

# Secretary Cohen to Step Down Jan. 1 + COVID Vaccination Urged this Holiday Season



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# COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) NC UPDATE

*Dec. 3, 2021*

## Secretary Cohen to Step Down Jan. 1



This week, Governor Roy Cooper [announced](#) that NCDHHS Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D., will be stepping down from the agency after five years of service to the state. Governor Cooper has appointed Kody Kinsley, current NCDHHS Chief Deputy Secretary for Health and lead for COVID-19 operations, to succeed her beginning Jan. 1.

Secretary Cohen, an internal medicine physician, was appointed by Governor Cooper in January of 2017 and has served as Secretary of NCDHHS leading the state during some

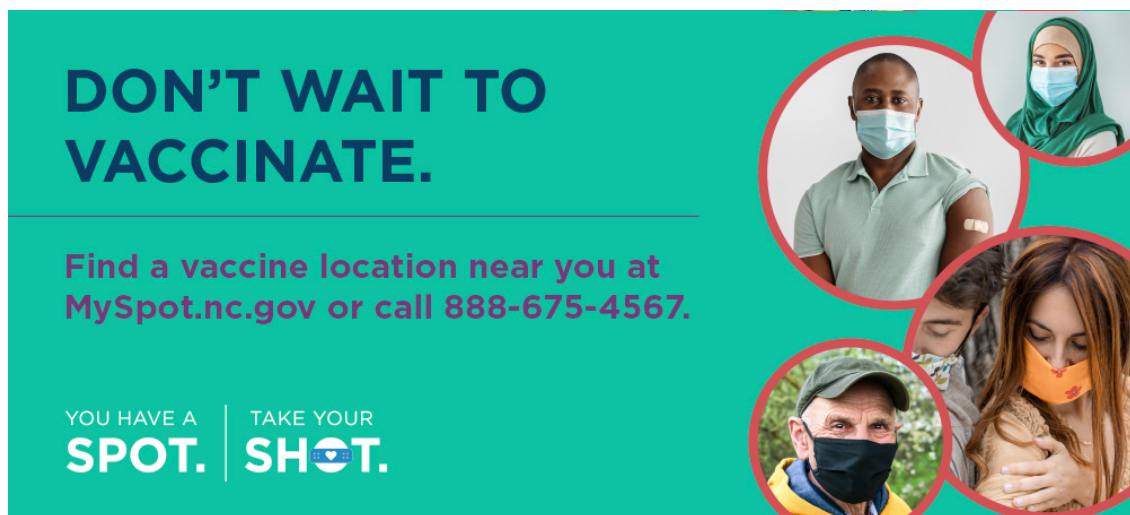
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of the most challenging times in North Carolina history. She has led the state's response to COVID-19 and served as Governor Cooper's chief advisor and strategist on beating the pandemic.

Secretary Cohen has been lauded for her outstanding leadership during the COVID-19 crisis. In September of 2020, Secretary Cohen was awarded the [Leadership in Public Health Practice Award](#) from Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. She was named the [2020 Tar Heel of the Year](#) by the Raleigh News & Observer newspaper and Dr. Cohen was also elected to the [National Academy of Medicine in 2021](#).

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## [Governor Cooper Urges Vaccination this Holiday Season](#)



**DON'T WAIT TO VACCINATE.**

Find a vaccine location near you at [MySpot.nc.gov](https://www.myspot.nc.gov) or call 888-675-4567.

YOU HAVE A **SPOT.** | TAKE YOUR **SHOT.**

In this week's COVID-19 briefing, Governor Cooper [urged](#) North Carolinians to get their COVID-19 vaccination or booster as we are in the midst of the holiday season.

The Delta variant is still with us, causing sickness and death mostly among the unvaccinated, while health alerts about the emerging omicron variant have caused concern and opened a new set of questions. As public health experts race to get answers about the new variant, getting more people vaccinated is the way out of this pandemic.

