



## St. Luke's New 'Shot-Line' Automated Phone Call System to Speed-Up Pennsylvania Vaccinations

By Sam Kenedy

BETHLEHEM, PA \_ If you're 75 or over and are registered at St. Luke's University Health Network, expect an automated call to schedule an appointment for your COVID-19 vaccine. Starting next week, St. Luke is launching a new technology called "Shot-Line," an automated scheduling system that will allow individuals to self-schedule their appointments over the phone.

Existing St. Luke's patients who have yet to be vaccinated and are eligible according to Pennsylvania Department of Health guidelines will receive a call on the phone number they listed on their St. Luke's patient records. During the call from 1-866-785-8537, an automated voice recording will ask if they would like to receive the vaccine. If they answer yes, they will undergo a COVID-19 eligibility check, and, if successful, will be given three appointment dates and times at the vaccine site nearest to the location on their record. They can then select the appointment time that is best for them by pushing that option number and be scheduled within 3 to 4 minutes.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people who are eligible for the vaccine to get it," said Shishir Singh, Director of Development, Information Technology. "Our teams are working day and night to keep up with the demand and develop the best, easiest processes to get shots in arms as quickly as possible."

"We are starting with those over 75 because a good number of people 75 and over have not yet been vaccinated," Singh said. As more vaccines become available, St. Luke's will follow PA Department of Health guidelines and use its Shot-Line system to schedule appointments for other groups, including those 65 and older and anyone between the ages of 16 and 64 with a condition that puts them at higher risk of the virus.

### System developed internally

Singh and the members of the St. Luke's Information Technology department developed the automated scheduling system internally over the last two weeks at a break-neck speed. "We saw that many older people were having difficulty using computers to sign up online using current processes," he said. "Our automated system is meant to open up another channel for people to easily get scheduled with minimal hold and or wait times."

St. Luke's piloted the program on a small number of patients in early February and is scaling it up based on the feedback it received. "We're closely monitoring the conversion rate and taking quick corrective actions as needed. We strongly believe that if the 75-plus group can easily do it, the rest of the population can too," Singh said. "We're targeting to get at least half of those eligible to sign up using the Shot-Line."

Singh also said to expect more announcements from St. Luke's in the near future around continuous improvements to its vaccine scheduling. "We are pretty excited about rolling this out and helping the community by making it easy to use and really helpful," he said.



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