

The Hmong Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Hmong Institute hosts COVID-19 vaccination clinic for Hmong and Southeast Asian elders

MADISON, WI—The Hmong Institute is partnering with Benevolent Specialists Project (BSP), a free clinic, to provide free COVID-19 vaccine to Hmong and Southeast Asian adults 65 and over on **Tuesday, March 9, 2021 from 9:30-noon** at the Life Center, 4402 Femrite Drive, Madison.

The pandemic has highlighted the health disparities and inequalities that exist with administration of the vaccine. There is an urgent need to ensure that our elders have access to the vaccine and the community is educated with accurate information about the vaccine. Peng Her, CEO of The Hmong Institute said, “We heard from many elders in the Hmong and Southeast Asian community that they do not have access to MyChart, do not know how to use the internet, and cannot call to set up vaccine appointments due to language barriers. Elders keep asking us when will they get their vaccine shot?”

The elders’ inability to get vaccine shots due to culture and language barriers and the underlying health conditions of the elders put them at a disadvantage and at greater health risk if they contract COVID-19. Additionally, there has been numerous misinformation through social media about the vaccine and about COVID-19. One misconception is that people with COVID-19 are at the hospitals, which any Hmong elders have expressed they will not get the vaccine shot at the hospital to avoid catching COVID-19.

Benevolent Specialists Project (BSP) is a free clinic who provides specialty care to uninsured, low-income patients referred by clinicians in South-Central Wisconsin. BSP is unique because it is an all-volunteer charitable clinic made up of over 16 medical specialties. Dr. Tim Docter, Medical Director of Benevolent Specialists Project states, “Concerned that our patient population may be uncomfortable with or not have access to getting vaccinated due to transportation and/or communication restraints, we decided to become a mobile vaccination team working in conjunction with Dane County Public Health and The Hmong Institute.”

By being a vaccine site, The Hmong Institute is making the vaccine accessible to more Hmong and Southeast Asian community members because they are getting the vaccine in a location that is familiar, trusted, and have bilingual staff and Hmong nurses. Hmong nurses from the Hmong Nurses Association will be available to answer questions or concerns elders may have. Most importantly, skeptical elders hearing and/or seeing other elders and people from their community getting vaccinated and getting accurate information about the safety of the vaccines will help them overcome their vaccination fear. In addition to the vaccine clinic, The Hmong Institute has created a COVID-19 Hotline and is working with Madison Dane County Public Health to get accurate information about the vaccine to the Hmong and Southeast community.

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