



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Department of Health Launches Text Messaging Initiative to Get More Pennsylvanians Fully Vaccinated**

*If you haven't received your second COVID vaccine dose, it is not too late*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Pennsylvania Department of Health Acting Secretary Alison Beam and Acting Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson [yesterday announced](#) a new initiative to get more people fully vaccinated. Starting next week, the department will send a second dose reminder text to individuals who got their first dose but missed their second appointment.

“We have been making great progress in the fight against COVID-19, as more than 5.7 million Pennsylvanians have stepped up to get fully vaccinated,” Acting Secretary Beam said. “We want to remind everyone that getting the second dose is important to help protect against COVID and the Delta variant. While the recommendation is to get the second dose within 42 days for best results, we know that schedules can be hectic and people miss appointments. The goal of these reminders is to make sure people know that it is never too late to get your second dose, and to help individuals make a new second dose appointment at a provider convenient to them. Even if you were one of the first people to get vaccinated back in December, if you missed your second dose, there is still time to get it.”

Text messages will be sent early next week to 254,850 contacts. The first text message will go to people who got their first dose between Dec. 14, 2020 and May 14, 2021 and have not gotten their second dose. Individuals contacted provided phone numbers to their providers when they made their first dose appointments. Individual vaccine providers have commonly used text messaging as a tool for appointment reminders.

“As we have seen over the past 16 months, COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications,” Dr. Johnson said. “There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, and if you get sick, you could spread the disease to family, friends and others around you. Getting vaccinated significantly lowers your risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death.”

If you have not been vaccinated yet or have only received the first dose of a two-dose vaccine—it is never too later to get vaccinated. There is scientific evidence that a second dose will reduce your chances of getting COVID-19 and developing severe symptoms that could send you to the hospital,” Dr. Johnson said.

The department reminds residents that they only need a second dose of the vaccine if they received Pfizer or Moderna as their first dose. If an individual received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, they do not need a second dose. Additionally, if an individual received the Pfizer vaccine as their first dose, they must receive the Pfizer vaccine for their second dose, and it is the same for the Moderna vaccine.

**The Department of Health is working to ensure the vaccine is provided in a way that is ethical, equitable and efficient to all Pennsylvanians:**

- All Pennsylvanians age 12 and older are eligible to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine. Use [Vaccine Finder](#) to find a COVID-19 vaccine provider near you.
- A [commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) explains the current process for getting one. Pennsylvanians with questions about the vaccination process can call the Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- [Vaccine dashboard data](#) can also be found on the website to find more information on the doses administered and showcase demographic information.
- The [Unite Against COVID Weekly Update](#) is a round-up of news you can use and answers to your most pressing vaccine questions – delivered directly to your inbox every week.
- Frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

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