

Farmer and Farmworker Vaccination

Farmers and farmworkers are now eligible for vaccination for COVID-19 as essential workers. This includes those who work in crops, nurseries, landscapes, livestock, and other parts of the green industry. Some farmers and farmworkers have already been vaccinated and more are being vaccinated every day. In Johnston County, CommWell Health, Benson Health, and the Johnston County Health Department have all indicated that they are planning to assist with the effort of vaccinating farmers and farmworkers. However, this will depend on the availability of staff and vaccine.

Right now, Johnson and Johnson vaccine is not widely available. Therefore, the vaccination process will be a two-shot process separated by 28 days with either Moderna or Pfizer vaccines. When Johnson & Johnson vaccine is available, it will likely be prioritized for this effort.

CommWell Health

CommWell Health has indicated that they will make appointments for a mobile team to visit farms in our area to vaccinate worker groups of 40 or more. Otherwise, they will prefer to schedule vaccination at one of their regular vaccination sites. To schedule an opportunity with CommWell, please call Tracy Faircloth at 910-818-4773 or Tiffany Horne at 910-990-4651.

Johnston County Health Department

The local health department staff is offering regular vaccination clinics at local school facilities. Typically, these are held at either West Johnston High School or North Johnston High School on Wednesdays and at Johnston Community College on Fridays. I have personally seen this process work, and it is highly efficient. If you would like to take a group of workers to one of these clinics, it is possible, but the health department staff requests you call in advance to schedule an arrival time to make this process work smoothly. Information about the clinics can be found at <https://www.johnstonnc.com/covid19/#vaccine>. To arrange for a group of farmworkers, please call Erin Smith at 919-989-5275 (office) or 919-524-0464 (cell).

Benson Health

Benson Health is working closely with the NC Farmworker Program to arrange a vaccine clinic on a weekend in April. This will likely be offered on a Saturday and may be able to reach as many as 400 farmworkers. Please watch for more details on this event and we will share more when possible. You can also check their website at benisonhealth.org.

There are multiple pharmacies and medical facilities throughout Johnston County that are offering vaccination. It is possible or even likely that these other locations are willing to help. The list provided is not intended to include everything. If you have a local healthcare provider or pharmacy that has been assisting with healthcare for farm workers, please reach out to them and see what they can offer. As more information is available to us, we will surely pass it along.