FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 6, 2022

PFIZER, MODERNA COVID VACCINES STILL RECOMMENDED AS BEST DEFENSE AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

CUMBERLAND, MD – Among the three approved COVID-19 vaccines in use in the United States, health officials continue to promote the Moderna and Pfizer mRNA vaccines as the best options for protection against COVID. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends Moderna or Pfizer COVID vaccine over the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine based on extensive analysis of the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

On Thursday, the FDA announced that it was limiting authorization of the J&J COVID vaccine to use only in individuals age 18 or older who are unable to receive any other approved COVID-19 vaccines and would otherwise not receive a COVID-19 vaccination. The J&J vaccine carries a very small risk of thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS – blood clots combined with low blood platelet levels which can occur within one to two weeks of vaccination). However, TTS is very rare and -- for individuals with no other COVID vaccine option -- the FDA says that the known benefits of the J&J vaccine outweigh the potential risks. To date, there have been 15 confirmed cases of TTS out of approximately 8 million doses of J&J administered.

"[This] action demonstrates the robustness of our safety surveillance systems and our commitment to ensuring that science and data guide our decisions," said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. Dr. Marks went on to say that the FDA continually monitors the safety of all approved COVID vaccines and thoroughly evaluates new safety information as it becomes available.

The health department continues to offer Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines and boosters to the public each Wednesday. Youth vaccines (ages 5 to 11) are given from 3 to 4:30 p.m. on the main floor of the Allegany County Health Department, Willowbrook Office Complex (12501 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland, MD). Vaccines for ages 12 and older are offered at the Allegany County Fairgrounds Multipurpose Building (11400 Moss Avenue, Cumberland, MD) from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays.

Appointments are recommended for both clinic locations and can be scheduled by going to the health department website at https://health.maryland.gov/allegany. For assistance registering for an appointment, county residents can call the COVID-19 call center at 240-650-3999. COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are also widely available at local pharmacies, urgent care clinics, and some primary care providers.

Free drive-thru COVID-19 testing is available at the Allegany County Fairgrounds (11400 Moss Ave., Cumberland) on Mondays from 2 to 7 p.m. and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

ALLEGANY COUNTY COVID-19 DATA AS OF MAY 5:
- CDC COVID-19 Community Level: Low
- New COVID Cases This Week: 32 (cumulative total 17,235)
- Additional Deaths This Week: 1 (cumulative total 362)
- Cases Per 100,000 People: 6.49 (Maryland: 19.48)
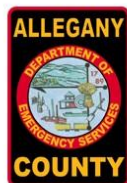- Positivity Rate: 3.92% (Maryland: 6.05%)

NEXT UPDATE: Friday, May 13

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