North Carolina is working hard to increase the number of vaccinated people in our state, including children who are now eligible. In North Carolina, 13% of [children ages 5-11](#) have received their first dose during the past four weeks.

Like many vaccinations, boosters are needed to strengthen and extend protection against COVID-19. If you are 18 and older, you should get a booster as soon as you are eligible. If you got the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, you should get a booster two months after your shot. If you got the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, you should get a booster six months after your second shot.

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North Carolinians can learn more COVID-19 vaccinations at [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](https://YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov) (English) or [Vacunate.nc.gov](https://Vacunate.nc.gov) (Spanish). Visit NCDHHS' [Walk-in Family Vaccination Sites](#) website to find a family vaccine event. Use [NCDHHS' Find a Vaccine Location](#) tool to find a spot to take your shot.

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## **[New Program Offers Help for Families to Pay Water Bills](#)**



This week, NCDHHS [announced](#) more than \$38 million in federal funding to establish a new water assistance program for households affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beginning Dec. 1, eligible households that have had their water services cut off or have received notice that their water services are in danger of being cut off can apply for assistance in paying their bill through a new federal program called the [Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program](#) (LIHWAP).

The program provides a one-time payment for eligible low-income households directly to the utility company. LIHWAP runs through September 2023 or until the funds run out. Families can apply [here](#). [Read more](#).

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## **[Kids Have a Spot to Take Their Shot](#)**



The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is now authorized for kids 5-11 and is free, safe and effective. Visit [myspot.nc.gov](https://myspot.nc.gov) to find your kids' spot today.

**Layer up this winter**

**Get your flu and COVID-19 shots.**

The graphic consists of a purple rectangular background. At the top left, the text "Layer up this winter" is written in white. Below this text are five circular icons: a blue bandage, a red and blue winter jacket, an orange beanie, a pair of blue and white patterned gloves, and a white shield with a blue cross and snowflakes. At the bottom right, the text "Get your flu and COVID-19 shots." is written in white.

Layer up this winter and protect yourself, your family and those around you by [getting your flu shot](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends flu vaccination](#) for everyone 6 months and older.

Flu vaccinations are available at hospitals, pharmacies, private medical offices, some federally qualified health care centers and local health departments, and are available at

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little to no cost. COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same time as other vaccines, including the flu vaccine.

Learn more about the [similarities and differences between the flu and COVID-19](#) from the CDC, and visit [covid19.ncdhhs.gov/flu](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19/flu) for more information about the flu and where to get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

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## **Other COVID News**

- NCDHHS [recently added data](#) on additional and booster doses, and ages 5 and up population data to its [vaccine data dashboard](#).
- The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is [reminding hunters to practice safe handling](#) while field dressing and processing harvested deer, following recent studies in Iowa and Ohio that confirmed infection with SARS-CoV-2 in wild deer.

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## **COVID-19 Testing**

Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been exposed to the virus should get tested as soon as possible. Seek medical attention immediately for serious symptoms such as trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, or bluish lips or face.

- To find a testing site near you, visit [ncdhhs.gov/GetTested](https://www.ncdhhs.gov/GetTested).
- For an up-to-date list of no-cost community testing events, visit the [No-Cost Testing Events](#) webpage.
- Additionally, all North Carolinians can request a free at-home COVID-19 testing kit. [Learn more](#).

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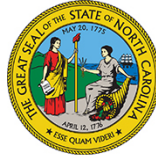
## **Get the Latest Information**

- Visit the [NCDHHS COVID-19 website](#) for information, a [data dashboard](#), [updates](#), [live briefings](#), the [latest guidance](#) and more.
- Go to [North Carolina's COVID-19 Information Hub](#) for resources, information and assistance across state government, including the latest [news releases](#).
- Check out [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](https://www.yourshot.nc.gov) to learn more about [finding your spot](#) to get your shot, [videos](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine, and other resources.
- Follow NCDHHS on [social media](#).



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NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
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Roy Cooper, Governor | Dr. Mandy Cohen, Secretary

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