



Charlotte  
DeSoto  
Manatee  
Sarasota

Through the COVID-19 Response initiative at The Patterson Foundation, this weekly Amplify communication aims to weave together what works in each of the counties for a healthier and more thriving Suncoast. You're receiving this message because you've been identified as a community advocate, and we hope you'll share these stories and messages far and wide in your network.

### Health Officer Credits Staff + Partners With Advances on COVID-19 Front

More than 233,000 residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. COVID-19 positivity rates are well below the 5-percent benchmark. More than half a million face masks and hand sanitizers are in the hands of residents and visitors. What's behind the advances in Manatee's battle against COVID-19?



Manatee Health Officer Dr. Jennifer Bencie repeatedly celebrates her staff when talking about these advances. She also thanks health care partners, local governments, schools, businesses, nonprofits, and others. "Our community partners unite to promote, protect, and improve the health of county residents and visitors," said Dr. Bencie. "The collaboration that helped Manatee rise through the ranks to become the ninth healthiest county in the state this year is driving our success on the frontlines of the pandemic." Dr. Brooke Baker's research into why certain subpopulations and individuals are hesitant to get vaccinated helps the advances. "We must keep health equity in mind when we shape campaigns," said Dr. Bencie. "Dr. Baker's efforts help ensure all members of our community, especially our underserved populations, have access to all resources and benefit from targeted efforts."

Here are some other preventive measures **Saint Paul's** is taking:

- Having speakers set an example by wearing face masks when speaking to the congregation and wiping down the shared microphone between each speaker.
- Serving communion wafers and beverages in metal trays filled with small plastic cups that each congregant can retrieve and open as the tray is passed among the pews. The arrangement helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 by ensuring each congregant is the only person touching his/her own plastic cup and alleviating the need for congregants to line up in close proximity to each other at the pulpit to receive communion.
- Giving congregants and visitors a small plastic bag of prevention products as they enter the church, including hand sanitizers that congregants can share with others.

We encourage houses of worship to develop their own COVID-19 protection plan if they have not already.



Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put various groups of people at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19, including

many people from certain racial and ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities.

### Protecting Our Vulnerable Populations

- **Older Adults:** Older adults are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 and might need hospitalization, intensive care, or a ventilator to help them breathe. Older adults, and those who live with, visit, or provide care for them, need to take preventive measures to protect themselves from getting COVID-19. Learn more [here](#).
- **People with Certain Medical Conditions:** People of any age with conditions such as cancer, chronic liver disease, diabetes, heart conditions, and mental health conditions are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines (initial doses and boosters) and preventive measures for COVID-19 are important, especially if you have multiple or severe health conditions. Learn more [here](#).
- **Pregnant or Recently Pregnant:** If you are pregnant or were recently pregnant, you are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19 compared to people who are not pregnant. Pregnancy causes changes in the body that could make it easier to get sick from respiratory viruses like the one that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for [people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future](#). Learn more [here](#).



### Suncoast COVID-19 Stats Week of December 13, 2021

| COUNTY    | 7 Day Rolling Ave. of Daily New Cases | *A Population 5+ with at Least One Vaccination Dose |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Charlotte | 17 🟢                                  | 72% 🟢   |
| DeSoto    | 1 🟢                                   | 55% 🟡   |
| Manatee   | 29 🟢                                  | 66% 🟡   |
| Sarasota  | 35 🟢                                  | 74% 🟡   |

\*Please note, the percentage vaccinated column now reflects the percentage of vaccinated individuals ages 5+

- 🟢 Denotes a positive trend
- 🟡 Denotes a trend that remained the same
- 🔴 Denotes a trend heading in the wrong direction

### Saint Paul's Missionary Baptist Church Takes COVID-19 Prevention Measures

Saint Paul's Missionary Baptist Church is taking COVID-19 prevention measures to protect the congregation. As church congregants decide whether or not to get vaccinated, the church staff and congregation developed a plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through traditional prevention measures. In addition to providing congregants and visitors with face masks, attendants at the front door take down the contact information of individuals entering the church. Should a congregant test positive for COVID-19, the church's staff will use the contact information to identify other congregants who may have been in close proximity of the congregant who tested positive and encourage them to get tested.



The measures we continually take are working! We must continue to do our part to get back to normal. Encourage your family, friends, stakeholders, clients, and others to continue to get vaccinated. Getting vaccinated is the best protection against COVID-19. Let's keep our community's numbers heading in the right direction!

### CONTACT US

Please forward this to your network, and when you have stories about overcoming and thriving during COVID-19, please send them to Cheri Coryea at:

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#COVID19  
@ThePattersonFdn

