



Here are the latest encouraging stories, health tips and news items.

**COVID-19 stories highlighted in blue*

JUST FOR COLLEAGUES

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Introducing LVHN's New Chief Operating Officer

John Pierro, MBA, will join LVHN on May 31.

COVID-19 VACCINE TOWN HALL

COVID-19 Vaccine Community Town Hall on Facebook

Tune in on April 29 at 1 p.m. if you have concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Business Travel Update

Fully vaccinated colleagues may travel for business starting July 1.

Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute Town Hall

Watch the video to learn about Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute's growth.



STORIES



LVHN Volunteers Create Sanctuary Inside Broughal Middle School

The staff break room is now a place to relax and recharge.

LVHN NEWS



LVHN COVID-19 Report – Updated April 28

See the latest LVHN data.

**VACCINATION CLINIC
AT NORTHAMPTON
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
APRIL 29**

LVHN Hosts COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Drive-Through Event on April 29

We expect to administer 3,500 doses of the Moderna vaccine at Northampton Community College.

HEALTH TIPS



Know the Symptoms: COVID-19 and Seasonal Allergies

Learn how to tell the difference.



Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine

A recent review determined it's safe and effective.



Gut Check: Everything You Need to Know About Gut Health

Listen to the latest episode of The Healthiest You podcast.

IN THE NEWS

'Community bonding' sought as Schuylkill County prepares for medical residency program

April 28, 2021 | yahoo.com

Allentown's Bradbury-Sullivan LGBTQ Community Center provides comfort via pop-up vaccine clinics

April 28, 2021 | penncapital-star.com

PA report says sepsis is an accomplice in COVID-19 deaths

April 28, 2021 | yahoo.com

Lehigh Valley physician helping people with COVID-19 in India, from thousands of miles away

April 27, 2021 | wfmz.com

LVHN tops off Carbon hospital and other company news

April 22, 2021 | mcall.com

Share your story at [LVHN.org/stories](https://lvhn.org/stories).

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



Introducing LVHN's New Chief Operating Officer

April 23, 2021

This message is from Brian A. Nester, DO, MBA, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lehigh Valley Health Network.

During our national search for LVHN's new Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, we looked for a health care leader with the experience to assist in the execution of our strategy to enhance access, experience and value. We also searched for an executive whose personal values align with our health network's values. I am pleased to report that we found the colleague we were looking for. LVHN's new

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Introducing LVHN's New Chief Operating Officer



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Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer is John Pierro, MBA.

John comes to LVHN from Steward Health Care System, an \$11 billion health care network based in Needham, Mass., with 35 hospitals in 10 states. John served as Chief Operating Officer of the organization's north region, which includes 12 community hospitals, 2,800 beds and more than 12,000 employees. He was responsible for hospital and ambulatory operations, facility design and construction, quality, strategic planning, growth and clinically integrated systems of care. John held this role since 2016. His impressive list of accomplishments shows his drive for excellence and includes the following:

- Co-led a multidisciplinary team of talented physicians and nursing staff that achieved the Leapfrog No. 1 hospital in the state for patient experience, national recognition for two hospitals as Leapfrog "Top 100 Hospitals," and national recognition for three hospitals as Leapfrog "Top Hospitals" for three consecutive years
- Built a culture that supports professional development by establishing an educational and development fund, and implementing a career advancement program for health system leaders
- Achieved operating margin improvement through significant service line growth and integrated expense management across the 12-hospital network
- Deployed a fully integrated daily management system that aligns physicians, administrators and front-line staff using an interactive operating model and automated electronic medical record (EMR) interface that drives accountability through real-time key performance indicators
- Acquired and integrated three new hospitals, and completed more than \$800 million in capital improvements including EMR conversion, inpatient pavilions, emergency departments, intensive care units, and hybrid, cardiac and robotic operating rooms
- Expanded ambulatory services by opening 38 new physician practices and 23 urgent care centers in strategic locations to give patients convenient access to

services and a seamless experience across the network

- Recruited more than 500 new primary care providers and surgeons

Prior to his tenure at Steward, John gained experience at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Brigham Health System in Boston where he served as Senior Vice President of Operations, at Hospital Acquisitions and Solutions in Philadelphia as Chief Executive Officer, and at Norwalk Hospital in Norwalk, Conn., where he was Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. John also served as Deputy Chief of Management and Policy for the Office of the Governor of New Jersey.

