

## HEALTH / NEWS

**Health Department to Administer Monkeypox Vaccine to Eligible Individuals**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – Last week, the Hamilton County Health Department began offering the monkeypox vaccine, Jynneos, to eligible individuals in the community.

The Tennessee Department of Health recommends vaccination for people who have been exposed to monkeypox or people who may be at high risk of infection to monkeypox. These individuals include:

- Individuals with a known contact/exposure to monkeypox identified through public health interviews during the prior 14 days.
- Individuals who might have been exposed to monkeypox in the past 14

days, including if they:

- Are aware that a sexual partner was diagnosed with monkeypox in the past 14 days.
- Have had multiple sex partners in the past 14 days.
- Gay, bisexual, or other men who have sex with men, and/or transgender, gender nonconforming or gender non-binary individuals who report any of the following in the last 90 days:
  - Having multiple sex partners or anonymous sex.
  - Being diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
  - Receiving medications to prevent

HIV infection (HIV PrEP).

“The Health Department wishes to ensure that high-risk populations have access to this vaccine and that our community realizes there is no need to panic. Practicing good prevention habits such as avoiding close, skin-to-skin contact with people who have a rash that looks like monkeypox, avoiding contact with objects and materials that a person with monkeypox has used, and washing your hands often will reduce transmission,” says Hamilton County Health Department Health Officer Dr. Stephen Miller. “As a reminder, anyone who has been in close, personal contact with someone who has monkeypox is at risk of contracting the

virus.”

Vaccines are currently available by appointment only at the Health Department’s main facility located at 921 East 3rd St., Chattanooga, TN. Please call the Health Department’s hotline at 423-209-8383 to make an appointment.

The Health Department created a monkeypox webpage, which displays the number of monkeypox cases for the Hamilton County area, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section, and links to state and federal resources.

**Airline Features All-black Female Crew in Historic Flight Honoring Aviation Pioneer Bessie Coleman**

By Robin Smith

Are you aware that the lifespan of American adults is significantly impacted by something which has fallen out of our discussions, yet has grown more potent in recent months?

No. It’s not currently COVID, despite rising case counts as our social patterns of activity have increased over the summer. No. It’s not monkeypox, the latest declared emergency that, interestingly, the World Health Organization has issued direct warnings to those living the homosexual lifestyle.

CNBC published remarks by WHO’s monkeypox expert and WHO Smallpox Secretariat, Dr. Rosamund Lewis, noted that “men who have sex with men are the group for the highest risk of infection right now. About 99% of cases are among men, and at least 95% of those patients are men who have had sex with men.”

It’s increasing overdose deaths from fentanyl and a new class of synthetic opioids that are literally wiping out generations of Americans. This is due to addictions and ease of access obtaining illegal drugs flowing over open borders, as reported by CNN in February 2022. To fund international drug cartels that are lavishly wealthy from preying on Americans, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that from February 2021 to February 2022, more than 108,000 Americans died of drug overdoses.

Almost three-fourths, or more than 70 for every 100 overdose deaths, were opioid-related.

What is fentanyl? It’s a powerful medication used appropriately for severely in-



Bessie Coleman was the first Black woman to earn a pilot’s license in 1921. (Courtesy American Airlines)

jured patients, or those dealing with terminal diseases, or who are under strict supervision of physicians. Why is it so deadly? Its potency is underestimated, but its impact on the respiratory system is greater than morphine and heroin.

Stated plainly, fentanyl reduces both your rate of breathing and the volume of air moved. Its victims usually die. Fentanyl also lowers the heart rate and blood pressure. Obviously, if one’s heart is not beating sufficiently to move blood through your body and not giving breath, the outcome is clear – death.

Even in states where other drugs are

legal, like Colorado, where marijuana was legalized back in 2012, an analysis of 2021 deaths in the “Rocky Mountain High” state revealed 48,284 deaths, 10,363 more than the pre-pandemic average. Only 5,298 of those were caused by the COVID virus. Coloradans are seeing a massive increase in overdose deaths in ages 25-44 years young.

As International Overdose Day, August 31, approaches, talk to your family members and friends. Addictions are deadly and must be addressed through medical and behavioral interventions. Resources are available with professionals ready to assist when accessed.

Be aware. Fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroine, and 100 times more potent than morphine. A new synthetic class being smuggled into our streets is the nitazenes. These illicit drugs are 20 times more powerful than fentanyl.

A Stanford-Lancet study this year predicts 1.2 million US deaths, with the greatest impact to the Black community, over the next decade due to opioids.

If you get medicine from your physicians, take it as prescribed and in consultation with your health team. Otherwise, beware of dangers.

**Shaquille O’Neal-Owned Big Chicken Coming Soon to Nashville, Knoxville, and Chattanooga**

Big Chicken, the star-powered fast casual chicken concept founded by Hall of Famer Shaquille O’Neal, announced today that it has signed a franchise agreement to open its first restaurant in Tennessee with local restauranter Jim Richards.

“With four decades of restaurant industry experience under my belt, I know the importance of creating a ‘wow’ experience for customers,” said Richards, who signed on to open ten locations across the state. “The food, service and overall experience at Big Chicken are truly unmatched and as someone who’s lived in the area for over 40 years, I’m confident we’ll become a quick hit for folks in Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga.”

