

Nearly 25 percent of Oconee residents have gotten first COVID-19 vaccine



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Signs line the pathway to a COVID-19 vaccine site operated by PRISMA Health in Columbia on Feb. 9.

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
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SENECA — After receiving initial doses in the middle of December, approximately 25 percent of Oconee County residents have received at least one shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Approximately 21,406 county residents have received at least one shot, according to the most recent S.C. Department of

Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) data provided on Tuesday.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were approximately 79,546 people living in Oconee County in 2019. Those 65 years and older were estimated to make up almost 24 percent of the entire population. Nearly 20 percent of the population was young-

SEE VACCINE, PAGE A4

FROM PAGE A1

er than 18 years old, according to the estimates. AnMed Health and Prisma Health both received their initial vaccine allotments in the middle of December.

DHEC records vaccine statistics based on age, sex and race:

- Ages 16-24 receiving at least one shot: 494
- Ages 25-34 receiving at least one shot: 883
- Ages 35-44 receiving at least one shot: 1,193
- Ages 45-54 receiving at least one shot: 1,759
- Ages 55-64 receiving at least one shot: 4,716
- Ages 65 and up receiving at least one shot: 12,887

• A total of 11,879 women (56 percent) have received at least one shot, compared to 9,513 men (44 percent)

Whites made up 89.3 percent of the county, according to 2019 population estimates. Blacks made up 7.6 percent and Hispanics made up 5.8 percent. Some 16,632 white people have received at least one shot in the county, accounting for almost 78 percent of vaccines administered in Oconee. DHEC data on the black population for Oconee County doesn't provide much clarity, with none being accounted for from ages 16-34. DHEC estimates 740 black people have been administered at least one vaccine dose. DHEC estimates 414 Hispanics have received at least one vaccine dose, or almost 2 percent of those vaccinated so far.

DHEC: 2 MILLION SOUTH CAROLINIANS HAVE RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE SHOT

On Thursday, DHEC announced a total of 2.03 million vaccine doses have been administered statewide. Some 702,000 residents have completed their vaccination. Approximately 21.4 percent of South

Carolina residents 15 and older have received at least one shot, while 17.1 percent of residents have completed vaccinations.

"Having the COVID-19 vaccine reach the 2 million mark is a giant step toward ending this pandemic in South Carolina," DHEC director Dr. Edward Simmer said in a news release. "We're grateful to our local leaders, providers and community partners for their efforts to get shots into arms as quickly as possible. They've not only helped our state achieve this 2 million-dose milestone, but they've also allowed us to open up vaccines to all South Carolinians 16 and older much faster than we initially anticipated. Now we need to continue this great effort until every South Carolinian has had an opportunity to receive the vaccine."

The total number of South Carolinians vaccinated figures to improve over coming weeks, with Wednesday marking the first day all state residents 16 and older became eligible to receive the vaccine. All three vaccines — Pfizer, Moderna and Janssen — are available to those ages 18 and older, and, currently, Pfizer is the only vaccine available to those ages 16-18, according to DHEC.

The agency said herd immunity "can be achieved" in South Carolina.

"DHEC advises that certain public health recommendations, like masks and physical distancing, can begin to be relaxed once 70 to 80 percent of the population is vaccinated," the release said. "Until then, it's important for everyone to continue to wear masks and physically distance."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated 99.5 million Americans — or 30 percent of the total population — had received at least one vaccine dose as of April 1. Approximately 16.9 percent of American residents — 56.1 million people — have been completely vaccinated.