Philadelphia Weekly PHP Outreach Newsletter

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

The Latest News

- **Job opening: Health Equity Advisor**
  - The Public Health Preparedness Program (PHP) is looking for a Health Equity Advisor.
  - The Health Equity Advisor will:
    - Ensure PHP interventions maintain a focus on equitable access to emergency information and services in priority areas and with priority populations.
    - Advise the Program on diversity, equity and inclusion both as it relates to structural contexts impacting disparity and local dynamics impacting community preparedness and resilience.
    - Develop mechanisms for internal and external evaluation of equity initiatives within the Program and serve on program and division level health justice and racial equity workgroups.
  - Find the full job description at: **https://bit.ly/PHPEquityAdvisor**
  - Applications due by September 9, 2022.
- CDC Recommends the First Updated, Bivalent COVID-19 Booster
  - The CDC and the FDA recommends the use for the updated COVID-19 boosters from Pfizer-BioNTech for people ages 12 years and older and from Moderna for people 18 years and older.
  - More information in the FAQ below and at **https://bit.ly/CDCBivalent**
- Free COVID Testing Kits Available for Distribution by CBOs
  - PDPH has procured a supply of at-home COVID-19 test kits and will be offering these tests to community-based organizations (CBOs) serving clients and patrons in areas of high COVID-19 risk.
  - Request your free test kits here: **https://bit.ly/CBOtestDistro**
- PDPH Launches the Primary Care Finder: **www.phila.gov/primary-care**
  - Find free or low-cost medical care in Philadelphia
  - Search by location, type primary care, specialty care or testing services.
  - The goal of this tool is to increase access to free or low-cost primary care services for Philadelphians, especially people who are uninsured or underinsured.
- Text-to-911 now fully operational in Philadelphia
  - Text-to-911 is a service that allows the public to send a text message to 911.
  - Individuals who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and those who face communication barriers may find this service a more accessible means of interface with 911.
  - More information available at: **https://bit.ly/PATextTo911**

COVID-19: Resources and Services

- **Where to find COVID-19 vaccine, including booster doses:**
  - Call 3-1-1 or visit **phila.gov/vaccine** or **vaccines.gov** to find a vaccine clinic near you.
    - For interpretation, call 3-1-1, press #5 and say your language.
    - Visit **https://bit.ly/KnowB4Ugo** for updates on transportation, access and functional needs resources, and up-to-date access descriptions of City-run clinics.
  - Options for COVID-19 vaccines for uninsured residents include:
    - Free vaccine at City health centers and pop-up clinics, for insured and uninsured residents. No ID is required at these locations.

- Other sites, like pharmacies, may bill your insurance company or charge you a direct fee. Call these sites before you go to find out about their policies.
  - More information available at: **www.phila.gov/vaccine** and **bit.ly/COVIDvaxFAQ-PDPH**
- **What to do if you lost your vaccination card?**
  - Ask your healthcare provider first, if they cannot help, call 215-685-5488 or email **covid@phila.gov** to request a copy of your vaccine record.
  - The CDC does not provide copies of COVID-19 vaccination card.
- **Stock up on FREE N95 masks**
  - Visit **https://bit.ly/FreeN95s** for free masks from the Strategic National Stockpile
- **Stock up on home tests**
  - How to get home tests paid for if you do have insurance:
    - Health insurance companies are required to reimburse 8 at-home tests per month for each person enrolled in the plan and will reimburse up to $12 per individual test.
    - Submit receipts for tests that you've purchased to your health plan, along with any other necessary documentation required by the health plan.
    - Detailed information here: **https://go.cms.gov/3Lqo0Yk**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Bivalent, updated COVID-19 Booster