Born and raised in Morris County, N.J., John is returning home. He is a graduate of Bloomsburg University where he earned a B.S. in Economics and Finance. He studied Health Care and Population Health at Princeton University/Woodrow Wilson School and earned his MBA at The John Hopkins University.

John, his wife and three sons are passionate about volunteering in the communities in which they live. They have supported food pantries, homeless outreach, the improvement of housing and recreation, and hospital events focused on underprivileged children, homelessness and victims of substance abuse.

John will officially join LVHN on May 31. At that time, please join in giving John and his family a very warm LVHN welcome.

COVID-19 VACCINE TOWN HALL

LVHN Hosts a Facebook
Community Town Hall on April
29 to Address Concerns
Around Willingness to Get
Vaccinated

April 28, 2021

Have concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine? Put your mind at ease by getting answers

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LVHN Hosts a Facebook Community Town Hall on April 29 to Address Concerns Around Willingness to Get Vaccinated



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from LVHN doctors who are holding an #LVHNLive Community Town Hall on Thursday, April 29, at 1 p.m. Bring your questions and drop them in the comments. Our panel will include LVHN's infectious diseases experts Timothy Friel, MD, and Alex Benjamin, MD. They'll share accurate information about the current vaccines, their safety and effectiveness. They also will show how quick and easy it is to book an appointment. Don't wait! [RSVP to get notified when we go live.](#)

Scheduling a vaccination appointment for any LVHN COVID-19 vaccination event, including drive-through clinics, is now faster and easier than ever.

Three easy ways to schedule:

1. NEW! Schedule right here.
[Make an appointment](#)
2. Go to MyLVHN, the health network's patient portal.
[Sign In](#) or [Sign Up](#)
3. Call our COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 833-584-6283



Call: 833-584-6283

(833-LVHN-CVD). We're open Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Don't wait! Sign up now. Appointments will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

You can schedule an appointment at five convenient locations:

1. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic—Pocono](#)
2. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic—Hazleton](#)
3. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic—Schuylkill](#)
4. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic—MacArthur Road](#)

5. [COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic–Northampton Crossings](#)

For current vaccination information, visit [LVHN.org/vaccines](https://www.lvhn.org/vaccines).



Fully Vaccinated Colleagues May Travel for Business Starting July 1

April 28, 2021

At LVHN, we recognize that travel for business or continuing medical education is critically important to the strength and strategy of our health network. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), people who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine can travel safely in the United States if they take necessary safety precautions like wearing a mask, avoiding large crowds and washing or sanitizing their hands frequently.

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Fully Vaccinated Colleagues May Travel for Business Starting July 1



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Lehigh Valley Health ...

51,093 likes

STAY SAFE STAY STRONG

#LVHNCOVIDSTRONG

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Effective July 1, domestic business travel will be permitted for colleagues who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after completing your vaccine series. Domestic business travel also must be approved by your immediate supervisor.

International business travel remains prohibited.

Please understand that the virus, its incidence rate and the regulations of the region, state and nation are very dynamic, and changes in travel policies may occur at any time.



Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute Town Halls – VIDEO

April 29, 2021

Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute leaders recently held the first ever virtual Cancer Institute Town Hall meetings. Leaders shared information about the Cancer Institute's growth, the increasing number of patients seen in the past year despite the pandemic, and new innovations and treatment options such as bone marrow transplants which will be available for patients in our region in the future.

[Watch the Cancer Institute Town Hall meeting.](#)

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Lehigh Valley Cancer Institute Town Halls – VIDEO



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LVHN Volunteers Create Sanctuary Inside Broughal Middle School

Staff break room is a place to relax and recharge

April 27, 2021

BY LIZ BARTOLAI

A sanctuary awaits the teachers and staff inside Bethlehem School District's [Broughal Middle School](#).

