



Give Your Community A Boost!

HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

Celebrated every year in April, National Minority Health Month builds awareness about the uneven burden of premature death and illness in minority populations and encourages action through health education, early detection, and control of disease complications.

This year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office of Minority Health (OMH) and their partners are highlighting the important role individuals and organizations can play in helping to reduce health disparities and improve the health of racial and ethnic minority and American Indian/Alaska Native communities.

This year's theme, Give Your Community a Boost, focuses on the continued importance of COVID-19 vaccination, including boosters, as one of the strongest tools to protect communities from COVID-19 which has disproportionately affected communities of color. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) data reflect some racial and ethnic minority groups — particularly Black or African American, Hispanic, or Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native people are at increased risk of getting sick, having more severe illness, and dying from COVID-19.

WHAT WE KNOW

South Carolina (SC), along with other states and the federal government has begun treating COVID-19 as an endemic virus due to declining cases and hospitalization rates as well as the increased availability of vaccines, treatments, and rapid testing. The term "endemic" refers to a disease that is circulating in a community at an expected or normal level, minus an occasional outbreak (for example, the flu).

Two years later, South Carolina has had a total of almost 1,470,000 cases and 17,650 deaths due to the coronavirus. Over 62.8% or 3,094,809 of SC residents have been vaccinated at least once.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As we learn to live with COVID-19 and recognize its severe impact on racial and ethnic minority populations, especially the American Indian/Alaskan Native communities, the need for continued education about the coronavirus, vaccines, booster shots and adherence to public health guidelines is paramount for everyone and especially all vulnerable minority populations. See the health tips below to keep yourself and others healthy:

 **GET VACCINATED & STAY UP TO DATE ON YOUR BOOSTERS**

 **WEAR A MASK**

 **STAY 6 FEET AWAY FROM OTHERS**

 **AVOID POORLY VENTILATED SPACES AND CROWDS**

 **WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN**

 **TEST TO PREVENT SPREAD TO OTHERS**

 **COVER COUGHS AND SNEEZES**

 **CLEAN AND DISINFECT**

 **MONITOR YOUR HEALTH DAILY**

 **FOLLOW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUARANTINE**

 **FOLLOW RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ISOLATION**

**Vaccines
Don't Save
Lives,
Vaccinations
Do**

- Walter Orenstein, MD
Emory University



Mental Health FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

Just as CPR helps an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) assists someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis and connect the person with help. A public education program, the Mental Health First Aid course, introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, builds understanding of their impact and overviews appropriate supports. Becoming a first aider does not prepare one to diagnose or provide any counseling or therapy. Instead, the program offers concrete tools and answers key questions like, "What do I do?" and, "Where can someone find help?"

This program also teaches common risk factors and warning signs of specific illnesses like anxiety, depression, substance use, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and schizophrenia. Learn more about Mental Health First Aid or register for an upcoming training by visiting www.holdoutthelifeline.org/mental-health-first-aid.

SMOKING & VAPING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

The health effects of smoking are well-known. Smoking tobacco affects the lungs, reducing lung capacity and increases the risk of respiratory infections and the severity of those infections. With COVID-19 also affecting the lungs, smokers are at higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 outcomes and possible death. E-cigarette use also has serious short- and long-term health effects on the lungs, brain, and heart. Moreover, vaping weakens the lungs in the same way that smoking does, leading to a much higher risk for respiratory disease and possible COVID-19 complications. A survey of young people aged 13-24 years found that a COVID-19 diagnosis was five times more likely among those who vaped and seven times more likely among those who smoked and vaped.



Tobacco use in all its forms continues to be the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in both the United States and South Carolina, accounting for 1 in 5 deaths annually. Approximately 34 million Americans and over 700,000 South Carolina adults smoke. In addition, over half of high school students and a quarter of middle school students in both the nation and state have tried a tobacco product (cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, and other products).

In early 2020, twenty percent of high school students and 5 percent of middle school students currently used e-cigarettes. A national sample of over 2,100 youth and young adults in May 2020 found that 56.4 percent of participants have changed their e-cigarette use, around one-third quit vaping entirely, another third reduced their use of e-cigarettes, and the rest switched to other nicotine and/or cannabis products.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO QUIT!

FREE nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges are available to eligible South Carolinians who enroll in Quitline services.

OPEN 24 HOURS A DAY / 7 DAYS A WEEK.

Services Include:

- Free one-on-one coaching (phone or web-based counseling and support) to quit smoking
- Development of a personalized quit plan



SOUTH CAROLINA
Tobacco Quitline
QUITNOW.NET/SOUTHCAROLINA 1-800-QUIT-NOW

To learn more about quitting tobacco products, visit www.scdhec.gov/tobacco or www.quitnowsc.org.



Hold Out the Lifeline: A Mission To Families

Each One Can Reach One

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