



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PA Department of Aging: Partnership Between COVID-19 Vaccine Providers, Area Agencies on Aging Helps More Seniors Secure Vaccine Appointments**

**Harrisburg, PA** – An amended Department of Health [order](#) indicating that certain vaccine providers must work with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to schedule vaccination appointments for older adults eligible in Phase 1A of the state's vaccination plan is reaping measurable results, as reported to the Department of Aging.

On a media briefing call today, the department was joined by several AAAs who described progress made on their vaccination waiting lists, as well as continuing partnership efforts to help every older adult in their local service area who wants a vaccine to get one.

"We're very pleased with early progress reports we've heard about these AAA – vaccine provider partnerships forged through the Department of Health's amended order just in the last week. Area Agencies on Aging now have vaccine provider partners to work directly with in order to secure appointments for older adults," said Aging Secretary Robert Torres. "Waiting lists of older adults who had reached out to their AAA because they don't have access to a computer and need assistance are starting to move. These are precisely the older adults we need to reach. These AAAs are great examples of what we're seeing on the ground and we anticipate hearing more of these success stories as a result of these partnerships."

The Lancaster County Area Agency on Aging has reported that new partnerships with vaccine providers forged as a result of the amended executive order have helped eliminate its waiting list of older adult vaccine consumers, which was over 825 last week. These are older adults who do not have access to a computer to obtain appointments.

"Given the number of offers we have had to help, we no longer have a waiting list," said Lancaster AAA Director Lon Wible. "We can see that these partnerships are truly making a difference."

Lancaster AAA already had a working relationship with the Southern Asian Association and partner NCS Pharmacy as well as the Lancaster Vaccination Center (CVC). Wible noted that following the amended order announcement, multiple providers including Hillcrest Pharmacy, WellSpan Health Systems and Union Community Care have reached out to take referrals and schedule shots. Consumers have been calling to express their appreciation.

Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging Board President Holly Kyle, who serves as executive director of the Union-Snyder Area Agency on Aging, said, "AAAs have been working to respond to the practical needs and questions that older adults have in obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine. If they can't go online, how will the system work for them? Partnering with

vaccine providers empower our agency to offer real help and reduce frustration. Already, we are seeing movement in the right direction.”

“With the new vaccine provider partnerships that have been formed in the last several weeks, we have been able to make significant progress in scheduling appointments for the older adults in our service area. The PACE Call Center has also been very helpful in acquiring appointments for those in 1A. We are now working with the local Department of Health and several pharmacies to schedule appointments ourselves which has significantly reduced our waiting list,” said Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties executive director Mary Roselle.

“Our dedicated staff has helped more than 1,000 senior citizens without computers or internet to schedule vaccination appointments, and we have worked with our transportation department to provide rides to local clinics,” said Pike County AAA executive director Robin Skibber. “This would not have been possible without the advocacy and collaboration among our commissioners, state and federal legislators, Wayne Memorial Community Health Centers, the Pike Office of Emergency Management, and the Department of Health.”

The Pike County AAA is currently working to get vaccinations directly to the local homebound population.

Sec. Torres also praised the collaborative work of department programs including PACE, Pennsylvania’s prescription assistance program for older adults, which has prioritized assistance with vaccine appointments to PACE/PACENET enrollees, who number about 275,000 statewide. The PACE program has also partnered with Walmart on its vaccine clinics by pre-enrolling some of the most vulnerable older adults for a vaccine appointment, including older adults served by local Area Agency on Aging programs. The PA Link to Aging and Disability Resources is also assisting older adults who are trying to get a vaccine appointment.

There are approximately two million Pennsylvanians 65 and older within the Department of Health’s vaccine distribution jurisdiction. According to the [data](#) reported to the department as of March 26, there have been 1,493,933 residents 65 and older who have received the vaccine at this time – nearly 75 percent of seniors 65 and older within DOH’s vaccine jurisdiction. A breakdown of that information is available below.

Age demographics update each week  
here: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>.

Find more information about the amended order [here](#).

Find FAQs on the order [here](#).

**MEDIA CONTACTS:** Karen Gray, Jack Eilber, Aging: [agingcomms@pa.gov](mailto:agingcomms@pa.gov);

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