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Secretary of Agriculture Visits Rural Vaccine Clinics, Encourages Farmworkers to Seize Opportunity

Gettysburg, PA – With all of Pennsylvania's essential agriculture industry now eligible for COVID-19 vaccination, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding today visited with two vaccine providers in Adams County.

The Adams County-WellSpan Health Joint Community COVID-19 Vaccination Site, which serves the community at large, and Keystone Health, whose mission is to serve the unique needs of Pennsylvania's migrant and seasonal farmworker population, are both accessible options for farmworkers in Pennsylvania's 20,000-acre fruit belt.

"For the past year, you've pushed up your sleeves and continued working to feed Pennsylvania and the world as the coronavirus pandemic surged across the commonwealth," said Redding. "Now it's time to roll up your sleeves for the COVID-19 vaccine. Choosing to protect your health with the vaccine not only protects you and your family, but it ensures the availability and accessibility of our food supply. It's critical to the resilience of our industry."

Pennsylvania is home to more than 60,000 farmworkers – both citizen and migrant – who work to ensure Pennsylvania's farms run efficiently and produce food to feed the nation. These farmworkers became eligible for vaccine last week as part of the commonwealth's [expanded special initiative](#) to vaccinate frontline workers, and the rest of the agriculture industry became eligible for vaccine Monday, April 5 when the commonwealth moved to [Phase 1B](#).

"Farmers, farmworkers, and frontline workers throughout the food supply chain are among the many heroes who are ensuring that essential needs are being met throughout this pandemic," said Pennsylvania Farm Bureau Manager of Government Affairs Joel Rotz. "Agricultural producers have long embraced science to protect their animals and crops against disease to assure an abundant, healthy and safe food supply. Now, it's time to continue to trust science and protect our heroes throughout the food supply chain by voluntarily receiving the coronavirus vaccine."

[Keystone Health](#) is the sole grantee in Pennsylvania to provide services to migrant agriculture workers across the commonwealth. In addition to providing services at their own sites, they also visit farm labor camps and provide on-site basic healthcare services.

"At Keystone Health, we are working hard to disabuse our agricultural workers of vaccine myths and misinformation that are circulating," said Joann Cochran, Keystone Health president. "Vaccination is an act of love. It's a way to protect those we care about."

The Adams County-WellSpan Health Joint Community COVID-19 Vaccination Site is a public-private partnership, as can be seen in county vaccination sites across the commonwealth. While the site serves the entire community, Adams County has roots in agriculture with an abundance

of orchards across the fruit belt of South Mountain in western Adams and more than 2,000 agricultural farm managers with eligible farmworkers across the county.

“WellSpan Health has established a goal of 10% allotment of vaccine for at-risk populations, including food and agricultural workers. To date, we’ve vaccinated more than 2,500 at-risk persons in our communities and have several initiatives under way,” said Ann Kunkel, vice president of Community Health and Engagement for WellSpan Health. “We thank Secretary Redding and the Wolf Administration, the Adams County commissioners and our other partners across southcentral Pennsylvania as we seek to reduce vaccine hesitancy and overcome barriers for at-risk individuals to get vaccinated. Everyone deserves a shot of hope.”

Any eligible individual can make an appointment at the Adams County or any WellSpan vaccination site by visiting [MyWellSpan.org](https://mywellspan.org) or by calling their COVID-19 Hotline at 855-851-3641. You do not need to be a WellSpan patient to make an appointment. Just last week, WellSpan administered its 200,000th dose across south central Pennsylvania.

[Moderna](#), [Pfizer](#), and [Johnson & Johnson](#) are available to those interested in vaccination. Essential workers who get the COVID-19 vaccine are protecting themselves, their family, their co-workers, and their community. In addition to this, farmworkers who choose to protect their health with the vaccine are also protecting the availability and accessibility of food.

Pennsylvania’s agriculture industry is encouraged to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine by visiting pa.gov/covid.

Note: Photo and video from this event will be available at [PAcast.com](https://pocast.com).

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