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Ohio Vax-2-School Program Expected to Include Children Ages 5 to 11 Years Old as Soon as This Week

Entry Deadlines to be Announced in the Coming Days

COLUMBUS – This week, it is expected that the CDC will recommend the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine pediatric formulation, allowing parents who wish to have their children ages 5 to 11 years old to be vaccinated to start making vaccination appointments.

As soon as the CDC recommends the vaccine, the Ohio Vax-2-School program will expand to include youth ages 5 to 11, Ohio Vax-2-School will award \$2 million in scholarships to eligible Ohioans. Prizes include 150, \$10,000 scholarships, and five, \$100,000 grand prize scholarships.

Ohioans aged 12-25, or their parents or guardians, can currently enter online at www.ohiovax2school.com or by phone at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634) once they have received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Providers in Ohio will be permitted to administer vaccines to children ages 5 to 11 years old following the recommendation of the CDC, which is expected following the meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), scheduled to meet Nov. 2-3. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) has recommended the pediatric formulation of COVID-19 vaccines for those ages 5 to 11 years old, and the FDA has issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the vaccine. Those ages 5 to 11 years old can be entered in Ohio Vax-2-School immediately following their first dose of the vaccine, which could be administered as soon as later this week following the recommendation of the CDC.

The Ohio Vax-2-School prize scholarships, awarded in Ohio 529 College Advantage plans, can be used at the Ohio college, university, technical/trade school, or career program of the winner's choice. A deadline to enter and drawing dates have not yet been announced. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Lottery Commission will share those details after the CDC recommends the use of the pediatric vaccine formulation for 5-11-year-olds.

To date, more than 6.4 million Ohio residents, representing nearly 65% of Ohioans ages 12 and older, have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Among Ohio's youngest eligible residents, more than 385,000 Ohioans ages 12-17 – more than 43% of Ohioans in that age group – have started the vaccination process. Vaccines offer the best protection from COVID-19, and the Ohio Vax-2-School program is an added incentive to be vaccinated for those in the eligible age group, currently 12-25, who have received at least one dose of the vaccine. This applies to vaccinations received at any point since the COVID-19 vaccines have been available.

Ohio's goal is to ensure fair, equitable distribution across the state so this important COVID-19 vaccine for younger Ohioans is available in each of Ohio's 88 counties. ODH is diligently working with vaccine providers, including local health departments, pediatricians, family physicians, community health centers, both adult and children's hospitals, schools, and pharmacies across the state to prepare to vaccinate youth ages 5-11. ODH is working closely with Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Ohio AAP) and the Ohio Children's Hospital Association (OCHA) to prepare for vaccine distribution.

COVID-19 vaccines are widely available throughout the state. Many providers offer walk-in appointments, or Ohioans can schedule a vaccination appointment at gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov. Ohioans who want to learn more about the safety, efficacy, and side effects of COVID-19 vaccines should talk to their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist, or visit coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine to learn more.

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