



A Community #ForAllAges

Age-Friendly Sarasota

May 2020

Celebrating Older Americans Month 2021

By Susan Berger (Firestone)
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COMMUNITIES OF STRENGTH: MAY 2021



Each May, the [Administration for Community Living](#) leads the celebration of Older Americans Month. This year's theme is Communities of Strength, recognizing the important role older adults play in fostering the connection and engagement that build strong, resilient communities.

The past year has been challenging to say the least, but from this, communities find strength in its people. Strength is not only shown through courageous acts but also in the day-to-day kindnesses shown

to each other. We have witnessed older adults stepping up to help through volunteer efforts at our nonprofit organizations. We have seen neighbors reaching out to neighbors to pick up groceries and medicine, prepare meals, take out trash, and help with yard work. Many have embraced new technology to keep in touch with family/friends and access much-needed medical care through telehealth. Others have connected on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter or via Skype, Teams, and Zoom for online learning and meetings.

Our older adult population has seen many changes over the years, and I believe you could certainly consider them resilient.

The Administration for Community Living offers some helpful suggestions to help enjoy everyday life, share, connect, and help build resiliency. Together, we can find strength and create a stronger future.

COVID-19 Vaccine Distrust: Why It's High, and How to Respond to It

By [Abby Rolland](#) and [Hannah Saeger Karnei](#)
COVID-19 Response

How Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines Work

Understanding the virus that causes COVID-19.
Coronaviruses, like the one that causes COVID-19, are named for the crown-like spikes on their surface, called **spike proteins**. These **spike proteins** are ideal targets for vaccines.

What is a viral vector vaccine?
A viral vector vaccine uses a harmless version of a different virus, called a "vector" to deliver information to the body that helps it protect you.

How does the vaccine work?
The vaccine teaches your body how to make copies of the **spike proteins**. If you are exposed to the real virus later, your body will recognize it and know how to fight it off.



GETTING VACCINATED?
For information about COVID-19 vaccine, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines)



[\[click to enlarge\]](#)

Refusing a vaccine when one is available is known as "vaccine hesitancy." In recent years, vaccine hesitancy has increased worldwide - so much so that the World Health Organization considered it a top 10 global health threat in 2019. Misinformation is a major cause of vaccine hesitancy, and there is much misinformation about both COVID-19 and its vaccine because they are new. We'll go over common causes of vaccine hesitancy and explore some ways to handle it, as well as provide some reliable sources of information.

Twelve things you need to know about vaccine hesitancy

- **Look for joy in the everyday:** Celebrate small moments and ordinary pleasures by taking time to recognize them. Start a gratitude journal and share it with others via social media or call a friend or family member to share a happy moment or to say thank you.
- **Reach out to neighbors:** Even if you can't get together in person right now, you can still connect with your neighbors. Leave a small gift on their doorstep, offer to help with outdoor chores, or deliver a homecooked meal.
- **Build new skills:** Learning something new allows us to practice overcoming challenges. Take an art course online or try a socially distanced outdoor movement class to enjoy learning with others in your community. Have a skill to share? Find an opportunity to teach someone, even casually.
- **Share your story:** There's a reason storytelling is a time-honored activity. Hearing how others experience the world helps us grow. Interviewing family, friends, and neighbors can open new conversations and strengthen our connections.

In these extraordinary times, it is the ordinary that stands out. The simple act of kindness, human compassion, and caring. Each of us can contribute; no effort is too small.

When we come together and share our challenges, joys, and experiences, we build relationships and community.

Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium

By Susan Berger (Firestone)
Aging System Policy Coordinator
[Sarasota County Health and Human Services](#)



**MENTAL
HEALTH
AWARENESS
MONTH**
— MAY —



On May 6th, the [National Council on Aging](#) hosted its 4th Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium. This virtual symposium was packed with conversations about access to mental health services, health disparities in aging, substance use disorders, socialization and engagement, funding strategies, and perspectives on the lived experience of mental health.

The day started with a powerful session on ageism. Activist and author Ashton Applewhite spoke about how ageism creates additional barriers for older adults seeking behavioral health care and its significant impact on health outcomes. She further discussed the resiliency of older adults, suggesting that they come to the pandemic with life experiences that help them cope better. The biggest takeaways: people are happiest when they are young and when they are older,

1. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting sick.

2. People of color are especially vulnerable to severe COVID-19.

3. Getting vaccinated for COVID-19 helps others in your community.

4. More vaccinations for COVID-19 mean a chance to return to normal.

5. Though the COVID-19 vaccine development was fast, it did not skip steps.

6. Diversity in COVID-19 vaccine testing helped assess safety and effectiveness.

7. Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are temporary and do not mean you're sick.

