for COVID-19 symptoms with monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma, you should wait 90 days before getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Talk to your doctor if you are unsure what treatments you received or if you have more questions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

- People who are actively sick with COVID-19 should wait until they have recovered and can no longer spread the virus before getting their vaccine.

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Let's work together to share information.
Help distribute information and materials:
YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov

- **Help direct people to "their spot" for reliable information about the vaccine**: Maybe it's you, now that you have new vaccine knowledge

- **Show people that you trust the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines**: Share your positive experience when you have your shot against COVID-19—use our tip sheet to create and share your own video to promote vaccination: **files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/NC-Vaccine-Selfie-Video-Tip-Sheet.pdf**

- **Use and share the COVID-19 vaccine communications materials to make sure more North Carolinians have accurate and up-to-date information on the vaccines**: Find them at **YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov**

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Let's talk.

"You're not only helping yourself, you're helping your neighbors, also."

NASCAR legend and North Carolinian Richard Petty receives his COVID-19 vaccine