

**February 25, 2021**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL HOSTS INFORMATION SESSION TO OVERCOME COVID-19 VACCINE HESITANCY**

***Raoul Partners with Medical Experts to Address Issues Contributing to Skepticism of Vaccine***

**Chicago** —Attorney General Kwame Raoul today joined Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike and representatives from Pfizer to address issues and questions contributing to vaccine hesitancy, particularly in Black and minority communities. Attorney General Raoul hosted “The COVID-19 Vaccine and You: Overcoming Vaccine Hesitancy,” a free Black History Month webinar to overcome vaccine hesitancy in Black and minority communities.

Raoul and National Association of Black Journalists President Dorothy Tucker moderated the panel of health care experts that included Dr. Ngozi Ezike and senior officials from Pfizer. The speakers addressed commonly-asked vaccine questions, such as how the vaccine was developed, who should be vaccinated and the possible side effects. Attorney General Raoul convened the panel in an effort to address hesitation and skepticism surrounding the vaccine and reassure residents that providers and public health leaders are working to ensure safe and equitable vaccine distribution. Raoul encourages residents to consult a health care professional with questions about eligibility for the vaccine.

“There are legitimate reasons for people to distrust the health care system: from the infamous Tuskegee experiment and the story of Henrietta Lacks, to people being dismissed when they describe symptoms to medical professionals,” Raoul said. “Shaming those individuals does not help us overcome vaccine hesitancy, which is why I convened this panel of experts. Providing information that comes from trusted sources is how we are going to address skepticism in Black communities, communities of color and other underserved populations, and ensure that all Illinois residents seek the vaccine when they are eligible.”

The vaccine’s distribution is being overseen by Illinois public health officials, and today Gov. JB Pritzker launched Phase 1B+, which includes people age 16 and older with disabilities or underlying conditions who are not otherwise covered by previous eligibility categories, in accordance with CDC guidelines. More than 2.3 million doses have been delivered so far.

Attorney General Raoul also is reminding residents that they will be able to receive the vaccine only through a designated health clinic. No one can pay to put their names on a distribution list or purchase early access to the vaccine. People should also be aware that Medicare or Medicaid will not call seniors or residents to proactively offer the COVID-19 vaccine. Residents should consult their health care providers or local health departments for guidance in determining when the vaccine will be available to them.

Today’s information session as well as additional materials and data are available free of charge on the [Illinois Attorney General’s website](#) and on the [Illinois Department of Public Health’s website](#). Individuals who have questions or need to report a scam related to the COVID-19 vaccine should call the Attorney General’s Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-386-5438 (Chicago), 1-800-243-0618 (Springfield), or 1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale), or file an online complaint.