FEMA Mobile Vaccination Unit Supports COVID Testing and Vaccinations in Philadelphia

Release Date: January 21, 2022

PHILADELPHIA – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently deployed staff and a Mobile Vaccination Unit, a self-contained vaccination center on wheels, and staff to support the City of Philadelphia's pandemic fight.

These FEMA resources will support mobile vaccinations in hard-hit communities throughout the city and a central vaccination location in partnership with Philadelphia's Black Doctor's Consortium (BDC) through mid-February. Over the past year, BDC's mobile COVID-19 testing and vaccination operation have broken down many barriers supporting tests and vaccinations for thousands of Philadelphians throughout many historically unreserved communities.

FEMA clinical and administrative staff will support BDC's efforts out of their Ala Stanford Center for Health Equity (ASHE Center) in North Philadelphia. The ASHE Center provides an array of primary and pediatric care, along with COVID-19 testing and vaccines since its opening in October 2021. Additionally, FEMA staff and the Mobile Vaccination Unit will support BDC's partnership with the Philadelphia School District, providing mobile vaccination capabilities at school facilities throughout the city.

"FEMA has worked with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, as well as the Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management and Philadelphia Department of Public Health from the beginning of the pandemic. We continue to support the Commonwealth and City on this vital mission through a unique, community focused partnership to assist with equitable vaccine delivery," said FEMA Region 3 Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney. "FEMA understands the disproportionate impact that disasters, like the pandemic, have on many communities. The added staff and logistics capabilities this federal support brings to Philadelphia will expand access to vaccination and testing in some of the city's

hardest hit areas."

The mobile vaccination sites will be able to provide up to several hundred vaccinations per day, with both Black Doctor's Consortium and FEMA contracted clinical staff delivering shots in arms. FEMA non-clinical staff, supporting the operations administrative needs and logistics, will free up BDC's medical personnel to focus more efforts on clinical roles.

This operation kicked off on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a *day on* for the FEMA staff supporting this mission. FEMA staff supported BDC's COVID-19 testing and vaccinations at the ASHE Center, as well as testing at the Greater Philadelphia MLK Day event at Girard College. Black Doctor's Consortium clinical staff were able to provide hundreds of COVID-19 tests at both events with the enhanced capabilities provided by the addition of federal staff.

"Black Doctor's Consortium has always gone to areas where people live, work, worship and play. With children, you go to school, which is why we partnered with the School District of Philadelphia," said Dr. Ala Stanford, BDC's founder and CEO. "Our children are significantly impacted by the virus at higher rates than previously seen during the pandemic. For the first time since the pandemic started, we've seen more children hospitalized and becoming seriously ill from COVID. By educating our students and families, we are helping them to make informed decisions, working to keep our children safe, and ensuring that schools can safely stay open for in-person learning."

"For the last year, FEMA has been a key partner in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Health Commissioner Dr. Cheryl Bettigole. "This mobile vaccine unit is more evidence that the power of private, local, and federal partnerships can address critical needs in under-resourced areas. We welcome FEMA's support and look forward to continued efforts to fight the pandemic."

Previous FEMA support to the pandemic fight in Philadelphia was resoundingly successful. Between March and June of 2021, FEMA supported two large scale community vaccination centers in Philadelphia, accounting for more than 350,000 vaccinations and nearly a quarter of all vaccinations given in the city during that time. In addition to directly supporting shots in arms, FEMA supported the City of Philadelphia with extensive outreach efforts in vulnerable communities, including deploying street teams to canvass local commercial corridors and community

centers, speaking engagements and trusted messenger tours with community and faith-based organizations, partnering with disability advocacy organizations and health care providers, and partnering with public transit agencies to mitigate transportation barriers to vaccine accessibility.

This most recent deployment to Philadelphia is in addition to a federally supported COVID-19 testing site located at the Cibotti Recreation Center in Southwest Philadelphia. The site is operated by a testing contractor coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control's Increasing Community Access to Testing (ICATT) program and can administer more than 500 tests per day in support of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's city-wide testing operation.

Earlier in January, FEMA responded to a request from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the deployment of federal medical assistance teams, comprised of Department of Defense medical providers, to add medical staff capabilities to key regional hospital systems.

For more information on BDC's testing and vaccination schedules, visit: www.bdccares.com

For more information on the City of Philadelphia's COVID-19 vaccination and testing efforts, including the federally supported testing site, visit: www.phila.gov/covid

A FEMA Mobile Vaccination Units arrived in Philadelphia on January 15th. These self-contained vaccination centers can be set up anywhere in support of local partners. The Philadelphia MVU will bring vaccination capabilities closer to the communities and people that need them, reducing some of the barriers to vaccinations.

FEMA Corps Staff prepare COVID-19 Testing Stations at the Greater Philadelphia MLK Day of Service Event on January 17th, 2022 at Girard College.

Black Doctor's Consortium Founder and CEO Dr. Ala Stanford delivers a morning briefing to BDC's clinical staff, FEMA staff and volunteers at the Greater Philadelphia MLK Day of Service at Girard College on January 17th, 2022 at Girard College.