

Ohio Governor Uses Lottery to Incentivize Individuals to Get Vaccinated

After an 11 day pause of vaccinations, due to reported adverse effects of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, Ohio is trying a new approach to encourage people to inoculate themselves against the coronavirus.

On May 12th, Republican Gov. Mike DeWine announced the Buckeye State's new incentive program dubbed the "Ohio Vax-a-Million," which is a weekly lottery starting May 26. Vax-a-Million is financed by the federal pandemic relief funds and will be open for Ohio residents that are 18 years old or older and have had at least one COVID vaccine dose. The weekly winner will receive 1 million dollars.

A few days after the initial announcement, vaccination rates jumped up from 16% to 28%.

Director of the Ohio Health Department Stephanie McCloud, said, "This dramatic increase in vaccinations indicates that the Vax-a-Million drawing has been impactful in creating momentum for vaccinations throughout Ohio. We are grateful that the drawings are helping spur Ohioans to take this important measure to protect their health, their loved ones and their community. We are seeing increasing numbers in all age groups, except those 80 and older, who are highly vaccinated already, Although the rate among that group is decreasing, it is doing so at a less rapid pace, demonstrating some positive impact even in that group."

Ohio has also announced an incentive program for students ages 12-17 that will award a full, four-year scholarship to attend Ohio public universities. The scholarship includes tuition, room, board and books.

Ohio isn't the only state trying the lottery method to motivate people to take a vaccine—New York and Maryland are incentivizing their residents with prizes as well.

The CDC resumed the distribution of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine April 24, but with warnings of the risks. {eoa}

John Matarazzo is a digital content specialist for Charisma Media, reports for the Charisma News Podcast and is the host of AlongTheWay on the Charisma Podcast Network.

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