- **What is a bivalent booster and why is it different than the original booster?**
  - This updated booster is bivalent, meaning it contains a combination of the original booster with updated protection against the types of COVID-19 that are most contagious now.
  - It is expected that the COVID-19 virus and all viruses will mutate (change) over time.
    - This is why the flu vaccine is updated each year, to protect you from the types of flu virus expected to be the most common that season.
  - This updated COVID-19 booster, includes an mRNA component that provides people with protection from the types of the COVID-19 Omicron variant that are currently the most common.
  - This updated COVID-19 boosters adds Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 spike protein components to the current vaccine.
    - The BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of the omicron variant are currently causing most cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and are predicted to circulate this fall and winter.
- **What about side effects?**
  - Side effects from the bivalent, updated booster are similar to the side effects that you may experience when getting any other Pfizer or Moderna booster.
- **Who is eligible to receive this updated booster dose?**
  - The Pfizer bivalent booster vaccine is approved for individuals 12 years and older, at least 2 months after completion of the primary series or 2 months since receiving the most recent booster dose.
  - The Moderna bivalent booster vaccine is approved for individuals 18 years and older, at least 2 months after completion of the primary series or 2 months since receiving the most recent booster dose.
- **Who should get this booster?**
  - Everyone who is eligible should get a booster, but those who are most likely to get severely sick from COVID-19 should make sure to get this updated booster. This includes the elderly, immunocompromised, and those with chronic conditions like diabetes, kidney disease, and underlying lung disease.
- **Why should I get yet another vaccine?**
  - COVID-19 vaccines are likely to become a routine part of seasonal healthcare, similar to the annual flu vaccine.

- Seasonal flu is now one of the most common respiratory infections but getting a flu vaccine every year protects you from getting severely sick and from passing the virus to others who could get severely sick or even die from the virus.
- COVID-19 is likely to continue to spread around the world and may become as common as the seasonal flu virus.
  - Because it is expected that viruses like influenza and COVID-19 mutate (change) as they spread, researchers will continue to make updated versions of the flu and COVID-19 vaccines to protect us.
- This is why it is important to get your flu vaccine every year and to get a COVID-19 booster, each time you are eligible.
- The more people who are vaccinated and boosted:
  - The less the virus will spread
  - The less people will get sick
  - The less people will go to the hospital or die from the disease
- What about a bivalent booster for children under 12?
  - In the coming weeks, CDC also expects to recommend updated COVID-19 boosters for other pediatric groups after reviewing all available data.
- How do we know these new boosters are safe?
  - Both the Moderna and Pfizer bivalent, updated booster have been studied and approved by the FDA.
    - The FDA evaluated the booster's effectiveness and safety data from a clinical study and reviewed data on the safety and effectiveness of the current mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, which have been administered to millions of people, including during the omicron waves of COVID-19.
- More information from PDPH available at: **https://bit.ly/COVIDboosterPHL**
- More information from the FDA available at: **https://bit.ly/FDABivalent**

Monkeypox Resources and Services

- People who are concerned that they've been exposed, or believe they are at high risk of being exposed to monkeypox, should call the PDPH Call Center at 215-685-5488 to see if they are eligible to be vaccinated.
- Recording of the PDPH Monkeypox information available at: **https://bit.ly/MPXinfoSept7**.
  - Info session was held on Wednesday, September 7 and covered the following topics:
    - Overview of Monkeypox, Signs and Symptoms, What to do if you're sick, Treatment, Harm Reduction, Vaccine and Resources.
- Find the latest information on cases and vaccine at: **https://bit.ly/MPXDashboard**
  - Updated every Monday.
- Find the latest guidance about monkeypox at: **https://bit.ly/PHLMonkeypoxInfo**
- Find the latest flyers and printable information at: https://bit.ly/PHPGuidance
- Find information on precautions to take while you wait for your Monkeypox vaccine at: **https://bit.ly/MPXvaxWait**
- If you would like to receive the weekly Monkeypox newsletter update, email: **publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov**

More Information

- **PDPH Call Center:**
  - Call 215-685-5488, Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.
- **Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline**
  - Call 800-722-7112, press #9 for interpretation. Open 24/7!
  - Talk to a medical professional about COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, vaccine, tests, Etc.
- **Frequently asked questions on all 3 vaccines:**
  - From PDPH: **https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxFAQ-PDPH** (English)
  - From the CDC: **https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxFAQ-CDC** (English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, and more)

How to Stay Connected

- **Health and Emergency Updates**
  - Text ReadyPhila to 888-777 and get updates to your phone
  - Find the latest information at phila.gov, Facebook, and Twitter
- **Join the Community Response Partner Network**
  - This newsletter is sent to the Community Response Partner Network , part of the PDPH Public Health Preparedness Program.
  - Sign up at https://bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse to get essential public health information, then pass it on to your family, friends, and community.
- **Questions or suggestions?**
  - Email us at **publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov**
  - Leave a message with the Public Health Preparedness Program Outreach Team at 215-429-3016.

Be safe,
Philadelphia Department of Public Health