

The Record-Argus RecordArgusNews.com

Serving Greenville, PA since 1848

FAST SHOTS

Planning second clinic with second thousand next week

January 23, 2021

By CALEB STRIGHT



(From left) Walberg Family Pharmacies owners Stacey and Bretton Walberg; Creative Director & Director of Merchandising Misty Henry; and Rylan and Keaton Walberg help set up for the pharmacy's COVID-19 vaccination clinic today at First Presbyterian Church, Greenville. Caleb Stright/R-A

Friday was a busy morning for Bretton Walberg. Not only did he and his company receive its first shipment of 1,000 COVID-19 vaccines, but soon after, they secured a physical location to administer them; activated a Web site so that locals could schedule their shots; and within 98 minutes, had every single one of the thousand shots scheduled out.

Walberg joked that some people get their adrenaline fix from racing cars at high speed. "I get mine from being able to take something like this and turn it around in a day-and-a-half," he said.

As of Thursday night, he knew he'd be getting the vaccines, but didn't know what day.

The delivery came Friday, and what a delivery it was. The vaccine has been described as the moonshot accomplishment of this generation of scientists.

“When I picked it up, I couldn’t help but smile,” Walberg said. “I was holding 1,000 doses of something that’s potentially life saving. Our community is going to be 1,000 people stronger.”



Rylan and Keaton Walberg help set up for the Walberg Family Pharmacies’ COVID-19 vaccination clinic today at First Presbyterian Church, Greenville. Caleb Stright/R-A

Friday was busy, but today could give it a run for its money.

Walberg’s first shots will be administered at 7 a.m. at First Presbyterian Church, Greenville, with the clinic scheduled to continue until 3 p.m., which translates to 15 shots every five minutes. He said five stations will be administering the shots.

The family company owns and runs several pharmacies – including locations in Greenville, Mercer, Jamestown, Reynolds, Sharon and others – but none has enough space to accommodate that flow of traffic, and to allow for social distancing. That’s why they’re working with the church.

With the demand far exceeding the supply, the Walbergs fielded some concerns Friday from people who weren’t able to get in within that first 98 minutes and reserve a vaccine.

Something the Walbergs are underscoring is that they're not done. The company had already secured 1,000 more Moderna vaccines from McKesson Pharmaceuticals and were finalizing plans on administering them early next week.

And, they've ordered 6,000 more, with plans to deliver every shot they get.

How many they get will be up to the state Department of Health.

"As we continue to receive more vaccine, we'll continue to hold clinics," Walberg said. "We're doing the very best we know how. We're truly blazing a new trail, how to do mass immunization in Mercer County."

As of Friday, the state was reporting that 3,794 people had been vaccinated in Mercer County since Dec. 18.

The Walberg team will deliver a quarter of that in just a matter of hours.

"The goal is to vaccinate as many people as possible, to the point of herd immunity, to help protect our community," Walberg added.

The Walberg team encouraged those who have an appointment today to mind their time slots. That means not being late, of course, but also not too early. The church has a large parking lot, but it's still limited.

They also asked anyone who doesn't have an appointment to not go to the church, as all vaccines have been accounted for.

To be eligible for the vaccine, a person has to meet the state's phased rollout guidelines.

As of Friday, vaccines were open to healthcare workers, anyone over the age of 65 and any over 18 who has high-risk health issues.