



Office of the Governor

**JB Pritzker**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

**CONTACT**

[Gov.Press@illinois.gov](mailto:Gov.Press@illinois.gov)

## **State Partners with Crossing Healthcare to Expand Equitable Distribution of Vaccine in Central Illinois**

*New Pilot Program with FQHCs and Safety Net Hospitals to Help Reach Underserved Communities*

**(DECATUR)**- Building on existing efforts to ensure equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health today announced a new partnership with Crossing Healthcare to administer vaccines to residents in Decatur. The partnership is part of a broader pilot program the state launched in coordination with five federally qualified health centers (FQHC) and five safety net hospitals across the state. In the coming weeks, the pilot program will expand to include additional critical access hospitals across the state. Vaccines are available to residents by appointment only.

“Ensuring the most vulnerable Illinois residents have a trusted, reliable health care provider to administer the COVID-19 vaccine is critical to combating this deadly virus,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “This new pilot program builds on robust efforts by the administration to ensure equity is at the center of the state’s Vaccine Administration Plan. By partnering with providers in underserved communities we can reduce vaccine hesitancy and ensure we are reaching Illinoisans in the communities they call home.”

The state will provide each of the sites with approximately 300-500 vaccine doses per week, in addition to the allocated doses the state distributes to existing health care partners like local health departments and pharmacies. IDPH used the COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI) as well as local vaccination rates to select sites for the first round of the pilot program.

The new partnership between the state and Crossing Healthcare as well as other similar providers will help ensure that communities hardest hit by COVID-19 have access to the vaccine. The program also aims to reduce vaccine hesitancy in underserved areas by providing residents the ability to receive vaccines more quickly from trusted providers.

“This deadly virus has claimed the lives of too many our family members, friends and neighbors,” **said Sen. Doris Turner (D- Springfield)**. “Illinois residents, especially those in underserved communities, need access to reliable and quality care. The launch of the new pilot plan will not only save many lives but will also undo the negative stigmas associated with health facilities. Recognizing that certain gaps exist is a huge first step and will lead to successful health outcomes.”

“I am grateful Crossings was recognized by our Governor as an integral provider in our community. This will allow Crossings to distribute the vaccine to our community. Along with my efforts, I want to recognize all my colleagues who also work tirelessly to serve our citizens. This was a true coordinated effort to ensure our citizens' needs are being met in a timely manner,” **said Rep. Sue Scherer (D-Decatur)**.

The new pilot program builds on the federal FQHC vaccination program through which five FQHCs across the state receive vaccine doses directly from the federal government. Illinois has an expanding network of state-supported vaccination sites operating across southern, central and northern Illinois. To find additional information about vaccine availability, including locations and eligibility, visit [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov).

Sites participating in the pilot program include:

**Central Illinois:**

- Crossing Healthcare, Macon County

**Cook & Collar Counties:**

- Family Christian Health Center, Cook County
- Chicago Behavioral Hospital, Cook County
- AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center, DuPage County
- Lake County Health Department and FQHC, Lake County

**Metro East:**

- Touchesstte Regional Hospital, St. Clair County

**Southern Illinois:**

- Rural Health, Inc., Union County
- SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital, Marion County

**Quad Cities:**

- Community Health Care, Inc., Rock Island County

###