

# Blue Ridge Health District Vaccinates Virginia

Ginger Hood, assistant editor

Under glittering fluorescent lights and between sectioned off fitting rooms, the Blue Ridge Health District's (BRHD) vaccination clinic in Fashion Square's former JCPenney is equipped to vaccinate hundreds of people each day they open their doors. The inside of the formerly deserted store is now divided by winding lines of belt barriers between its mirror-covered pillars; leftover advertisements and shelves are scattered between signs directing vaccine recipients through the various stages of the vaccination process.

The volunteer personnel are friendly but efficient, making the vaccination process run smoothly. No insurance or payment is required to receive the vaccine — all that is needed is an appointment (which can be made online) and a photo ID. Upon arrival to a previously scheduled appointment, recipients can enter through the JCPenney door facing Route 29. Recipients under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

After checking in, recipients receive a card that denotes which vaccine they will be getting — on a Moderna and Pfizer day, the cards are either pink (for Moderna) or green (for Pfizer). After a quick temperature check, recipients proceed



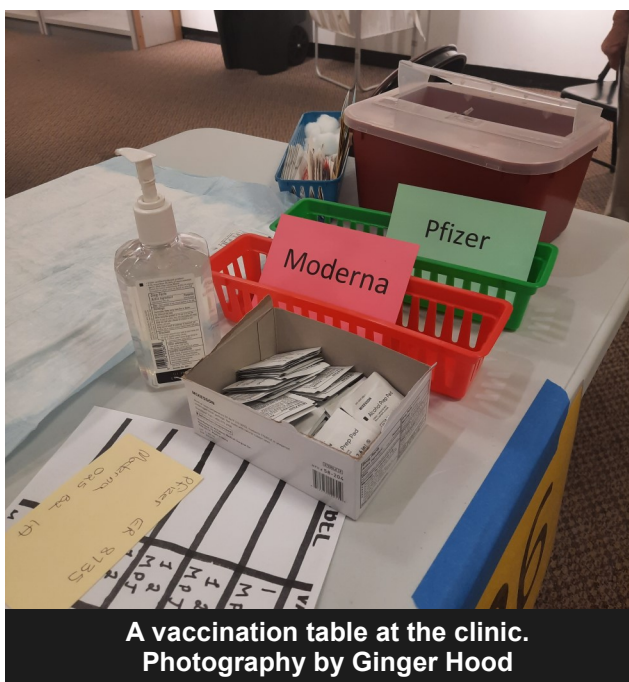
straight back to the registration tables where IDs, birthdates, and vaccine types are all sorted out in a matter of minutes.

After registration, the slightly longer wait begins. “The line moved, so there wasn’t a lot of standing around and waiting,” said Lillian Hood, a PVCC student who got vaccinated at the clinic. “It probably took 30 minutes to get through the whole process.”

The line flows back and forth in 6-foot increments, inching towards the eventual goal: the vaccination area. Tables equipped with alcohol wipes, cotton balls, band-aids, and vaccines stand in neat rows between empty shelves. Filling out the pre-vaccination questionnaire helps to speed up the vaccination process itself; however, each vaccination table is equipped with a computer where recipients can fill out the questionnaire.

The vaccination itself only takes a few moments — after a swab of an alcohol wipe on the injection site and a quick pinch of the needle, recipients can proceed to the observation area. After 15 minutes — ample time to schedule a second dose online — recipients are free to leave or to schedule a second dose appointment with a volunteer.

For more information on vaccinations in Virginia, visit the Virginia Department of Health's website or the Vaccine Appointment Management System (VAMS). For more information on the Blue Ridge Health District's vaccination process, visit their vaccination webpage or call the BRHD COVID-19 Hotline at 434-972-6261 (open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.).



A vaccination table at the clinic.  
Photography by Ginger Hood