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State Launches Public-Private Partnership to host Vaccination Clinic at Chicago's Union Station Ahead of Memorial Weekend Travel

*Five additional vaccination clinics scheduled in Downstate
Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD -- Ahead of Memorial Day weekend, the State of Illinois is launching public-private partnerships to make vaccination clinics readily available for travelers. With the help of Amtrak, Walmart, TravelCenters of America, Wally's, and HyVee, the state will host vaccination clinics at Union Station and at travel centers in Mt. Vernon, Troy, Effingham, Bloomington, and Pontiac.

For the first time since the onset of COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control has said it is safe to resume travel and gathering with fully vaccinated friends. The American Automobile Association (AAA) projects Memorial Day weekend travel will be 60% higher than last year and the state is committed to reaching people where they are to make vaccinations as accessible as possible.

“After an incredibly difficult year, lifesaving vaccines have truly opened the door for a summer of fun and venturing out, which is why Illinois is pulling out all the stops to make accessing these vaccines as easy as stopping for gas,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “With one-shot vaccine stops at Union Station, TravelCenters of America, and along I-55, Memorial Day Weekend travelers will have yet another chance to join the more than 6 million Illinoisans who have gotten vaccinated.”

The State of Illinois is partnering with Amtrak and Walmart to bring vaccination clinics to Union Station to help vaccinate the traveling public. Nearly 100 trains will operate carrying more than 30,000 travelers passing through Union Station on Amtrak trains this Memorial Day weekend, and this vaccination event creates an easy and convenient solution for travelers.

These vaccination clinics are available Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 11:00am – 7:00pm. These clinics will offer the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine and are available to anyone 18-years and older. No appointment is necessary, and vaccines are available at no cost – regardless of insurance status.

“We are proud to help expand access to vaccines – an important part of bringing an end to the pandemic,” **said Kevin Thompson, Walmart’s Senior Director of Public Affairs for Illinois.** “Events like this are critical to ensuring all individuals who want the vaccine can get it – and we’re thankful to work with organizations like Amtrak and the State of Illinois to continue this important work.”

“Our nearly 50-year partnership with the State of Illinois involves more than the state-sponsored trains, it includes our commitment to public health and safety. The more our nation is vaccinated, the more we can be free to travel and close some of the distance we’ve all felt during the pandemic,” **said Mary Carlson Bis, Amtrak Senior Director of Emergency Management.**

The State of Illinois will also host vaccination clinics at four TravelCenters of America locations in downstate Illinois: TA Mt. Vernon, TA Troy, Petro Effingham and TA Bloomington. These vaccination clinics will be available Saturday, May 29 through Tuesday, June 1 from 10:00am-3:00pm and 5:00pm-8:00pm. These vaccination clinics will offer the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine and are open to anyone 18-years and older. No appointment is necessary, and vaccines are available at no cost, regardless of insurance status.

“TravelCenters of America has a unique opportunity to help the state get professional drivers and others vaccinated and we are committed to doing our part to eliminate barriers to receiving care,” **said Jon Pertchik, CEO of TravelCenters of America.** “Our travel centers are positioned to serve professional drivers who cannot park at a traditional pharmacy or doctor’s office or schedule a set appointment time. By alleviating significant challenges faced by professional drivers and other guests, we are delivering on our mission of returning every traveler to the road better than they came.”

Additionally, the State of Illinois is partnering with Wally’s and Hy-Vee to offer a vaccination clinic for travelers along I-55 outside Pontiac. This clinic will be held on Monday, May 31 from 10:00am – 2:00pm. This clinic will also offer the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine and is available to anyone 18-years and older. No appointment necessary, and vaccines are available at no cost and without proof of insurance.

“We are excited to partner with Wally’s and the State of Illinois to increase COVID-19 vaccine access for those traveling throughout Illinois this Memorial Day weekend,” **said Angie Danielson, pharmacy supervisor for Hy-Vee’s east region.**

“Wally’s is committed to enabling easy access to vaccinations for our guests, our team members and the local Pontiac community in participation with the State of Illinois and Hy-Vee,” **said Andy Strom, Chief Experience Officer for Wally’s.** “As Americans

get back on the road, Wally's is positioned to welcome our visitors in our spacious and extra clean facility with plenty of room to maneuver whatever they may be driving or towing. On behalf of Wally's – Home of the Great American Road Trip – we want to wish everyone a happy and healthy Memorial Day – safe travels.”

As a bit of extra incentive, Wally's will be offering a free Wally's fountain drink to anyone who gets vaccinated on Monday. Details will be provided on-site upon vaccination.

While 66% of adults (18+) in Illinois have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, that percent needs to increase to help prevent new variants from causing a resurgence of cases in Illinois. In addition to these Memorial Day weekend vaccination clinics, there are more than 1,000 locations in Illinois offering the COVID-19 vaccine.

To find a vaccine location near you, visit www.coronavirus.illinois.gov.

About the Business Emergency Operations Center

This public-private initiative was made possible by the State of Illinois' Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC). The BEOC enhances communications and information exchange between the private sector and the state emergency management professionals to improve response and recovery efforts for disasters or emergencies. The BEOC partners with representatives from more than 200 companies and associations throughout Illinois. These companies make up more than a dozen critical infrastructure sectors such as: food/agriculture, emergency services, energy, information technology, commercial facilities, financial services, communications, transportation systems, critical manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, healthcare/public health, and water and wastewater systems.

“The Business Emergency Operations Center is critical to our state's response and recovery operations,” **said Illinois Emergency Management Agency Director Alicia Tate-Nadeau.** “We rely on the private sector to keep food on our tables, supplies on our store shelves and to keep our communities resilient. Illinois' private sector has been invaluable throughout the course of this pandemic to meet daily needs our communities. This vaccination campaign is yet another demonstration of their commitment to the state's recovery from this pandemic.”

To become a member of the Business Emergency Operations Center, businesses can inquiry with Illinois Emergency Management Agency, 217-782-7860.

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