The logo features the text "NC Rural Coalition Fighting COVID-19" in orange and white on a dark blue background. To the right, there is a graphic of overlapping triangles in shades of blue, orange, and grey, forming a larger triangular shape that points to the right.

NC Rural Coalition Fighting COVID-19

NC Rural Coalition Fighting COVID meeting Wednesday, June 2, 2021 * 9:00-10:00am Meeting notes

Facilitator: Nick Galvez, Manager, NC State Office of Rural Health

Speakers: Dr. Kelly Kimple, Section Chief, Women's & Children's Health Section, NC Division of Public Health
Dr. Correll D. McRae, Sr, Program Manager, COVID Response, NC Division of Public Health

Nick Galvez introduced himself and welcomed the participants. He added that the Coalition is comprised of the Foundation for Health Leadership & innovation, The Rural Center, AHEC, the Governor's Hometown Strong Initiative and The Office of Rural Health, part of the NC Department of Health and Human Services. The Coalition provides a forum to share ideas and receive feedback, which is shared with the NC DHHS to ensure that those who are working on the ground, get the resources they need to fight the pandemic. Nick introduced Dr. Correll McRae, who spoke next.


Dr. McRae described the Green Event, a vaccine distribution event that was held over three days, May 21-23. The clinic was brought to the community, and the Community Engagement Task Force vaccinated 422 individuals.

Vaccine hesitancy has become a recurring issue. Concerns about past health care atrocities is a dominant theme. To overcome this, he recommends making the space welcoming and have a trusted community member speak on issues. An event was held at the Dix Campus targeting the younger population, up to 19 years old, and 176 people were vaccinated. To increase vaccination rates, it's important to be inclusive and thoughtful in how to engage people. In hosting an event, an organization can partner with vendors to have activities, live music and volunteers. It's important to have activities tied to the event to occupy younger family members who are not old enough to receive the vaccine.

Dr. Kimple spoke about vaccine rates and used a PowerPoint to demonstrate data and trends. Using a state level view of vaccines, more than 50% of the population aged 12 and over have received at least one dose. Almost 50% of the NC population is fully vaccinated. Of those age 65+, 80% have received at least one dose. The dashboard on the NCDHHS website is updated frequently.

She added that efforts to overcome barriers to equity are continuing to improve. Vaccine distribution should be fast, fair, easy and everywhere. Initiatives are driving demand. The Healthier Together Initiative is using trusted messengers to reach historically marginalized populations. Efforts to increase access to primary care providers are ongoing.

Several policy changes have been enacted regarding vaccine distribution. Providers no longer need to use all the vaccine before ordering more, and can request the amount they want, rather than accepting a larger dose that they may not be able to use. Providers can share their allotment with providers who only need small

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quantities. The requirement to use all doses within 7 days has been rescinded. Also, the COVID vaccine can be co-administered with other vaccines.

A social vulnerability index tool is being used to identify areas of NC that need more access to vaccine. A map of NC is mapped with census tracts, that when clicked on, can indicate the vulnerability of that area. The higher the number, the more vulnerable the area is.

The Pfizer vaccine was previously available to youth 16 and over, and is now available to youth 12 and over. Pfizer and Moderna started clinical trials in March with younger individuals. Cases of children less than 17 years old are on the rise, with over 100K testing positive. Emphasizing that vaccines prevent the spread of COVID and protect others will encourage vaccination. Despite concerns, there is no evidence that the vaccine has a negative effect on fertility and has no effect on teen development. There have been a few reports of heart inflammation, however, no long term complications have been identified. The CDC is continuing to monitor the situation. Those who are vaccinated can enroll in the V-Safe app, where they can report any side effects as a result of the vaccine.

Incentives are being rolled out to attract more vaccinations. Four counties are offering \$25 cash cards to people coming to a site for a vaccine, in addition to the driver who brings them. Bring Summer Back is an NCDHHS campaign to promote vaccinations. Information on the website includes tools, flyers, videos and FAQs. <https://myspot.nc.gov/>

A question and answer session followed. The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 23 at 9:00am. Registration is available on <https://bit.ly/ruralfightscovidreg>