

LVHN Offering Second Dose of Bivalent COVID-19 Booster Shot

By LVHN

LEHIGH VALLEY, PA. - COVID-19 bivalent mRNA booster shots are available at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) with second doses of the booster now being offered to adults age 65 and older as well as immunocompromised individuals 6 years and older. Eligible and interested individuals can receive the bivalent booster by scheduling an appointment with their Lehigh Valley Physician Group (LVPG) primary care physician's office.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently amended the emergency use authorizations of the COVID-19 vaccines manufactured by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna. The new guidelines recommend the use of bivalent mRNA vaccines for all primary vaccine series and booster shots. The bivalent vaccines include the original COVID vaccine as well as an updated component aimed at the BA.4 and BA.5 variants which currently cause the majority of worldwide COVID infections. The original monovalent vaccines will no longer be available for use in the United States.

The CDC recommends bivalent boosters for everyone 6 months and older who has completed the initial vaccine series but has not received a bivalent booster. In addition, the CDC authorized a second bivalent booster for the two groups with the greatest risk of severe COVID infections – adults age 65 and older and individuals with immunocompromising conditions. However, to receive a second bivalent booster, it must be at least four months since the first bivalent booster was administered.

The new authorization also simplifies the vaccine series for almost all age groups. Bivalent versions of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines will be used for all individuals 6 months and older who were not previously vaccinated. For individuals 6 years and older, only a single dose of the bivalent vaccine is required to complete the vaccine series.

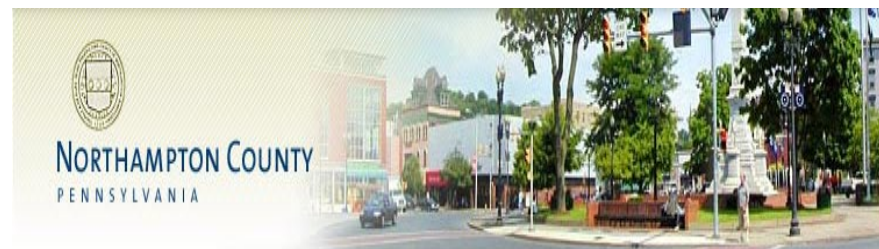
Despite continued decreases in COVID cases across the country, the U.S. is still seeing more than 1,000 COVID-19-related deaths every week. "Vaccination remains one of our most important tools to reduce the risk of serious complications related to COVID-19," says Timothy Friel, MD, Chair, Department of Medicine, infectious diseases specialist, LVHN. "This is particularly important in those individuals who are most vulnerable and at highest risk for hospitalization and death following infection."

Vaccinated individuals who have not previously received a bivalent booster shot should strongly consider scheduling a booster, particularly for the following:

- Older adults
- Immunocompromised individuals age 6 years or older
- Those with multiple medical issues that place them at higher risk for severe outcomes and hospitalization related to COVID-19

"As always, we encourage patients to discuss any questions about their personal risk and need for bivalent boosters with their primary care or specialty care physicians or other health care provider," Dr. Friel says.

To schedule an updated COVID-19 bivalent booster, an individual can call their LVPG primary care clinician's office or can log in to MyLVHN, the patient portal, and select "Schedule Vaccine Appointment," found under the menu icon.



Northampton County Accepting Applications for 2024 Hotel Tax Program

By Brittney Waylen

EASTON - Executive Lamont McClure and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) announce that applications for the 2024 Northampton County Hotel Tax Grant Program will be accepted from May 1st through July 10, 2023, at 4:00PM.

Applicants must either be a federally registered non-profit entity, 501(C)(3), 501(C)(4), or 501(C)(5), or a municipal entity located within Northampton County. Eligible projects will enhance tourism and/or promote community development within Northampton County and must be completed within Calendar Year 2024.

Hotel Tax grants are awarded through a competitive process and distributed at the discretion of County Council, advised by the County Executive, who receives recommendations from the Hotel Tax Review Committee. Awards are expected to be announced in October 2023, and all projects must be completed by December 31, 2024.

Interested organizations can apply by visiting the Northampton County Participant Portal hosted by Neighborly Software at: <https://portal.neighborlysoftware.com/NORTHAMPTONCOUNTYPA/participant> Registration is required on the Participant Portal in order to apply.

Program inquiries should be directed to: Northampton County Department of Community & Economic Development Karen Collis, 610-829-6314, kcollis@norcopa.gov

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For more information, contact Director of Human Resources Shawn McGovern at 610-530-5510 or mcgoverns@cetronia.org.