

Niagara County Department of Health, 211 partner to ensure access to COVID-19 POD preregistration

The Niagara County Department of Health and 211 Western New York have established a formal partnership to ensure access to county point of dispensing COVID-19 preregistration access for those within limited or no access to the internet.

“While our point-of-dispensing (POD) operations remain preregistration only, it is important that we partner with agencies such as 211 to ensure those with limited or no access to the internet are able to preregister for CO-

VID-19 vaccine if eligible,” stated Elise Pignatora, director of public health planning and emergency preparedness.

“This partnership will additionally help those 65 and older who are now eligible for vaccine but are encountering difficulty in registering for an appointment at one of our PODs,” Public Health Director Daniel J. Stapleton noted.

211 WNY is a communications platform that serves as a single access point for individuals seeking information and services.

COVID-19 Closures & Updates

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“211 is proud to partner with the Niagara County Department of Health, supporting registrations for the county’s PODs by

phone 8 a.m.-8 p.m., seven days a week. Since COVID-19 hit WNY, 211 has experienced a surge in requests for assistance from families and individuals struggling to meet basic needs including food, PPE, housing and rent assistance, and mental health services; helping with vaccination registration is a natural fit,” said Kelly Dodd, director of contact center services.

For more information regarding the Niagara County point-of-dispensing operations, to in-

clude eligibility and registration, visit: <https://www.niagaracounty.com/health/Services/PublicHealth-Preparedness/2019-Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccination>. For those who are unable to access registration via the internet, call 211 for registration support.

211WNY is available 24/7 by dialing 211 or 888-696-9211. Visit www.211wny.org for information on services available in the community or more information.

Higgins not surprised by continuation of closed border

Congressman Brian Higgins, D-NY-26, who serves as co-chair of the congressional northern border caucus, released the following statement in response to Canada’s announcement of the extension of the existing border restrictions:

“Today, as expected, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that restrictions will remain in place at the U.S.-Canada bor-

der. The Trump administration has failed in its response to COVID and taken no responsibility for addressing the economic and health needs related to this national emergency. Consequently Americans have suffered.

“Despite our numerous requests to U.S. border agencies, no plan has been developed for the eventual reopening of the border between the United States and

Canada. Thankfully, next week a new administration steps in – one that recognizes the strength and value that comes with closer coordination with Canada – one of our closest allies. The Biden-Harris team steps in at a time of national crisis. They will have a great deal of work before them. And while I don’t expect change immediately, I do believe the new administration will work with focus to repair

relationships with our allies and put the United States on a healing path.”

The border between the U.S. and Canada first closed due to the pandemic on March 24, 2020, and has been extended multiple times. Higgins has fought for the development of a plan that takes a nuanced approach to reopening the border and has pushed for reciprocal family reunification

measures and exemptions for property owners.

The U.S. and Canada share 5,525 miles of border, the longest land boundary between two countries in the world. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports, “Approximately 400,000 people and over \$1.6 billion in goods cross the Northern Border daily through more than 120 POEs (ports of entry).”

Expo will return to Niagara Falls in 2022 (cont.)

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is to present one of the best fishing shows in the Great Lakes and we are confident we will do that in 2022.”

The Greater Niagara Fishing Expo is not just another outdoor trade show. “Teaching Fishing” is what this show was built around and what makes it

unique. The show facility provides a unique blend of a spacious exhibitor event center and a multitude of seminar rooms, all utilizing state-of-the-art technology. The show, in its eighth year, utilizes these rooms to deliver up to 18 classes concurrently, each targeting different topics for various levels of expertise.

The rescheduled show, moving to a February timeframe and adding an addition day, will also include the Lake Ontario Trout and Salmon Association’s Salmon School, which will be altering its date to Feb. 19, 2022. For a list of featured speakers and further details, visit www.lotsa1.org.

“This rescheduling decision is

not taken lightly,” said Conference & Event Center Niagara Falls General Manager Jason Murgia. “The Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo is a massive economic catalyst for our local community during the winter, putting heads on beds and people in the local restaurants. When the public health

crisis eases, we are confident the expo will be bigger and better than ever.”

For more information on the Greater Niagara Fishing and Outdoor Expo, visit www.niagrafishingexpo.com or follow on Facebook.

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teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, school administrators, paraprofessional staff, support staff and bus drivers

Public-facing grocery store workers

As is the case with other regional hospitals, Memorial is experiencing periodic vaccine shortages due to overwhelming demand and short supply. Therefore, the scheduling of vaccine events will depend on the availability of the vaccine Memorial receives.

The medical center will continue to vaccinate members of priority group “1A,” which includes frontline health care workers, nursing home residents, emergency medical services personnel and residents of

NFMMC (cont.)

group homes overseen by state agencies such as the Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Mental Health.

“To date, we have administered close to 2,500 vaccines to health care workers and providers, nursing home residents and

others prioritized in groups ‘1A’ and ‘1B,’ ” Ruffolo said. “Memorial Medical Center is fully invested in this effort. As COVID-19 vaccine becomes available, we will continue to reach out to those priority groups.”

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