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Pharmacy COVID vaccine supply quickly depleted



Photos/Don Del Rosso

Remington Drug Co. pharmacist and co-owner Travis Hale discusses the COVID-19 vaccine with Carmen Fox before giving her the shot Friday.

By **Don Del Rosso**
Staff Journalist

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The Sumerduck educator warily decided to get a COVID-19 vaccination.

“Since Day One, there’s just been so much misinformation out there and such uncertainty about the virus itself,” said Carmen Fox, 66, who received the first of two Moderna shots Friday afternoon at Remington Drug Co.’s vaccination clinic at 204 E. Main St. “And then, on top of it, the vaccines coming through as quickly as they did, I was very apprehensive.”

But Mrs. Fox, who qualified for the vaccination because of her age and job, set aside those fears — putting health considerations first.

“The virus is a very real threat, and I would like to see our nation get well a lot faster,” said Mrs. Fox, who teaches school-age children at Verdun Adventure Bound in Culpeper County and helps care for her 89-year-old mother. “I just felt like getting (the vaccine) was the right thing to do.”

The **Remington Drug Co.** vaccinated 100 people last week during a three-day clinic from Wednesday through Friday, pharmacist Travis Hale said.

On Friday afternoon, the Virginia Department of Health informed him that the pharmacy would get another 100 doses within a month to give the initial round of patients a second shot. The follow-up shot will make the vaccine 94 percent effective against COVID-19 infection.

News of the second dose removes a lot of uncertainty about how and where the pharmacy customers would get the second-round vaccination, Dr. Hale said.

“We just weren’t sure” until Friday, the pharmacist said.

Remington Drug learned on Friday, Jan. 15, that it would get 100 of 200 doses that it had requested through the state health department, said Dr. Hale, who co-owns the practice with pharmacist Al Roberts.



Patients must wait at the clinic for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to ensure they have no adverse reaction.



Pharmacist Margaret Rowe gives Edward Fox of Sumerduck the shot.

You’ve got tons of people that need a vaccine, and we’re only getting a trickling amount. There’s just so many people that aren’t going to get serviced.

— Remington Drug Co. pharmacist and co-owner Travis Hale



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That triggered a scramble to obtain and set up space to operate the clinic.

Remington Town Councilman Van Loving contacted Chet Huey, who owns a number of Main Street properties, to ask for help.

Obliging, Mr. Huey donated the vacant the one-floor storefront, just across from the Main Street pharmacy.

“Our team got it ready that weekend,” Dr. Hale said.

Via UPS, 100 vaccine doses arrived the morning of Tuesday, Jan. 19, in a sturdy, insulated 18-by-18-inch cardboard box, the pharmacist said.

The pharmacy established a registration and scheduling system on its website.

“The appointments (for vaccinations) were gone in three hours” after the pharmacy posted their availability late Tuesday morning, Dr. Hale said. “And there was no marketing whatsoever.”

Remington Drug pharmacists and a technician inoculated 30 people Wednesday and an equal number Thursday. The remaining pharmacy customers received the vaccine Friday.

With one vaccinator, the pharmacy can process a patient about every 10 minutes, Dr. Hale said.

“If we’ve got two vaccinators, we could easily do probably 16 to 20 an hour,” he explained.

Last week’s clinic operated from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Though not set up to handle “mass volume” of vaccinations, Dr. Hale believes the online system to provide the vaccine has worked well.

“We’ve had a lot of compliments on how simple and easy it was to (register and schedule appointments), come through and get their vaccine,” he said. “In and out. No lines or anything like that.”

Mrs. Fox agreed.

“I thought it went very well,” she said. “I felt like I was well prepared by the drug store and the people who administered it. They were very informative.”

Because of limited COVID-19 vaccine supplies, Virginia provides doses to specific groups of **people in phases**.

Phases “1a” and “1b” include healthcare personnel, “essential” workers, people 65 and older as well as those ages 16 through 64 with a “high-risk medical condition.”

Belinda Loving, 59, of Remington has diabetes and **Lupus**, an autoimmune



disease.

Remington Drug pharmacist Margaret Rowe asked Mrs. Loving several screening questions before administering the vaccine Friday afternoon.

Mrs. Loving, an administrative assistant for a Culpeper-based government contractor, said she had no allergies or reactions to vaccines.

Mrs. Loving then rolled up her left sleeve and within minutes the pharmacist administered the vaccine.

“And there you go,” Dr. Rowe said.

“I didn’t feel a thing,” Mrs. Loving replied.

“That’s good,” Dr. Rowe told her. “Glad to hear that.”

The pharmacist then listed the vaccine’s possible side effects.

“You might have a sore arm,” Dr. Rowe said. “You might have a headache. You might feel flushed and feverish. You might have achy joints. All of that’s normal. That’s just your immune system responding to the vaccine. It doesn’t mean you’ve got the flu.”

The pharmacist added: “If they don’t go away in a few days, you might want to seek medical assistance.”

If the available vaccine supply allowed, the Remington pharmacy would have no problem administering 200 doses per week.

“We could definitely do that,” Dr. Hale said. “That would be enough to take care of our population — not being a whole lot of site in the area — and we could bring in Bealeton”

But that probably won’t happen based on **vaccine supply** figures provided last week by Rappahannock Rapidan Health District Director Wade Kartchner, the pharmacist said.

Fauquier has about 71,000 residents. Based on a per capita calculation, the county would get would get 236 to 591 doses of vaccine per week over the next month or two.

“You’ve got tons of people that need a vaccine, and we’re only getting a trickling amount,” Dr. Hale said. “There’s just so many people that aren’t going to get serviced.”

Contact **Don Del Rosso** at Don@FauquierNow.com or 540-270-0300.

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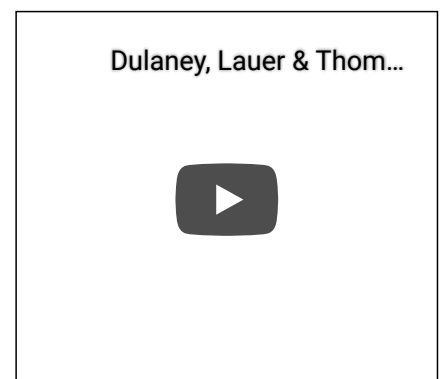
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