



JB Pritzker, Governor
Paula A. Basta, M.Div., Director

Respect for Yesterday
Support for Today
Plan for Tomorrow

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**Find A Vaccine
Location**

IDoA COVID-19 Resources

February 15, 2022

Dear Aging Network:

February is dedicated as Black History Month, honoring the contributions and sacrifices of African Americans throughout U.S. history. This year's theme, [Black Health and Wellness](#), recognizes the legacy of Black medical scholars and health care workers. It's especially timely as we enter the third year of a pandemic that has disproportionately affected communities of color and brought racial inequity to the forefront of public health.

In honor of Black History Month, AgeGuide is [highlighting the accomplishments of Black leaders who continue to advocate and inspire into their older years](#). IDoA encourages all our providers to celebrate Black community members who have paved the way for generations to come, and to consider nominating them for the [Senior Illinoisans Hall of Fame](#).

I also invite you to read about the [origins of Black History Month](#), take a [tour through Black History](#), or find details about upcoming [Black History Month events in Illinois](#). For additional resources, check out the latest news and blogs posts about [Black and African American elders](#) from the [Diverse Elders Coalition](#).

As you may have heard, Governor Pritzker recently announced that Illinois is on track to [lift the statewide indoor mask requirement on Monday, February 28](#). Statewide COVID-19 hospitalization rates are declining faster than at any other point in the pandemic, with Illinois leading the Midwest in people who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Older Illinoisans continue to lead the way in vaccinations, with 95% of older adults having received at least one shot. A remarkable 80% of eligible older adults have also received their booster shot!

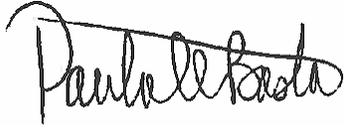
Governor Pritzker also recently announced his Fiscal Year 2023 proposed budget for the State of Illinois. Following the Governor's budget address on February 2, I joined First Assistant Deputy Governor Lizzy Whitehorn and the leaders of the Departments of Human Services, Healthcare and Family Services, Public Health, and Children and Family Services for a briefing to stakeholders about the content of the proposed budget. While the final budget passed by the General Assembly may look different, I am encouraged by the prioritization of both our Aging Network workforce and the programs that older adults depend on. Notably, under the Governor's plan, IDoA's budget would increase by 13.6% compared to Fiscal Year 2022, including a substantial increase for home-delivered meals and new funding for caregiver support programs. If you weren't able to watch the budget briefing live and would like more information, a recording is available [here](#).

Looking ahead, next month marks the 50th anniversary of the Senior Nutrition Program. ACL has chosen the theme of "Celebrate · Innovate · Educate," which celebrates the many accomplishments of the national and local senior nutrition programs, acknowledges the innovative approaches used to support older adults, and looks at how education can help communities understand and use nutrition services. For a preview of the upcoming celebrations, check out this [anniversary awareness webinar](#). ACL is also collecting

content from local programs, including photos of activities, news articles, and thank you notes from older adults. Submissions must be emailed to aclnutrition@betah.com by March 18.

As always, I close this letter with a heartfelt thank you to our Aging Network. Valentine's Day was yesterday, but the love I feel for each of you, for this line of work, and for our mission at the Department on Aging is worth celebrating all year. Please continue to stay safe and well, and keep up the great work.

Sincerely,



Paula Basta, M.Div.
Director, Illinois Department on Aging

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine** at (800) 252-8966; (888) 206-1327 (TTY)

