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## Several hundred Native Americans get vaccinated at Buffalo pop-up clinic

Mike McAndrew Feb 20, 2021 Updated Feb 21, 2021 0

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Dr. Raul Vazquez, of Buffalo's G-Health Enterprises, vaccinates Michael Martin, director of Native American Community Services, against Covid-19 at a pop-up clinic at the agency's 1005 Grant St. office, on Saturday. Seneca Nation businessman J.C. Seneca, Martin and Vazquez organized the event where 350 people were expected to be immunized.

John Hickey

Mike McAndrew

**O**rganizers of a pop-up Covid-19 vaccination clinic expected to immunize more than 300 Native Americans from across Western New York on Saturday in Buffalo.

The event at the Native American Community Services headquarters on Grant Street was limited to Native Americans who meet the state's vaccination eligibility guidelines or their employees.

Dr. Raul Vazquez, founder of Buffalo's G-Health Enterprises, obtained the vaccine doses and arranged the five-hour clinic with Michael Martin, director of Native American Community Services, and Seneca Nation businessman J.C. Seneca, who owns the Tallchief Territory Native Pride Travel Plaza in Irving.

Seneca said the virus has had a big impact on the Seneca Nation territory south of Buffalo and in Native American families throughout the region.

In the spring, one **Seneca Nation family lost three members to Covid-19**: Norma Jean Kennedy, 91, her daughter, Diane L. Kennedy, 71, and Diane's sister, Cynthia J. Mohr, 65.

"We have to do whatever we can to keep our people safe and make sure they understand the seriousness of the pandemic," Seneca said.

The pop-up clinic had enough doses to vaccinate 350 people, said Vazquez.

"While I am always working to get Covid vaccines into the community, I am particularly determined to ensure vaccinations for brown, Black and Native people. My reason is that

those populations have been the most severely impacted by Covid-19 and represent the fewest of all Americans vaccinated to date," Vazquez said.

As of Dec. 2, the Centers for Disease Control had reported **2,689 Covid-19–associated deaths** among non-Hispanic American Indians and Alaska Natives.

An analysis found the cumulative incidence of laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 cases among the native population was 3.5 times higher than among whites, according to a CDC report.

Vazquez said the infection rate among Native Americans may be even higher because of less testing for the virus among that population.



Meanwhile, Vazquez said, only 385,000 Native Americans across the country have gotten the first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine.

With 250 people vaccinated by noon Saturday, Vazquez said he expected to use all 350 doses at the pop-up clinic.

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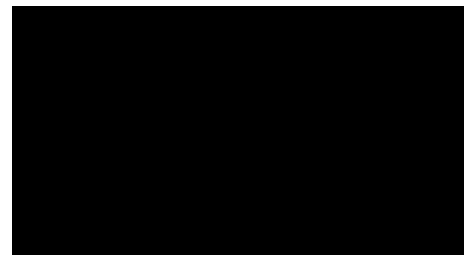
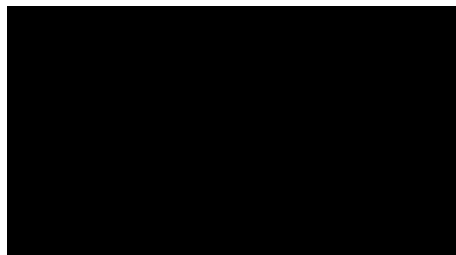
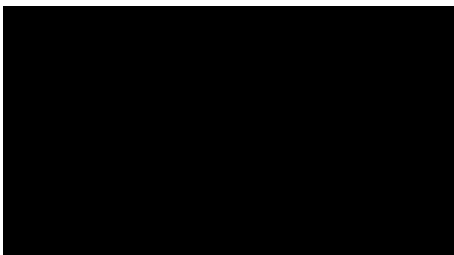
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**Mike McAndrew**  
Watchdog Team editor

I am the editor of The Buffalo News' Watchdog Team. I have worked at The News since 2016. Prior to that I worked for newspapers in Syracuse, N.Y., and in Pottsville, Pa.

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