8. Do you have allergies? You can probably still get the COVID-19 vaccine.

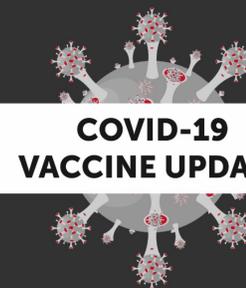
9. The vaccine is safe for mothers who are breastfeeding and women trying to become pregnant. If you are pregnant, talk to your doctor.

10. If you've already had COVID-19, getting the vaccine will add extra protection.

11. Time is of the essence.

12. Vaccines can't save lives unless people get vaccinated.

[CLICK HERE TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE](#)



**COVID-19
VACCINE UPDATE**

By Chuck Henry
Health Officer
[Department of Health Sarasota](#)

The COVID-19 Vaccine has been available for several months. Of those eligible for the vaccine in Sarasota

and that we can't challenge any bias, including ageism, if we don't recognize it.

Lucky for us, there is "Old School." This website, the brainchild of Ashton Applewhite, is a clearinghouse of great resources to educate people about ageism. [Check it out for yourself.](#)

There was a thoughtful session entitled "Socialization and Engagement-What We Know Works," with speaker Kimberly A. Van Orden from HOPE Lab (Helping Older People Engage). [HOPE Lab](#) studies ways to maintain and grow meaningful social connections in later life. She has authored or co-authored more than 50 publications on the subject.

In this session, she introduced us to Uniper, a TV-based and mobile-based solution for care delivery and social engagement. The TV kit includes a small receiver box, camera, and easy-to-use remote control

with an embedded microphone. Once installed, the user can interact live with other members and engage in programs, classes, exercise, games, and much more. [Learn more by watching this short video.](#)

The spotlight session, "Access to Behavioral Health in Diverse Older Adults," was a revealing and insightful session moderated by Mary Roary from SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration). It took a hard look at what access to mental health care services looks like from the perspective of Native American, African American, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ communities. The panelist shared both experiences and solutions for success.

There was something for everyone. At the conclusion, attendees were asked to describe one area where they would create actionable steps to help improve older adult mental health. With the level of content, I'm not sure how anyone could pick just one!

Harwood National Study

By [The Patterson Foundation Fellows](#)



Join us for an important national study conducted by [The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation](#) on June 24. This study seeks to understand the perspectives of different communities across the country as folks navigate today's evolving challenges and opportunities.

Chosen as 1 of 15 communities invited to participate, this two-hour conversation will be a rare chance to inform a national strategy for public innovation and guide the work of The Harwood Institute for years to come. Mark your calendar for Thursday, June 24th, from 12pm-2pm (ET). Space is limited, so be sure to [sign up here](#) to reserve your spot.

As a special gift from [The Patterson Foundation](#), each participant will

County, 44.2% are fully vaccinated, while 58.38% have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Data through 5/6/21 shows 78% of people age 50+ and 88% of those 65+ in Sarasota County have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Overall, this is great news for older adults in Sarasota County. However, many folks in the 50-59 age group have not received their vaccine. In the 50-55-year-old group, only 51% have received a vaccination, and in the 56-59-year-old group, it is 55%.

Ideally, we want those percentages to be above 70% to help drive COVID-19 transmission levels down and keep everyone in our community safe.

Millions of doses have been given across the United States with very few vaccine-related problems. Vaccines are now available at many locations throughout the community, and individuals 18 years and older can get a vaccine at the Sarasota Square Mall without an appointment.

The Mall clinic is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with extended hours on Tuesday and Thursday through 6:00 p.m.



Connecting with the people, activities, and community resources that enrich our lives is essential in maintaining our health and well-being as we age. Suncoast Villages build a sense of community and connectivity as membership-driven, grassroots organizations powered by neighbors helping neighbors. They offer a wide array of support services through a strong volunteer base and a network of connections that help older adults to live vibrant, purposeful lives when choosing to age in place.

Suncoast Villages, a regional umbrella organization within a network of over 250 Villages across the nation, is designed to support and empower older adults through Villages serving communities in the Suncoast region

receive their choice between one of Rich Harwood's insightful and inspiring books: *Stepping Forward* or his latest release, *Unleashed*.

We look forward to a rich experience and a meaningful conversation.

including Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota counties.

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To share news or information, contact the editor at ssternberg@thepattersonfoundation.org.