

Columbia city leaders working with beauticians, barbers to boost vaccination rates

COLUMBIA, S.C. (WACH) — COLUMBIA, S.C. (WACH) -- The fight continues to drive up vaccination rates in Columbia and across the Midlands. That includes working with barber and beauty shops, like Regal Lounge Men's Barber and Spa in Columbia, to host vaccine sites.

“When this federal program opened up, we knew we wanted to be a part of it and show the community that we love them in a great way. That we love you to life,” said Chynna Phillips, who co-owns the barbershop with husband Landry Phillips.

The couple opened the barber and spa on Bull Street in Columbia a little more than a year ago. At the height of the pandemic, Landry said they had concerns beyond being able to keep the doors open, which led them to get vaccinated.

“We have a four year old son, he can’t get the vaccine. You also have elder grandparents that love you very much, and at the end of the day, what does it mean to you to be able to hug them, and know you’re doing it a safe way without putting them in jeopardy,” Landry added.

Once they found out they were eligible to apply for the federal ‘shots at the shop’ program – and partner with Columbia officials, DHEC and other agencies to give people access to the vaccine – they were happy to get involved.



Chynna and Landry Phillips own Regal Lounge Men's Barber and Spa in Columbia. They are one of sixteen barber and beauty shops in South Carolina expected to host coronavirus vaccine clinics.

“When this federal program opened up, we knew we wanted to be a part of it and show the community that we love them in a great way. Essentially, we love them to life,” Chynna said.

Regal Lounge is one of sixteen barber and beauty shops across the state scheduled to provide the Pfizer vaccine – available to anyone twelve and older.

Columbia mayor Steve Benjamin joined in a roundtable discussion with U.S. Congressman Jim Clyburn, U.S. Secretary of Housing Marcia Fudge, and South Carolina's epidemiologist Dr. Linda Bell Monday to discuss the state of coronavirus infections in the city, and how the community can partner with the city's and nation's leaders to decrease the spread of the virus.



The fight continues to drive up vaccination rates in Columbia and across the Midlands. That includes converting barber and beauty shops, like that of Regal Lounge in Columbia into coronavirus vaccine sites./Photo by: Simone Jameson

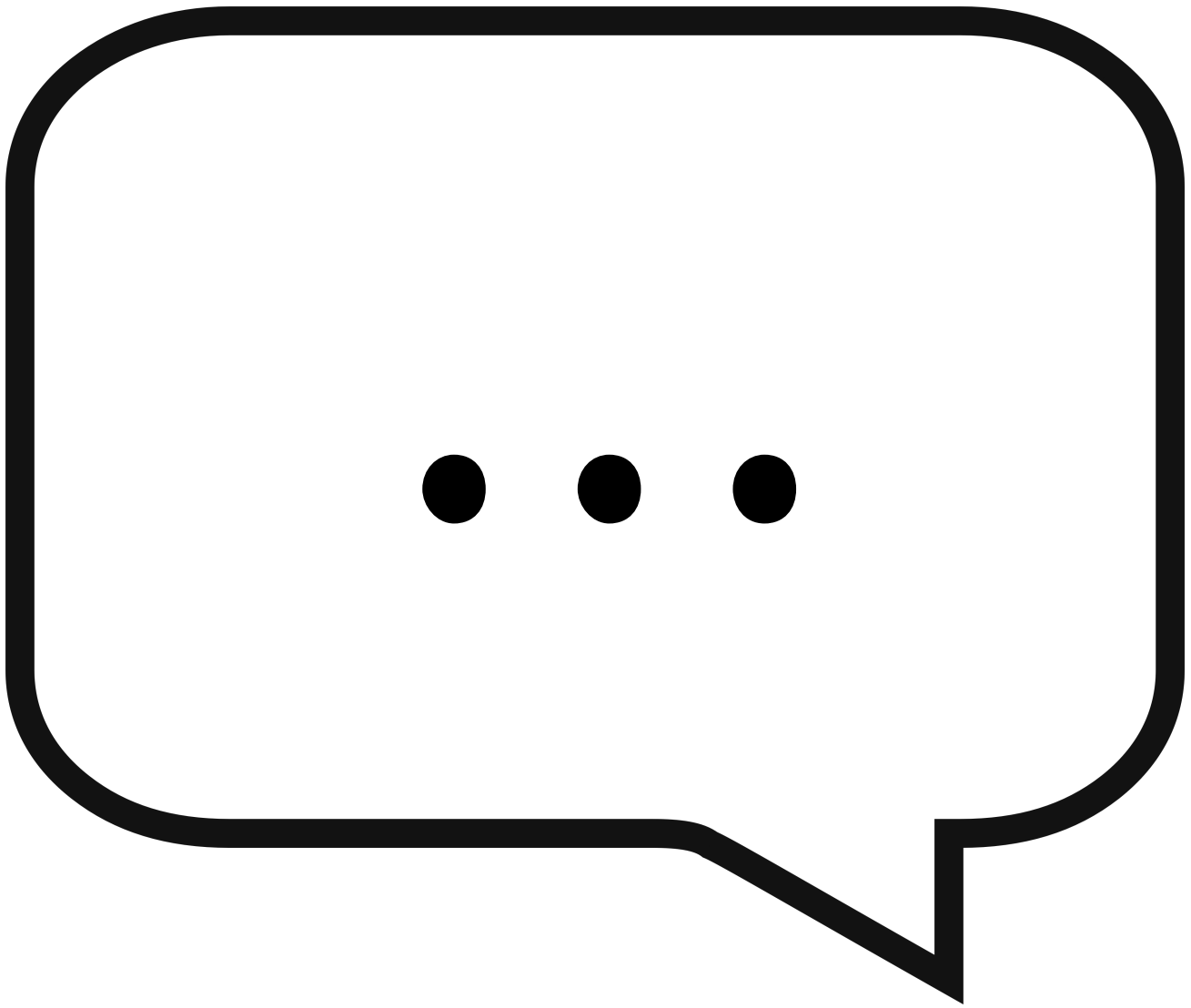
As of Friday, SC DHEC reported a total of 6,697 new cases of coronavirus. In that week was a total of 31,458 cases. City leaders and health experts confirmed that Friday's total was the third highest total in a single day of coronavirus cases since the start of the pandemic. An unsettling setback in the battle against the virus.

“This vaccine is safe and effective, and it is how we're going to save lives," said Dr. Brannon Traxler, backing the vaccine clinic. “We all want to get rid of our masks, go back to our normal lives, and save other people's lives as well as our own.”

Congressman Clyburn attributes a rise in cases and decrease in interest in the vaccine to false information.

“The last time the country was at this at kind of inflection point – was in 1918, is the last time we had this kind of pandemic,” said Congressman Jim Clyburn. “With my work here, we found out that the misinformation floating around this country makes this pandemic different than the one before.”

Monday's vaccine clinic ran from 11am to 2pm at Regal Lounge, and was intended to just be a one-time event. However, owners Landry and Chynna tell WACH FOX News they are now looking at doing follow-up clinics.



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Barber and beauty shops that want to partner with officials to host clinics can find [more information here](#).