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IDPH Holds Vaccination Event in East St. Louis to Promote COVID-19 Booster and Flu Shots

Director of IDPH gets Both Shots at East Side Health District; Illinois reports 11,447 New Cases of COVID-19 in Past Week

EAST ST. LOUIS – Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Sameer Vohra received a COVID-19 booster and a flu shot today in East St. Louis at the East Side Health District. Director Vohra appeared with State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Swansea) and State Representative LaToya Greenwood (D-East St. Louis) and stressed the importance of getting fully up-to-date with protection from COVID-19 and the flu ahead of the oncoming winter season.

The event was held as the CDC released data showing that 14 counties in Illinois are rated at [Medium Community Level for COVID-19](#). IDPH is reporting 11,447 new confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Illinois, including 62 deaths since September 30.

“I feel very fortunate to have received both the COVID-19 bivalent booster and the flu shot today to protect myself and my family,” said Director Vohra. “With fall underway, it’s vitally important for everyone to protect themselves from both COVID-19 and the flu. We now have two powerful tools readily available to keep us safe, healthy, and protected during the fall and winter respiratory virus season. The new COVID-19 bivalent vaccines are designed to offer extra protection against the now-dominant Omicron strain of the virus.

“Additionally, the seasonal influenza vaccines are designed to keep us protected from this season’s influenza strain. As we return to our pre-pandemic activities this winter, I encourage all of you to use these important tools to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy this upcoming holiday season.”

More than 637,000 Illinoisans have received a dose of the new, bivalent COVID-19 vaccines since they were approved for use in early September, including 144,200 doses in the last week. Daily vaccination numbers are at the highest level seen since early February, during the major surge in illnesses caused by the Omicron variant.

“I strongly encourage everyone to not hesitate and make arrangements now to get protected from both COVID-19 and the flu,” Senator Belt said. “Call the East Side Health District or your local

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healthcare provider and make sure that you and your family stay safe during the coming cold weather months and the family gatherings we all look forward to in the holiday season.”

“The new bivalent COVID-19 vaccines offer great protection against the virus,” said Rep. Greenwood, who is the chairperson of the House Health Care Availability and Access Committee. “I applaud the East Side Health District for making it easy for everyone in East St. Louis and the surrounding communities to get both a flu shot and the updated COVID booster.”

Public health officials stress that the vaccines are especially important for those most vulnerable to severe illness, such as those individuals over 50, those with underlying medical conditions, and those who are immunocompromised.

IDPH reported that over the last week, an average of more than 20,000 doses of the new bivalent vaccines have been administered across the state each day. This is more than double the daily average for all vaccinations for most of the summer.

The CDC authorized two new bivalent booster vaccines on September 2 that include an mRNA component of the original strain to provide an immune response that is broadly protective against COVID-19 and an added mRNA component in common between the Omicron variant BA.4 and BA.5 lineages to provide better protection against COVID-19 caused by that variant.

The Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent, is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 18 years of age and older. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, Bivalent, is authorized for use as a single booster dose in individuals 12 years of age and older.

The updated boosters are available at pharmacies, hospitals, and other healthcare providers. The best way to locate a vaccine provider near you is to visit www.vaccines.gov and search for bivalent booster availability.

Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 3,773,667 cases, including 35,073 deaths, in 102 counties in Illinois since the beginning of the pandemic.

As of last night, 929 individuals in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 111 patients were in the ICU and 28 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators. The preliminary seven-day statewide case rate is 90 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 Illinoisans.

In counties at the **Medium Community Level**, persons who are elderly or immunocompromised (at risk of severe outcomes) are advised to wear a mask in indoor public places. They should also get up to date on COVID-19 vaccines or get their bivalent booster, if eligible.

IDPH has been supporting pharmacies and healthcare providers in efforts to increase their inventories of the various FDA-authorized treatments. There are [over 1,200 treatment locations](#) in Illinois - including all the major retail pharmacies. More than 96.7% of the state’s population is within a 10-mile radius of one of these locations.

A total of 23,981,588 vaccines have been administered in Illinois. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 23,388 doses, including the bivalent booster and first doses. Since September 30, 163,713 doses were reported administered in Illinois. Of Illinois’ total



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population, more than 77% has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, more than 70% of Illinois' total population is fully vaccinated, and more than 55% of the vaccinated population has an initial booster according to [data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Data indicates that the risk of hospitalization and severe outcomes from COVID-19 is much higher for unvaccinated people than for those who are up to date on their vaccinations. All data are provisional and are subject to change. Additional information and COVID-19 data can be found at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19.html>.

Vaccination is the key to ending this pandemic. To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, go to www.vaccines.gov. The federal government has established a new website that provides an all-purpose toolkit with information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.

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