

# COVID Vaccine...from Page 1A

“Seven COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic events have been planned through the end of January, along with follow-up events at which participants will receive their second dose,” the Health System announced Saturday.

Appointments are required and walk-ins will not be accepted, with event dates/locations being Jan. 11, 14 and 16 in Oakwood, Jan. 18 in Dawsonville, Jan. 23 in Winder, Jan. 27 in Gainesville and Jan. 30 in Toccoa. To schedule an appointment, visit [nghs.com/vaccine-registration](http://nghs.com/vaccine-registration).

“We are offering as many appointments as possible with the vaccine supply and staffing resources we have available,” Bobby Norris of Northeast Georgia Physicians Group said. “We will add more appointments – at more locations – as soon as we can. In the meantime, we appreciate everyone’s patience.”

Local pharmacies are expected to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to the general public this year, though there’s no timeline at present as to when those will be available.

Doctor’s offices are also eligible to give the vaccine while supplies last, though currently, only Synergy Health of Hiawassee is offering vaccinations to the public, based on state eligibility guidelines.

To sign up there, visit <http://www.synergymd.org> and click on the vaccine bottle. Synergy’s Dr. Samuel L. Church said that his office is working closely with the Department of Public Health “to efficiently get vaccines to all who want it.”

Vaccination efforts continued locally last week, with the Union County Health Department treating Stonehenge Senior Living staff and residents. This week, the Health Department will vaccinate the senior residents of Branan Lodge at Wesley Mountain Village.

In Towns County, the Health Department hosted its

first local vaccine clinic for health care workers on Jan. 6. And starting this week, the Young Harris-based facility will be welcoming expanded eligibility residents, including people aged 65 and up who have an appointment.

Union General Health System continued to vaccinate employees and health care workers affiliated with its Union General and Chatuge Regional hospitals, as well as residents and staff of the Union County Nursing Home and its Towns County counterpart.

Synergy Health stopped into the Towns County Emergency Management HQ in Young Harris Jan. 5 to host a vaccination clinic specifically for firefighters and law enforcement officers, organized after Gov. Brian Kemp announced testing eligibility for these first responders.

Towns County Sheriff Ken Henderson was at the front of the line to receive his first dose of the vaccine that day, and he said he was excited to be doing his part to promote a safe and healthy community.

Last week was Henderson’s first full week as the new sheriff in Towns County, and as a frontline worker in his community, he felt it important to take the vaccine “if it will prevent me from getting this virus where I can be out here helping the people.”

“Hopefully, this vaccine will help us to be out there working and serving the citizens that we need to be serving,” Sheriff Henderson said.

SARS-CoV-2 has been linked to more than 350,000 American deaths and much illness since its emergence a year ago, and those administering the vaccine are glad to finally have something they are hopeful will make a meaningful dent in the numbers.

“It feels good to actually have a solution to our problem,” Clinical Manager Savannah Kendall of Synergy Health said that Tuesday. “We’re able to work towards not just being reactive to patients coming in with COVID but being proactive in saying we have something that can resolve.”

“Hopefully, we can find a resolution to COVID and start protecting the community.”

Interest in the vaccine is incredibly high here, which makes sense, as Union and Towns counties are retirement communities consisting of a disproportionate number of senior citizens, who are the most at risk for death and hospitalization.



**Barnett vaccinated Jesse Miller at Chatuge Regional Hospital Jan. 7. Miller contracts with the hospital to provide Electromyographical Studies and Verve Conduction Velocity tests.**

Photo/Submitted

COVID-19 prevalence remains elevated all over the U.S., including in this region, and many people have placed their hopes in the vaccine, which has yet to be formally authorized by the Food and Drug Administration and deploys a technology that’s new in terms of use in humans.

As previously reported, there are several known side effects associated with COVID-19 vaccination, such as fever, headache, and rarer but more serious complications, though the most common side effect has been injection site soreness.

People will need to weigh the risks individually and in consultation with health care providers, but so far, for the most vulnerable to severe illness, many doctors believe the risks of an emergency use authorized vaccine are unlikely to be greater than the risks of COVID itself.

As far as COVID-19 testing goes, the local Health

Department is no longer holding daily clinics to allow the general public to receive free testing.

Until further notice, testing through the local Health Department will be strictly for symptomatic first responders, school employees and court system personnel who make an appointment.

District 2 Public Health is still offering COVID-19 testing for free to the general public at 2500 Allen Creek Drive in Gainesville. This site operates Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. by appointment only.

People can make an appointment by contacting the Call Center at 1-888-426-5073. Center hours are Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 7:30 am to 5 p.m., and Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Local testing is also available via doctor’s offices and other health care providers, though charges may apply.

## Notice on Vehicle Tags and Titles

Notice concerning Tags and Titles: Motor vehicle applications unavailable January 13 - 18. Due to a major systems upgrade all motor vehicle services will be unavailable during the above dates.

NO vehicle registration or titling services in office. NO online services available. The office will be open for all property tax services.

We appreciate your patience while we make the transition to enhanced version of DRIVES. T(Jan13,FI)SH

## American Red Cross Volunteers

Make a difference in your community! As a volunteer with the American Red Cross, you can help families recover after a home fire, train individuals in first aid and CPR, support America’s military families, or take on any number of other roles that make our communities safer, stronger and more resilient. Get started at <https://www.redcross.org/local/georgia/volunteer.html> or call your NWGA chapter office to ask about volunteer opportunities 844-536-6226. NT(Jan13,ZU)CA

## Misty Mountain Quilters sew for local Nursing Homes

In October 2020, the Misty Mountain Quilters Guild “Heart to Heart” group set a goal of creating thirty quilts for two nursing homes before Christmas.

They exceeded this goal with 32 quilts and 10 fidget pads, which were donated to four different care facilities in Union, Towns and Clay Counties.

Robin Jones, who took over coordinating this effort last September, is hoping to provide these items, as well as wheelchair and walker bags, to facilities in all five counties where most Guild members reside.

The goal is to help nursing home residents feel more at home and be reminded that they are loved by the community.

These quilts are lap-sized quilts, no larger than 40”x50”, suitable for wheelchair users, and each quilt takes several hours to create.

Many Guild members contributed their time and quilting skills to this project.

Fidget pads are about the size of a large placemat, and used by Alzheimer’s patients and others to provide sensory and tactile stimulation for restless hands.

They will have materials of different textures to feel, as well as buttons, snaps and zippers to keep fidgety fingers occupied.

Guild member Nelda Knight, of Blairsville, created all of these fidget pads.

If you would like to help with this effort, Ms. Jones will be at Fabrics Galore and Quilting Store, on the hill above the Blairsville Post Office, on January 19, from 11 AM to 1 PM to collect finished items and distribute kits of fabric and patterns.

You can contact her at [rljones4503@hotmail.com](mailto:rljones4503@hotmail.com).

For more information about the guild and its many outreach programs, visit <http://www.mistymountainquiltguild.org/home> or email [mmqinfo@gmail.com](mailto:mmqinfo@gmail.com).



Sarah Ensley (in reindeer antlers), Activities Director, at Union County Nursing Home, accepted the gift of 15 quilts from Santa’s Helper Robin Jones, representing the Misty Mountain Quilt Guild.



Santa’s helper Robin Jones of Young Harris presented 10 quilts to Mitsy Hansen, Activities director at the Chatuge Regional Nursing Home in Towns County.



The Clay County, NC, Care Center received seven quilts.



Santa’s Helper Robin Jones presented 10 fidget pads to the Hayesville House, Clay County, NC.