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LVHN Volunteers Create Sanctuary Inside Broughal Middle School



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The Launch Pad, designed by Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN)'s Community Engagement team and Young Professionals group for the Volunteer Challenge, is a break room created just for them to help release the day's stress.

The room evokes calm with soft lighting, anti-gravity recliners, massage chairs, a salt lamp, noise canceling headphones, essential oil diffusers, greenery, yoga mats, a coffee/tea station and more. It's available to the 80 people who work at Broughal.

"It's a place for mindful moments where teachers and staff can relax their brains and recharge," says Rick Amato, Broughal principal.

Alicia Creazzo, community school coordinator, says teachers and educational staff often experience compassion fatigue after caring for or learning about students who are suffering from illness or other trauma.

"Our teachers, after hearing about students' trauma or seeing how it's impacted them, then have to manage their own feelings about what they're hearing. It's had an impact of secondary or vicarious trauma on the school staff," she says.

Stress was acute this year because COVID-19 upended instruction, which affected both the school and southside Bethlehem community.

Launching "The Launch Pad"

The school already had a peace room where students could escape to relax, so there was a need for something similar for the staff, she says.

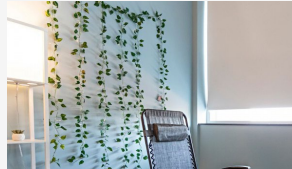
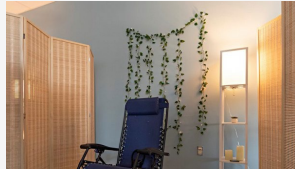
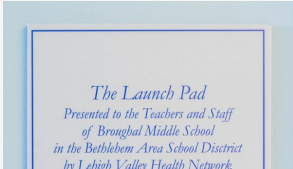
"We felt it may be really beneficial for us to have the same type of space for our staff to be able to step away when they have a couple of minutes to decompress, relax, rejuvenate, and then go back to their class or next assignment," Creazzo says.

School and health network volunteers, working as a team, agreed on a plan. Then Broughal staff measured the room.

Courtney Penrose, community engagement and public affairs specialist, LVHN Marketing and Public Affairs Department, says health network volunteers painted the

room, purchased the furnishings and staged it.

Volunteers made sure the room was ready for the return to in-person classes, Creazzo says.



Inspiration for room name

Now, the space needed a name that fit its purpose.

Inspired by the school mascot, Broughal Rockets, someone on the team suggested the landing pad, which everyone liked at first, Creazzo says.

“But that space is a place for you to go refresh and get ready for takeoff, to go back into your role. So, we ended up switching it to The Launch Pad, and that’s a play off of our school mascot,” she says.

LVHN volunteers and school partnership

Penrose says LVHN volunteers worked with the school staff for a virtual reveal in February.

“It has been an honor and privilege for us to work on this space for the teachers and staff at Broughal. We hope they enjoy the space.” she says.

[The Volunteer Challenge](#) is a Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley program that pairs local businesses and nonprofits to complete sustainable projects.

Creazzo says Broughal and LVHN will continue the partnership this year by launching virtual staff wellness programs.

LVHN COVID-19 Report

See the latest statistics about COVID-19 testing and care at LVHN

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) is the region's leader for coronavirus (COVID-19) assessment, testing and care. To win the fight against COVID-19, it's important that everyone continues to practice

[social distancing](#) , wash their hands frequently, [wear a mask](#) and take all the necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection.

This page was last updated on 4/28/2021 at 5:00 PM.