Richards has experience working with several brands in the restaurant industry. He served as the Vice President of Franchise Services for The Krystal Com-

pany for ten years before launching his own company, GPR Hospitality LLC, where he currently owns and operates 13 Five Guys restaurants in Tennessee and North Georgia as well as Fiamma Pizza Company with partner Brion Voges. With strong connections of his own in the industry, Voges, along with Richards’ other

business partners and associates Andrew Gardner, Bruce Bowman and Rodney Hutson will also be involved in operating the new Big Chicken locations. Together, they look forward to leveraging their industry knowledge to expand the brand’s presence into Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga.

“Jim’s extensive experience in restaurant ownership is extremely impressive and his excitement about the business is infectious,” said Big Chicken CEO Josh Halpern. “Nashville is a prime market and one we’ve been excited to expand into and Knoxville and Chattanooga are incredible college town markets that we’re excited to enter as well. We look forward to supporting Jim and his team as they introduce Music City and Eastern Tennessee to BIG flavor, BIG food and BIG fun!”

Since the announcement of Big Chick-

en’s franchising initiative just one year ago, the brand has more than 150 locations in its development pipeline. With its first franchised location set to open this August in Dayton, Ohio, additional upcoming franchise expansion includes new restaurants in Illinois, California, Texas, Oklahoma, Florida, Idaho, Utah, Tennessee and Nevada. Big Chicken currently has an existing location open in Las Vegas along with restaurants in Los Angeles, Seattle’s Climate Pledge Arena, metro-New York’s UBS Arena, the Moody Center in Austin and on two Carnival Cruise ships. Tailored for skilled restaurant owner/operator groups, like Richards, the franchise investment has been designed to align with successful, multi-unit investors who want to become part of Shaquille’s dream team.

Along with O’Neal, the championship pedigree behind Big Chicken includes a pair of powerful ownership group partners, including Authentic Brands and JRS Hospitality. Authentic Brands (ABG), a brand development, marketing and entertainment company, which owns a portfolio of iconic and world-renowned brands including Sports Illustrated, Elvis Presley and Reebok. JRS Hospitality, Las Vegas’ leading events and catering company with a reputation for hosting top tier parties, private dining and corporate gatherings at its iconic venues such as Cabo Wabo, Hexx, and Beer Park.

Ideal franchisees are multi-unit operators who trust and understand the established system Big Chicken has in place and have the capital to open several units.

Restaurant experience — whether traditional or not — is preferred, but not required. With significant interest from new owners, franchise investors will have the advantage to join a brand on the cusp of worldwide expansion.

Founded in 2018, Big Chicken is backed by a dream team of partners; JRS Hospitality, an accomplished Las Vegas-based ownership group; Authentic Brands Group, a multi-national, multi-billion-dollar brand development, marketing and entertainment company; and Hall of Fame basketball star Shaquille O’Neal. Big Chicken fuses O’Neal’s home-cooked childhood favorites with today’s trending flavors. From crispy chicken sandwiches and tenders to Cheez-It® crusted mac n’ cheese and hand-crafted ice cream shakes, each menu item tells a story all while offering guests an inside look into the life and personality of Shaquille O’Neal. With two traditional locations currently open and several in the development pipeline, Big Chicken is prepped to begin U.S. and international expansion through franchising.

About Shaquille O’Neal: Shaquille O’Neal is one of the world’s most successful athlete-turned-businessmen, whose accomplishments both on and off the court have translated into a highly sought-after consumer brand. As an entrepreneur, sports analyst, DJ, restaurateur, and brand ambassador, Shaquille O’Neal’s signature “Business of Fun” mantra resonates throughout each of his countless endeavors.

**AL Police: from front**

Thursday confirmed that Police Chief James Srygley and Assistant Chief John L. Goss had been dismissed.

The Shelby County Sheriff’s Office on Friday condemned the two officers’ actions and said it stands with the city “in providing emergency law enforcement related service to the citizens (of Vincent) at this time.”

Vincent mayor James Latimer said in a public meeting that this was “the only way” to stop paying the two officers involved in the incident due to a city policy that prevents any employee from being fired without two formal complaints and

a verbal warning.

Both officers had already been placed on paid leave, and the third officer on the force had resigned, leaving the city without any active police officers yet still paying two of their salaries.

By abolishing the whole department, the city will technically be making the officers redundant rather than firing them. The decision will take effect this coming week, with the local county sheriff’s department policing Vincent until a new force can be established.

The racist joke was told via text messages apparently sent between officers in June. “What do y’all call a pregnant slave?” said one officer, before supplying

the answer: “Buy one, get one free.”

Screenshots of the messages soon spread on social media, and police chief James Srygley’s declaration earlier this month that “appropriate disciplinary action” had been taken – without revealing the nature of that action or the name of the officer – did not quell the controversy.

“This has torn this community apart,” council member Corey Abrams said after the initial decision to try to fire the officers earlier this month. “It doesn’t matter what color we are as long as we do right by people.”

According to AL.com, one Black resident told other speakers at the public meeting last week: “You are not in our

shoes. You’re not Black, and the joke was not on you, the joke was on us.”

Another Black resident, Erica Kelley, told local broadcaster WBRC 6: “I think it’ll be a great change to bring in some police officers who are actually true on the oath they took to protect and serve everyone in the community.”

However, Black retired welder Robert Franklin told AL.com that the city should find another way to get rid of the two officers involved instead of disbanding the whole force.

According to the 2020 US census, around 81 per cent of Vincent’s residents are white, while around 12 per cent are Black.