



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michelle Hinchey

Senator Michelle Hinchey Presents Dr. Neal Smoller of Village Apothecary in Woodstock with Senate Commendation Award for COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Efforts

MICHELLE HINCHEY July 21, 2021

| ISSUE: **SENATE COMMENDATION, COVID-19, VACCINE EQUITY**



WOODSTOCK, NY – Senator Michelle Hinchey (S-46) on Wednesday presented a New York State Senate Commendation Award to Dr. Neal Smoller, holistic pharmacist and owner of the independent pharmacy [Village Apothecary](#) in Woodstock, New York, in recognition of Smoller’s exemplary service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic, which includes his work to educate residents about the vaccine and ensure equitable distribution.

To date, Dr. Smoller and his team of 200 volunteers, comprised of local residents and health care workers, have vaccinated over 36,732 Hudson Valley residents with more than 20,000 people fully immunized.

In addition to the Senate Commendation delivered by Hinchey, Woodstock Town Supervisor Bill McKenna awarded Dr. Smoller with the “Key to the Town” while Ulster County Legislature Majority Leader Jonathan Heppner and Ulster County Legislator Al Bruno presented Smoller with the Pride of Ulster County Award, among a number of other acknowledgments from leaders, including Ulster County Comptroller March Gallagher and representatives from the offices of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, and Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan.

“Back in January, Dr. Smoller set an ambitious goal for himself: immunize 10,000 people against COVID-19. During his final off-site clinic in June, he immunized his 20,248th patient — a testament to the effective, grassroots community effort he spearheaded alongside a legion of volunteers who have gone above and beyond to get shots in arms and guide our Hudson Valley communities back to safety,” **said Senator Michelle Hinchey.** “With a clear focus on equity, Dr. Smoller and his team have worked tirelessly to ensure that residents, regardless of their access to transportation or the internet, were accounted for in the distribution process, especially our homebound seniors. It is my honor to award Dr. Smoller a Senate Commendation and his ‘Volunteer Army’ a Senate Proclamation in recognition of their remarkable efforts. Getting your shot is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from COVID-19, and if you haven’t received yours already, my office can help. Residents of the 46th District can call us at (845) 331-3810 to schedule their vaccination appointment today.”

Dr. Neal Smoller said,

"It was the honor of my professional career to lead the COVID Busting Volunteer Army as they spoke up and spoke out for their neighbors, served their community with gusto, and displayed true selflessness during a dark time. Thank you to the community for the gift that was this opportunity to serve and the trust you gave us along the way."

Dr. Smoller has made it his mission to ensure that Hudson Valley residents are given equal access to the vaccine. After witnessing the distribution issues preventing under-served residents from receiving the shot, Dr. Smoller launched into action, amassing a [200-person strong volunteer army](#) who have traveled to churches, community centers, malls, and high schools — primarily in Ulster and Dutchess Counties — to educate people about the vaccine and stage vaccination clinics. During a three-day period in early March, 3,500 people were vaccinated in the Saugerties Junior High gymnasium thanks to a clinic set up by Smoller. A few days later, on March 5, 2021, when Smoller had a surplus of vaccines about to expire, he creatively pivoted to restaurant owners in Woodstock, asking them to send their staff to his pharmacy, where he and his team vaccinated the majority of Woodstock's restaurant workers. These remarkable acts were just the beginning and a sample of the lengths Dr. Neal and his Volunteer Army went to serve their community.

Dr. Smoller continues to offer vaccines at Village Apothecary in Woodstock with a goal to reach 40,000 individual doses. New Yorkers can schedule a vaccine dose now at Village Apothecary on Smoller's [website](#).

###