

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAMBRIA/SOMERSET COVID TASK FORCE LEADS TO REGIONAL CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

JOHNSTOWN, PA – In an effort to coordinate Covid-19 vaccination roll-out across Cambria and Somerset Counties, representatives from various sectors have come together to form the Cambria/Somerset Covid-19 Task Force. **As a result of the Task Force, Richland Family Health Center (RFHC) and the Johnstown Housing Authority (JHA) have partnered to vaccinate residents of Vine Street Tower, Connor Tower and Town House Tower this Saturday, March 13th.** Approximately 500 residents, all of which are elderly or disabled, will have the opportunity to receive the Covid-19 vaccination from RFHC free of charge. Residents will be vaccinated in Tower community rooms.

“Richland Family Health Center is excited to get shots into the arms of the individuals of Johnstown. We are here to serve the community, and provide (Patients First) medical care to everyone,” said William Kurtycz, CEO of Richland Family Health Center. “We are honored to be a member of the Cambria/Somerset Covid-19 Task Force and would like to offer a special thanks to JHA, UPJ Nursing, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health and 1889 Foundation. The synergies of this dynamic group are a true testament to what community health care is all about. Teamwork Makes The Dream Work!”

Both RFHC and JHA will continue to work in partnership to expand vaccination opportunities to the other public housing communities.

“This is an amazing opportunity for our residents and is a direct result of joining the Covid Task Force,” said Mike Alberts, Acting Executive Director of Johnstown Housing Authority. “The community organizations involved are committed to working together and I am truly thankful for being connected with Bill Kurtycz, Jeannine McMillan, their staffs and the other task force members. While the shared goal is for everyone to eventually receive the vaccine, I am glad we are able to assist families in these specific communities first.”

Cambria/Somerset Covid Task Force members include vaccine providers, Cambria County Dpt of Emergency Services, Somerset County Department of Emergency Services, county/state/federal representatives, social service agency representatives, and grassroots organizations. Members are actively coordinating vaccination efforts, especially efforts to reach the most at-risk and vulnerable residents in both counties. Topics addressed by the task force include vaccine scheduling, mass vaccination site logistics, public communications, vaccine education, and more.

“It’s been inspiring to see so many individuals from various agencies coming together to address this public health crisis. The Covid Task Force members are committed to working collaboratively with the common goal of providing community education and increasing vaccinations,” said Jeannine McMillan, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health.

Vaccine providers on the Task Force, such as Highlands Health, Mainline Pharmacy, Conemaugh Health System, and Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center at Windber, announced several other clinics are being held over the coming days and weeks.

The Task Force is currently compiling print material of all regional vaccine providers’ phone numbers and websites to make it easier for community members lacking internet access to find vaccine opportunities. These materials will be widely distributed and made available to community members, community-based organizations and media partners. Online Covid resources can be found on the In this Together Cambria website: www.inthistogethercambria.com.

The task force began meeting on Feb. 16th and will continue convening weekly via Zoom on Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. Any individuals involved with vaccine coordination, planning, or communications can attend. For more information about the task force, contact Jeannine McMillan, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health at jeannine.mcmillan@jefferson.edu or call at 814-535-5156.

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About Richland Family Health Center

The mission of the [Richland Family Health Center](#) is to promote health and wellness to our patient population by providing patient centered care that promotes engagement between the patient and the provider, leading to positive health care outcomes. We provide primary care, woman’s health, family planning, and well child services. We are a true family health center!

About the Johnstown Housing Authority

The [Johnstown Housing Authority](#) provides housing to eligible low or very low income families and individuals. Residents pay rent based on income, rather than on the size or type of accommodation. The Johnstown Housing Authority has eleven complexes, scattered throughout Cambria County, seven with 983 apartments, which are designed for low income families and individuals. There are four complexes that are designed for the elderly, disabled or handicapped. They consist of 521 low income apartments.

About 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health

The [1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health](#) was founded as a collaborative research and resource center focused on population health and disease prevention to benefit the citizens living in Cambria and Somerset Counties. The Center’s work focuses on identifying key contributing factors to poor health in the region and developing proactive and responsive strategies to address them. The Center is the first of its kind established in a small rural community rather than a large metropolitan area. It is envisioned that the work of the Center will provide a national model of how population health interventions can work in rural communities.