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Gov. Wolf, Health Agencies, Community Partners Helping Pennsylvanians Who Cannot Leave Home Receive COVID-19 Vaccine

Reading, PA – As Pennsylvania continues its accelerated COVID-19 vaccination plan, Pennsylvanians who are not able to leave their homes must be reached, and various state agencies and community groups are helping.

Governor Tom Wolf visited Reading today to talk about how the state and its partners are using various means to reach people not able to leave home to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

“Pennsylvanians who cannot leave their homes face unique challenges when it comes to vaccine access,” Gov. Wolf said. “We’re all working together to reach out to this population that can be hard to pinpoint. It’s very important to me and to everyone here today that we make this concerted effort to reach out to this group of Pennsylvanians who have been particularly hard-hit by the isolation that comes with a pandemic. We are committed to finding every way to reach Pennsylvanians who cannot leave their homes and give them equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine.”

The governor was joined by Secretary of Aging Robert Torres and Acting Secretary of Human Services (DHS) Meg Snead, along with Sen. Judy Schwank, Rep. Manny Guzman, Reading Mayor Eddie Moran, and representatives of Berks County and the Pennsylvania Area Agencies on Aging.

Collaborative efforts are already taking place to locate people who cannot leave their homes and get them vaccinated, including those Pennsylvanians who are not receiving services through the Department of Human Services or the Department of Aging.

“The Department of Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are committed to helping all segments of Pennsylvania’s older adult population obtain a COVID-19 vaccine, including those older adults for whom leaving their home to get a vaccine is either impossible or highly impractical,” said Aging Secretary Robert Torres. “Addressing the needs of these seniors is an issue that requires us to mobilize and collaborate to fit the needs and resources of each community. AAAs have been doing a great job collaborating with community partners to help older adults obtain their vaccine appointments. Now, we’re seeing AAAs and counties build upon those successful models to find creative ways to reach seniors who cannot leave home,

such as partnering with EMTs and visiting nurses. We appreciate the ongoing support of Governor Wolf and the departments of Health and Human Services to help us further advance these efforts.”

Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam today amended an order to ensure vaccine providers are working with local AAAs and other groups to reach those who are not able to leave their homes. The order was originally signed to connect providers to AAAs, which lead to great success to reach those 65 and older who were having difficulty obtaining vaccine appointments.

“Today’s amended order continues our work with our Medical Assistance managed care organizations to facilitate vaccine appointments for Pennsylvanians who are at greater risk of a severe COVID-19 case if they contract the virus,” said DHS Acting Secretary Meg Snead. “These partnerships break down barriers for seniors, adults with disabilities, and others in our Medical Assistance system who are high-risk and cannot leave their homes, many of whom are lower income or people of color. This direct outreach and coordination are essential for an equitable vaccination process and will help us save lives.”

“Homebound individuals have experienced social isolation for more than a year because of the pandemic,” Sen. Schwank said. “Simple activities we take for granted, like getting food, household necessities and medical care, became even more difficult to accomplish. Getting COVID-19 vaccines has added an additional layer of anxiety for homebound people, especially seniors, who desperately want to be vaccinated but can’t leave their homes. It’s our obligation to do all we can to get to them vaccinated and I am especially pleased that Governor Wolf and Acting Secretary of Health are taking this charge seriously.”

“We are in this fight against COVID-19 together, and I appreciate Governor Wolf and his administration coming to Reading and making a commitment to ensure our residents are vaccinated,” said state Rep. Manny Guzman, D-Berks. “It is important for all levels of government to partner in this effort, and my office is available to help connect people to the vaccine, as well as get them the help they need during this very difficult time. People should not go without proper health care and services, no matter their circumstance.”

While it is difficult to pinpoint the number of Pennsylvanians who are not able to leave their homes, the state and its community partners are committed to using all means of outreach to ensure everyone who wants a vaccine can get one.

“We are also working with housing associations, nursing care organizations, our federally qualified health centers, and other community partners to identify all Pennsylvanians who cannot leave their homes who need to be vaccinated and connect them to a provider,” Gov. Wolf said. “If you or someone you care about can’t leave home and wants to be vaccinated, please reach out to the Department of Health, your local Area Agency on Aging, or the Department of Human Services for help obtaining a vaccine appointment.”

A list of Area Agencies on Aging can be found [here](#).

A map of vaccine providers can be found [here](#).

The Acting Secretary of Health’s amended order can be found [here](#).

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