Total Positive Test Results

Since 03/16/2020

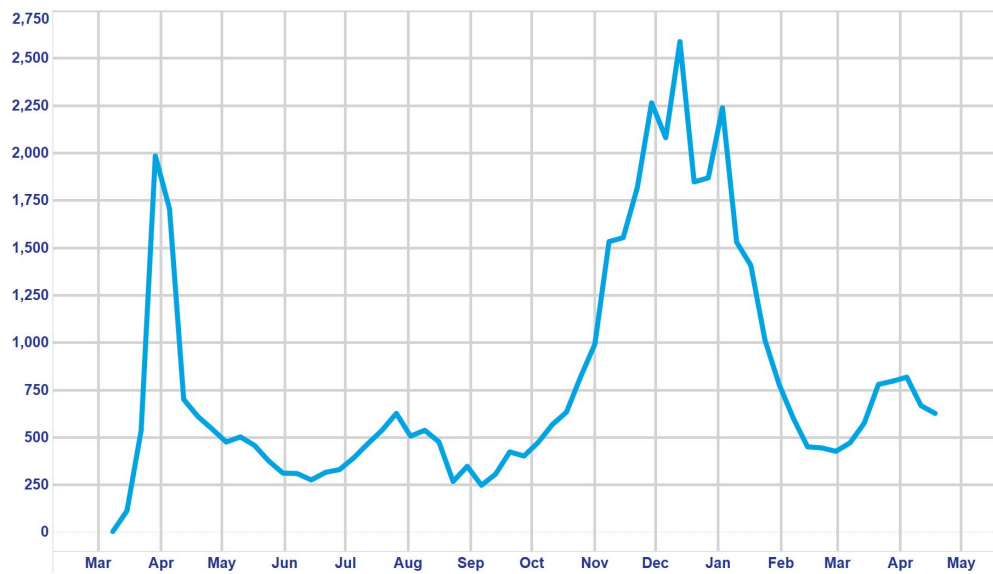
Total tests ordered: **252,046** – More than anyone in our region

Total positive tests: **47,855**

Positive result rate: **19.0%**

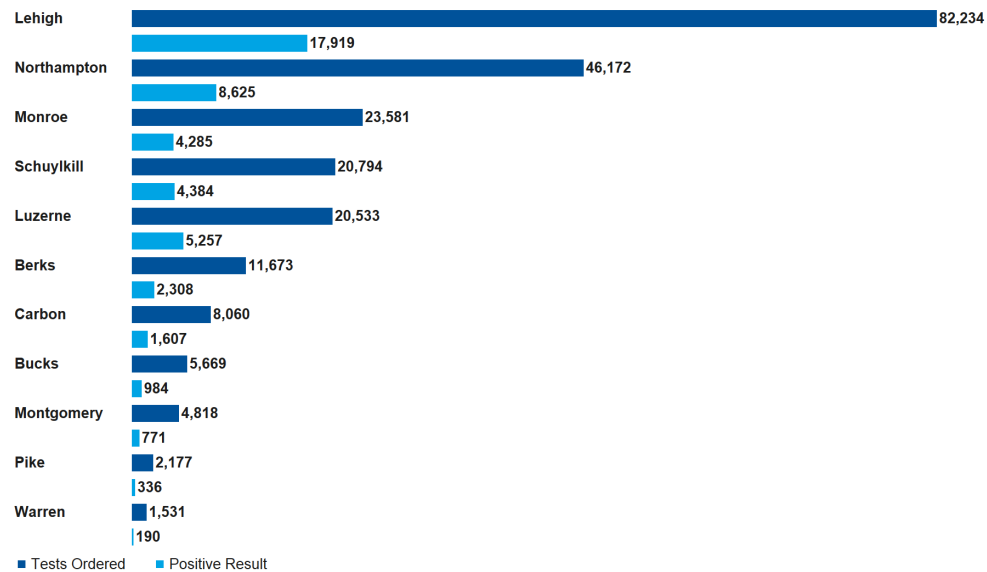
Weekly Positive Test Results

Data as of 04/24/2021



Patient Tests and Positive Results by County

First test result received 03/16/2020



COVID-19 Patients in LVHN Hospitals

Data as of 04/24/2021



VACCINATION CLINIC AT NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE APRIL 29

LVHN Hosts COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Drive-Through Event on April 29 at Northampton Community College

