



‘I wanted to help science!’ COVID-19 vaccine trial participants learn if they got the shot or placebo

Accel Clinical Research looking for more participants

DeLAND, Fla. – More than 1.2 million people have received the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Florida, according to the Florida Department of Health, and getting to this point would not have been possible without the Americans who volunteered for vaccine trials, including studies happening in Central Florida.

Kathleen Arthur signed up for Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine trial at Accel Clinical Research in August.



“I wasn’t worried. I just wanted to help science,” Arthur said. “If it helps people and it doesn’t kill me, then I’m in for it.”

At the time she didn’t know if she got the vaccine or not. She said she recently learned she received the placebo. She returned to the DeLand facility on Thursday to get her first dose of the vaccine.

“I wanted to make a difference. I have an 83-year-old very ill father and I have six grandchildren and I just want to get us going again,” she said.

Dr. Bruce Rankin is leading the research efforts. He said 1,200 people participated in both the Pfizer and Moderna studies at Accel Clinical Research.

The data his team collected was used to determine if the vaccines were effective. Both vaccines got Federal Drug Administration emergency use authorization in December.

“It is a very exciting thing to be part of that process,” Rankin said. “People want to know it’s safe and it has been well studied and that’s what our job here is to do.”

Rankin said he is now letting trial participants know if they got the vaccine or not. Those who got the placebo can get the vaccine at the clinical site.

He said just because this part of the trials is over it doesn’t mean their work is done.

“We’ve answered the question about how effective they are. Now people ask me, ‘Well how long is thing going to work?’” Rankin said. “We need to be able to get those antibody tests and monitor people out on year and two years to see how well the vaccine holds up and also if we need to have boosters.”

Rankin said the site is also conducting the Johnson & Johnson vaccine trial, as well as the Novavax trial.

He said if those vaccines are approved that could help meet the high demand for shots.

“We should see a shift in it because if we have four or five vaccines that are all effective, they can be manufactured independently and distributed,” he said.

As for Arthur, she said she wanted to do her part and hopes this brings us one step closer to ending the pandemic.

“This is the purpose. We did this to get to this point,” she said. “We want to move on, get back to normal.”

Rankin said they are still looking for trial participants. Visit COVIDOrlando.com for information on how you can enroll.

Click [here](#) to see the live article.