The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20210830145956/https://www.governor.pa.gov/newsroom/wolf-administration-highli…

Wolf Administration Highlights Free, Subsidized Public Transit to Vaccine Appointments

March 10, 2021

Press Release, Public Health, Public Safety

As COVID-19 vaccines become more available and as counties prepare to open mass vaccination sites, Governor Tom Wolf today reminded the public that public transit, often free or subsidized, is available in every county to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens can get vaccinated.

“Every Pennsylvanian who wants a vaccine will be able to get one. We are working to ensure that the most vulnerable populations have access to the vaccine as soon as possible,” Gov. Wolf said. “As vaccine supply continues to increase, we want to remind the public that free and subsidized transportation options are already available throughout the commonwealth and Pennsylvanians can make use of these programs to access vaccine sites. I want to thank our transit authorities for eliminating barriers for these populations, not just throughout the pandemic, but every day.””

“Transportation should not be an impediment to medical care or receiving the COVID-19 vaccine,” PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian said. “We are reminding Pennsylvanians that public transportation is available in every county and we encourage them to contact their local transit provider to take advantage of these services.”

Shared ride programs are available in every county and fixed-route transportation systems statewide offer accessible transportation. The commonwealth provides both Lottery and Act 44 funds to subsidize those trips for seniors and individuals with disabilities every day. Trips include those to mass vaccination sites and any site where a vaccine is available to individuals, including pharmacies, hospitals and doctor’s offices. Free transportation to vaccinations is currently available in at least 39 counties for qualifying individuals.

The Senior Shared Ride program enables all individuals age 65 and older to use shared-ride, curb-to-curb services and pay only a small portion of the regular shared-ride fare. Individuals with disabilities ages 18-64 may access transportation through the Persons with Disabilities Program.

More than 3 million Pennsylvanians have received at least one dose of vaccine and equitable access to vaccination sites through public transit is critical to the Wolf Administration’s efforts to combat the pandemic.

“We now have three vaccines available that have been proven effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19,” Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam said. “Public transportation will be a key to making those vaccines easily accessible once the supply catches up to demand. We want to thank transportation providers for helping to eliminate that potential barrier to vaccination.”

The Wolf Administration joined members of the Vaccinate Lancaster Coalition at the site of the Lancaster County Community Vaccination Center, located in a former department store at Park City Center. The vaccination center began accepting appointments this week. Individuals can register for a future appointment online at VaccinateLancaster.org by clicking on “Lancaster Co. Community Vaccination Center” and then on “Register for a Vaccination Appointment.”

“Lancaster County is a hard-working, dedicated community that comes together in times of crisis, and today’s launch of our community vaccination center is a shining example of that,” said Dr. Michael Ripchinski, chief clinical officer, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, lead healthcare partner for the Vaccinate Lancaster Coalition. “Lancaster County Government, Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health, Penn State Health, UPMC and WellSpan Health have all responded to the call to serve. We view this center as an essential way to make the vaccine available to everyone in Lancaster County and beyond. As vaccine volumes increase, we are optimistic that this will enable recovery from this pandemic.”

Red Rose Transit Authority, which operates through the authority of South Central Transit Authority (SCTA), is providing free rides to the site. Also, RRTA will allow customers eligible for the Red Rose Access shared-ride paratransit service to ride free when they have a scheduled vaccination appointment.

“South Central Transit Authority is glad that it can help provide this needed service for people to be vaccinated that may have transportation issues,” said SCTA Executive Director Dave Kilmer. “Public transit has played a vital role throughout this pandemic for getting essential workers to their jobs and can now gladly help in the efforts to get everyone vaccinated. We appreciate all the assistance provided by the governor and PennDOT to keep services operating and allowing us to provide these free rides.”