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## **NIHHC'S COVID-19 DRIVE-THRU CLINIC INCREASES VACCINATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ELKHART COUNTY COMMUNITY**

ELKHART, IN, July 2022 – The Northern Indiana Hispanic Health Coalition (NIHHC), in partnership with the Indiana Department of Health (IDOH), Heart City Health Center, REAL Services, and La Raza Radio, ran an expanded **COVID-19 vaccine & testing drive-thru clinic on Saturday, July 9, from 1 PM-5 PM, in the parking lot of NIHHC's Elkhart office location.**

In addition to Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and COVID-19 testing, the clinic offered COVID-19 health consultations with bilingual health professionals, including a medical doctor, to respond to all questions regarding COVID-19. Staff, community health workers (CHWs), and volunteers from IDOH, Heart City Health, and NIHHC provided 75 vaccines and 5 tests to the community in four hours. 8 first doses, 4 second doses, and 63 boosters were administered, including 7 pediatric doses. NIHHC staff provided 30 health consultations, and they distributed hand sanitizers, N95 masks, and 77 COVID-19 home testing kits, responding to the lack of rapid tests available in the area. 84% of attendees were Hispanic.

While public health COVID-19 vaccination efforts have been limited more recently, NIHHC worked to coordinate and promote the event, resulting in a significant turnout.

Trusted, culturally competent CHWs engaged in outreach with individuals to register appointments, follow up with reminders, and provide education, so that they could make an informed decision about vaccination.

“It is so refreshing to see how, around our COVID efforts, we continue to build relationships with community members, local organizations, and volunteer youth, who all attend the event and feel comfortable and welcomed in a safe environment,” said NIHHC Executive Director, Liliana Quintero.

Jimmy Dixon, the NIHHC staff member who coordinated the event and is also a CHW, said community members have become more open to getting the shot once they talk to someone, whether before the clinic or through a health consultation on site.

“People on Saturday were highly satisfied not just with our location, but also with the service that we provided and the up-to-date information we shared with them,” said Dixon.

NIHHC offered free tacos to all attendees and partnered with the Elkhart Public Library to provide free new books for children. Over 250 free tacos were provided to those who received any COVID-19 service, and 35 children ages 3-16 received an average of three books each.

Attendees appreciated the opportunity to have a meal. One woman who had gotten her first dose said she was hesitant to get her second dose and felt that she didn't need it. After seeing so many people getting sick again and then hearing about the clinic on the radio, she came back to NIHHC for the second shot.

"It's better for me to be protected," she said. "I finally decided to do it. Knowing I could get also get some food pushed me out the door!"

The newer, highly contagious BA.5 variant is surging across the country, but health experts stress that we can manage a surge by getting vaccinated and staying up to date. As a minimum, they recommend getting at least one booster shot.

"We must remain vigilant in the face of a decreased sense of urgency," said Quintero. "Vaccination is still our best tool to prevent hospitalization, death, and the emergence of new variants."

NIHHC is grateful for all of its community partners who helped make the July 9 clinic a community health event. NIHHC offers consistent vaccination and testing opportunities and remains committed to meeting the needs of the community to fight COVID-19. The next clinic is on Saturday, August 6, from 1 PM-5 PM, in the parking lot of NIHHC's Elkhart office (444 N. Nappanee St.). Families can be sure they are ready to go back to school by getting up to date on COVID-19 vaccination.

With support from the CDC Foundation, the Indiana Department of Health, and REAL Services, NIHHC's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, ***Unite Against COVID-19***, reaches the community by partnering with trusted influencers and messengers, leaders, health care providers, and community organizations and agencies.

*The Northern Indiana Hispanic Health Coalition's mission is to provide preventative health care programs to the communities of Elkhart, Kosciusko, Noble, and Marshall counties through education, advocacy, physician referral, and research, so that they may lead healthier lifestyles.*

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If you would like more information on NIHHC's activities and programs, please call NIHHC at 574-522-0966 or toll free at 1-877-21-SALUD, or visit our website at [www.nihhc.com](http://www.nihhc.com). If you have questions regarding COVID-19, please call NIHHC's bilingual COVID-19 hotline at 574-206-3938. Visit NIHHC's Facebook page for up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, and don't miss NIHHC's Pills of Knowledge video segments with healthcare professionals, broadcasted every Tuesday, 5-6 PM, on Facebook Live. **#UniteAgainstCOVID-19!**