

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Visits First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens Community-Based Vaccination Site

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SOMERSET, NJ - First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens was chosen to launch a statewide initiative designed to ensure vaccination distribution is done in an equitable manner. Jonnice Slaughter, 45 of Rahway became the first of 300 people who will be vaccinated at the site on Wednesday. Once the Moderna shot went into her arm the room full of socially distanced onlookers applauded. "I was very excited, I have always been one to get flu shots on a regular basis," Slaughter told TAPinto before she took her shot. "I try to do any preventive thing I can do to minimize how long I would be sick if I caught anything." Gov. Phil Murphy toured the site with state, county, and local officials, including Assemblyman Joe Daniels, County Commissioner Director Shanel Robinson, Franklin Mayor Phil Kramer, County Commissioner Deputy Director Sara Sooy, Commissioner Doug Singleterry, County Surrogate Bernice Tina Jalloh, and others. "The reason we are here today is that Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, and low-income people have been disproportionately impacted in so many ways, economically, physically, and otherwise," Reverend Dr. Buster Soaries said. "All the data indicated something had to happen to do an extra push to make sure that population, that demographic had access to the long-awaited vaccine. When you find churches like ours that have had over 300 deaths in the last year, either members of the church or relatives of members of the church, there is a passionate desire to do whatever it takes to mitigate the impact of this dread virus." Soaries said when Gov. Phil Murphy called to set up a vaccination site at FBCLG, he had to say yes, because his church along with many others began the process of educating its members of the importance of working with the government to vaccinate as many people as possible, in the pursuit to get back to normal. "I wanna say very simply, this is incredibly impressive, and it is desperately needed," Murphy said..."We are still on a road to equity as it relates to a whole range of challenges, including distribution of the vaccine, it is the reason why Lincoln Gardens is up and running as it is. We have made progress but we still have to make a lot more progress in black and brown communities. The needle is going in the right direction, but it needs to go a fair distance more, it needs to go faster." FBCLG is one of three initial locations set up to vaccinate 15,000 New Jerseyans in underserved communities throughout the state, according to officials. More sites are being planned as of press time, and the goal is to vaccinate 3,000 people at each site. Vaccinations at each location will take place over a two-week period, followed by a return to administer second doses, according to officials. "I am truly honored to join you this morning and bear witness to our first faith-based community vaccination partnership," New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judy Persichilli said. Community leaders and local officials partnered with the New Jersey Department of Health, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, FEMA, and the U.S. Department of Defense to make this program possible. More than 1,500 people have already taken their first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at the site, and have set up their appointments for their second shot in the coming weeks. New Jerseyans will need to make appointments at other partner sites when they are open and will need to deal directly with partnering houses of worship, community organizations, and local community leaders to coordinate. Franklin has a total of 4,498 COVID-19 cases, and 201 deaths since the pandemic hit New Jersey in March. There are 678 COVID-19 related deaths in Somerset County. One person aged 18-29, 15 people aged 30-49, 55 people aged 50-64, 161 people aged 65-79, and 262 people over the age of 80 have died, according to statistics proved by the SCDOH as of Feb. 23. The New Jersey Department of Health on Tuesday reported a total of 687,386 positive cases of the coronavirus since the pandemic began its spread in the state 346 days ago an increase of 2,484 overnight. The death toll in New Jersey is 20,689, an increase of 104 overnight. There have been 10,402,649 COVID-19 tests administered in New Jersey. There have been 10,361,871 COVID-19 tests administered in New Jersey. New Jersey administered 1,192,364 first doses, and 566,411 second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the Department of Health.

Malik Lyons
Reporter
TAPinto Franklin

VIDEO

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