Lehigh Valley, Pa., April 23, 2021

Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) will hold its next COVID-19 mass vaccination

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Contact



Brian Downs

Public Information Officer

Brian.Downs@lvhn.org

484-884-0819 

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LVHN Hosts COVID-19 Mass Vaccination
Drive-Through Event on April 29 at
Northampton Community College



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event in Northampton County at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem Township on Thursday, April 29. On this date, we expect to administer 3,500 first doses of the Moderna vaccine for free. Everyone 18 and older is eligible to receive the Moderna vaccine. The drive-through clinic will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and appointments are required. Those without an appointment will not be eligible for vaccination.

Scheduling a vaccination appointment for any LVHN COVID-19 vaccination event, including drive-through clinics, is now easier than ever:

1. People with a [MyLVHN](#) account, the health network's patient portal, can log in and click "Schedule your appointment" next to the vaccination announcement on the home screen. Under "Menu," you also can click "COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling." You also can click "Visits" and "Schedule an appointment." MyLVHN is the fastest and easiest way to schedule.
2. People without a MyLVHN account can visit [LVHN.org/appointment](https://www.lvhn.org/appointment) and follow the directions.
3. You can call LVHN's COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline at 833-584-6283, 📞 (833-LVHN-CVD). The COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline hours of operation are Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. However, because of large demand and call volume, you may be placed on hold.

Appointments will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

LVHN is prepared to vaccinate as many people as possible by also offering appointments at Lehigh Valley Hospital (LVH)—Pocono, LVH—Hazleton and LVH—Schuylkill.

In addition to these hospital locations, first-dose appointments also can be scheduled at clinics located at the [former A.C. Moore store, 2633 MacArthur Road, Whitehall](#), and at [Northampton Crossings shopping center in the former Sears Appliance and Hardware store, 3768 Easton Nazareth Highway, Lower Nazareth Township](#). All locations are by appointment only. With these expanded efforts, LVHN expects to deliver up to 36,000 doses per week.

LVHN is committed to administering the vaccine as quickly as possible. LVHN will cover all costs. The LVHN plan for administering COVID-19 vaccines is determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Health's [phased approach](#) to vaccination. For current vaccination information, visit [LVHN.org/vaccines](https://lvhn.org/vaccines).



Know the Symptoms: COVID-19 and Seasonal Allergies

April 23, 2021

BY KATIE CAVENDER

By now, it's happened to all of us. With one minor symptom, our mind begins to race. Do I have seasonal allergies? Maybe it's [COVID-19](#)? How can I know the difference? While seasonal allergies do not include some of the same symptoms as COVID-19, it can still be difficult to distinguish the root cause of your symptoms without speaking with a provider.

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Know the Symptoms: COVID-19 and Seasonal Allergies



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Symptoms and treatment for seasonal allergies

Runny nose, coughing, fatigue and headache are all symptoms of [seasonal allergies](#). With allergies, you have itchy and watery eyes as well. If you have significant muscle pain or sudden loss of taste and smell, you can rule out allergies as the cause.

If you aren't finding allergy relief with over-the-counter medication, schedule an appointment at an [LVPG Ear, Nose and Throat](#) practice near you. At your appointment, a provider will discuss [environmental allergy testing and treatment](#).

Many people with seasonal allergies can benefit from immunotherapy, which is covered by most insurance plans.

During this treatment, you are given very small doses of the allergen by injection in the office once a week, which gradually modifies the body's overreactive immune response. Allergy shots can take four to six months to reach maximum effectiveness. It is recommended to continue allergy injections weekly for three to five years. After this time frame, the injection schedule can eventually be modified to biweekly and then monthly, depending on your tolerance and response. The long-term commitment can be worth it.

Over-the-counter and prescription medications and steroid injections are also available for people who are not candidates for immunotherapy or don't want to get them. You will receive customized treatment that takes your preferences into consideration.

