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ACHD, 2-1-1 Partnership to Offer Phone Scheduling, COVID Vaccine Info

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) today announced that it has expanded its partnership with the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Beginning at noon today, call takers at 2-1-1 will provide phone support for scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments and will answer questions about the vaccines. ***Anyone calling before noon today for phone registration will not be able to be registered or accommodated.*** The phone registration support is intended only for those 65 and older without internet access or who are having trouble navigating the registration website.

Appointments are for the Health Department's Point of Dispensing (POD) inside the DoubleTree Hotel in Monroeville only. Appointments remain extremely limited with the approximately 750 available slots that span the next two weeks likely to fill up quickly. When all appointments have been filled, public notice will be provided and phone scheduling will end at that time.

"Navigating the online registration can be a challenge for some of our county's seniors, and vaccinating this group is a top priority for the Health Department," Dr. Debra Bogen, director of the Health Department said. "The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania has been a great partner throughout the pandemic, and I am happy they are able to help the Health Department and our seniors register for vaccine appointments."

Residents are reminded that 2-1-1 is only scheduling appointments for those who are 65 and older, and only for the Monroeville POD run by the Health Department. Other vaccine providers in Allegheny County have separate registration systems, and 2-1-1 will not be able to sign up people for appointments with those providers.

If available, callers should be prepared to provide an email address or cellphone number where they can receive a reminder to schedule the second dose in the vaccine series. An email address or cellphone number is not required. For those without an email or cellphone, instructions will be provided on when to contact 2-1-1 to schedule their second dose appointment.

In addition to scheduling appointments, 2-1-1 call takers will be available 24/7 to assist the community with questions related to the COVID-19 vaccines and any other COVID-related inquiries. Call-takers can also refer callers to the Pittsburgh Poison Center for clinical-related questions about the vaccine.

"This additional partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department is a great example of the importance of working together to connect people to resources that can help," said Bobbi Watt Geer, President and CEO of United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. "2-1-1 will continue to answer the call, serving our community as we work toward recovery from the pandemic."

The United Way's 2-1-1 help line has supported the Health Department throughout the pandemic. The Health Department, United Way and Pittsburgh Poison Center partnered at the beginning of the pandemic to answer questions and concerns related to COVID-19. In September, access to UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's Nurse Triage Line was added for parents, pediatricians and school administrators who may have questions as children headed back to school. Those services are still available with this expanded partnership to include vaccine information and scheduling.

Links to register at the Monroeville POD will continue to be posted on the Health Department's COVID-19 Vaccine Information Page (<https://alleghenycounty.us/COVIDvaccine>) should any vacancies occur.

The department will also continue to push out information through Allegheny Alerts (<https://alleghenycounty.us/alerts>).

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