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May 11, 2021

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Wolf Administration Visits Mushroom Farm Mobile Vaccine Clinic, Acknowledges Workforce Dedication to Food Security

Blandon, PA – Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Governor's Advisory Commission for Latino Affairs Executive Director Luz Colon today visited a vaccine clinic at Giorgio Mushrooms in Berks County where more than 600 farmworkers received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The clinic was available through a mobile vaccine and testing unit operated in partnership by the Latino Connection and Highmark Blue Shield.

"These frontline workers have accepted risk and worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure the availability of food," said Redding. "Now, as the COVID-19 vaccine is available, we see they're not only dedicated to feeding Pennsylvania, but they're dedicated to doing their part to ensure of a safer, healthier commonwealth."

"Thank you for saying 'yes' to agriculture and 'yes' to a brighter, healthier future. Your commitment to community makes Pennsylvania a better place," added Redding.

In August 2020, a [unique partnership](#) between the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Latino Connection, and Highmark Blue Shield initiated a first-of-its-kind mobile Community-Accessible Testing & Education (CATE) unit to strategically reach underserved, diverse populations and meet their COVID-19 testing needs. Now, it's used to administer COVID-19 vaccinations in coordination with community partners. So far, more than 1,500 agricultural and migrant farmworkers have been successfully vaccinated through the CATE mobile unit.

"We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has created great hardship and anxiety for Latino families that face barriers, especially with all of the misinformation out there," said Colon. "This unique partnership makes the COVID-19 vaccine 100% accessible by meeting the Latinx community where they are."

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. Pennsylvania's mushroom industry leads the nation in production, with nearly 60% of all mushroom production occurring in southeast Pennsylvania. The industry supports nearly 9,000 jobs and contributes \$1.1 billion to the economy.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Pennsylvania's nation-leading mushroom industry stepped up to the plate to both feed America and keep their workers safe. These farmworkers became eligible for vaccine as part of the commonwealth's [expanded special initiative](#) to vaccinate frontline workers.

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 the event available at PACast.com.

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