

Play it safe, pass it on

The Bethlehem Gadfly [coronavirus](#) April 17, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on the coronavirus* 

The Lehigh Valley is vaccinating at a great pace, but Pennsylvania is 4th in the nation in infection rate.

3 in 10 Pennsylvanians do not plan to get vaccinated. 50% of Republicans in the state do not plan to get vaccinated.

Nationwide 30% of our population has been vaccinated, 65% of seniors.

Gadfly again cautions the virus is still with us. He just lost a close family member to it, one who refused the vaccine.

And a close friend in his 50s spent over a week in the hospital with it, and now over two weeks after discharge is still having a rough time.

The virus is still with us.

It can hurt or kill you or loved ones.

The Bethlehem Health Bureau is making vaccination easy.

Makes sense to play it safe.

selections from [Eugene Tauber, "Pennsylvania coronavirus update: Lehigh Valley hits vaccination milestone, while state pushes past Minnesota, New York City to rank 4th in infection rate." Morning Call, April 16, 2021.](#)

The race to vaccinate people faster than they can be exposed to coronavirus and its variants passed a milestone for the Lehigh Valley: more than half of the 16-and-over population who are eligible to be vaccinated have received at least one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine, with

276,976 people who have gotten one of 438,173 vaccinations administered locally, accounting for 50.5% of those eligible.

Pennsylvania's statewide rate of 264 weekly cases per 100,000 population pushed it past New York City (which is administered separately from the rest of the state) and Minnesota to take the No. 4 spot in the list. Minnesota, Delaware and NYC now follow Pa. in the rankings. But the rate varies widely from county to county in Pennsylvania, from fewer than 28 per week to more than 416. [The rate in Northampton County is 348.2, Lehigh County 289.2.]

Hospitals in the Lehigh Valley report 192 COVID-19 patients, with 39 in intensive care and 25 on ventilators. Local hospitalizations are virtually unchanged week-to-week but have increased 66% over the last month.

selections from *Leif Greiss, "Muhlenberg College poll shows many Pennsylvanians still hesitant to get COVID-19 vaccine." Morning Call, April 15, 2021.*

A plurality of respondents, 46%, said they would get the vaccine as soon as it was available to them, 5% said they would get it a few weeks after it was available to them and 13% said a few months after. However, 31% of respondents said they do not plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Willingness or unwillingness to get vaccinated against COVID-19 differed significantly based on partisan leanings. Half of Republican respondents said they had no plans of getting the COVID-19 vaccine compared with just 14% of Democrats and 33% of independents. Democrats were far more likely, 67%, to answer they would get the vaccine as soon as it is available than independents, 42%, and Republicans, 27%.

See also *Ford Turner, "GOP lawmaker seeks 'COVID-Freedom Act.'" Morning Call, April 17, 2021.*