Symptoms and treatment for COVID-19

Common COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches


- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, call your provider or schedule a [virtual visit](#). Your provider will evaluate your symptoms to see if a test is needed. Most COVID-19 tests at Lehigh Valley Health Network will detect whether you have RSV, influenza A and B, or COVID-19 with one swab. The tests are highly accurate, and there is an extremely low possibility of a false positive. Your doctor also will provide quarantine guidance.

No over-the-counter supplement has been clinically evaluated and determined to be protective or able to decrease the chance of complications from COVID-19. However, everyone age 16 and older is eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. All COVID-19 vaccines available to the public have been proven to be safe and effective by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Vaccines are not fully effective until two weeks after your final dose. Also, remember to keep up the COVID-19 safety measures you already know: Wash your hands often, wear a mask, social distance and stay home if you feel sick.

No matter your symptoms, a provider can help you with next steps. Learn more about virtual care at [LVHN.org/virtual](https://www.lvhn.org/virtual).

COVID-19 vs. Seasonal Allergy Symptoms

	COVID-19	ALLERGIES
Itchy / watery eyes		Sometimes
Fatigue	✓	✓
Congestion / runny nose	✓	✓
Cough	✓	✓
Headache	✓	✓
Fever	✓	
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	✓	
Chills	✓	
Muscle / body aches	✓	
Nausea / vomiting	✓	
Diarrhea	✓	
Loss of taste or smell	✓	



What you need to know about the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine

April 26, 2021

Friday the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) concluded their safety review of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine and [determined that it is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19](#) saying, “the available data show that the vaccine’s known and potential benefits outweigh its known and potential risks in individuals 18 years of age and older.”

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What you need to know about the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine



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“All vaccines are monitored closely,” says [Alex Benjamin, MD, LVHN Chief Infection Control and Prevention Officer](#). “The reporting system called VAERS was designed to flag things like this, and the fact that vaccine distribution and production was paused means the system is working.”

Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)

Providers across the country have access to a reporting system called VAERS. It allows them to record health problems that occur after a person has received a vaccination. Even if providers do not think the vaccination caused the event, they should still report it.

The CDC says, “VAERS gives vaccine safety experts valuable information so they can assess possible safety concerns related to vaccines, including new COVID-19 vaccines. It is especially useful for quickly detecting unusual or unexpected patterns of health problems (also called ‘adverse events’) that might indicate a possible safety problem with a vaccine.”

The report itself does not mean that there is a connection between the vaccine and the health problem. In fact, the CDC even says, “Some reports may contain information that is incomplete, inaccurate, coincidental, or unverifiable. Most reports to VAERS are voluntary, which means they are subject to biases.”

This is why a full investigation is such a critical part of the process. As of April 12, there were six reported U.S. cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot in individuals after receiving the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine. All six people were women ages 18 through 49 with a type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) that was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets, also known as thrombosis-thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS).

When the FDA and CDC halted production and distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine April 13, they began a full investigation to ensure that the vaccine is safe.

“As of April 26, 15 cases have been identified out of 7,979,007 vaccine doses administered,” Benjamin says. “It is extremely rare. The CDC and FDA still did their due diligence to ensure these vaccines are safe.”

Following the review the CDC and FDA updated the [Johnson & Johnson vaccine fact sheet](#) to include information about the risk for blood clots and low levels of platelets. This fact sheet is to be distributed to all vaccine recipients and caregivers.

Vaccines at LVHN

Currently, the state of Pennsylvania is sending all shipments of Johnson & Johnson vaccine to intermediate units and retail pharmacies as part of a thoughtful plan to vaccinate prekindergarten-12 educators and staff as well as early childhood education workers. Everyone age 16 and older, including prekindergarten-12 educators and staff, can receive a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine at LVHN.

Three cases of CVST have been associated with Moderna, out of 84.7 million doses administered. All three people had normal platelet counts and began developing CVST within 12 days after vaccination. There haven't been any reported clotting issues among people who received a Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

Schedule your COVID-19 vaccine appointment today at [LVHN.org/appointment](https://lvhn.org/appointment).