

COVID and the Amish: Ohio congregants face soaring infections and vaccination rate is only 1%. Here's why

Holmes County, where half of the population is Amish, has the lowest vaccination rate in Ohio, with just 10% of its roughly 44,000 residents fully vaccinated.

Less than 1% of Amish have received any doses of vaccine, according to Michael Derr, the county's health commissioner.

In an effort to increase that number, health officials are holding vaccination clinics in rural areas. They've also reached out to bishops and community leaders to spread the word about the safety of the vaccines. Still, few Amish residents are showing up to the health department's clinics.

Marcus Yoder, who lives in Holmes County, was born Amish and is now Mennonite and still has close ties to the Amish community. He says the few Amish who are getting vaccinated are doing so privately through doctors' offices and small rural clinics – and they are keeping it to themselves.

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Some Amish residents are skeptical of the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines, and anti-vaccination conspiracy theories also spread throughout the community. There is also a lack of awareness about the more contagious variants spreading across the country, Yoder says... "There simply is a lot of COVID news fatigue. They simply do not want to hear about it, and that's really unfortunate."

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