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NEWS RELEASE

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New COVID Vaccinations Now Available At KCHD

CHARLESTON, W.VA. – The new COVID-19 vaccine is now available at the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department. No appointment is required for the COVID or flu vaccines, and it is safe to take both shots the same day.

KCHD has both Moderna and Pfizer vaccines in stock, but will not be offering the Novavax vaccine.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the updated COVID vaccine, but limited its use for many people. The shot is approved for all seniors, but the FDA narrowed its use for younger adults and children to those with at least one high-risk health condition such as asthma or obesity.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided a list of underlying conditions that will help people decide if they qualify for the COVID vaccine. The list is not exhaustive and may be found at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or in the lobby at KCHD. The health department will not require a physician's order if you can attest to meeting at least one of the risk factors on the CDC's list.

KCHD's Health Officer, Dr. Steven Eshenaur, says given recent upheaval in regulatory health agencies, many people who want to get vaccinated may believe they suddenly no longer qualify. They also may have concerns about insurance covering the shot, which can cost \$150 or more before insurance. "The list of risk factors is expansive and includes obesity, age, sedentary lifestyle, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease and a host of other issues that many of us face," Eshenaur explained.

"We will walk you through the list of risk factors when you come in to get the vaccine, and we will help you see if you qualify for the shot. Or, your physician can write an

order for you to get it. Either way, there will be no surprises from your insurer,” Eshenaur said.

Respiratory diseases can be deadly, Eshenaur cautioned. Vaccines like the flu shot, the COVID vaccine, and the RSV vaccine (available now for those 50 and older) can help prevent these viruses or, at a minimum, lessen the impact of the disease if you contract it. “Vaccines work and, even if you do get COVID, your chance of avoiding a hospitalization is better if you’ve had the shot.”

Preliminary data from the CDC estimates 47,500 Americans died from COVID-related causes last year. In at least two-thirds of those cases, COVID-19 was listed as the underlying cause of death. For the rest, COVID-19 was a contributing factor.

KCHD is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is open until 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. Please arrive at least 30 minutes before closing to allow us to take care of you.

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