



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 16, 2020

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**Fair Cares Wellness Drive to be hosted at EXPO New Mexico**

*Outreach event includes drive-thru food distribution, flu shots, census assistance, and a blood drive for the community*

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Officials with the New Mexico State Fair, Calvary Church, Albertson's Pharmacy, the 2020 Census, and Vitalant Blood Services announced a partnership for the first-ever Fair Cares Wellness Drive today. The event will be part of the fair's 2020 Virtual State Fair celebration.

The event will take place at EXPO New Mexico on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. and is free to the public. The Fair Cares Wellness Drive will provide contactless delivery of grocery boxes, and FREE (with insurance card) flu shots using the drive-thru model New Mexicans have become accustomed to during the pandemic. Vitalant Blood Services will also be prepared to collect blood donations by appointment inside the Flower Arts Building on the fairgrounds. Volunteers with the 2020 Census will also be on-hand to assist individuals in filling out the census online.

"This pandemic has really taken a toll on New Mexico's families and we want folks to know that we're thinking about them and we're here to help," stated New Mexico State Fair General Manager, Dan Mourning. "The Fair Cares Wellness Drive's purpose is to deliver precious resources and services to our community in a safe and impactful way during these unprecedented times."

Volunteers with Calvary Church, in collaboration with Convoy of Hope, will distribute food at ten stations that will be setup along Main Street. Calvary staff estimates 1,500 – 1,600 free food boxes will be available and limited to one box per car while supplies lasts. Boxes will include pantry staples, some fresh fruits and vegetables, toiletries, and non-perishable food items.

Two thousand flu shots will also be administered by volunteers with Albertson's Pharmacy and from UNM College of Pharmacy. New Mexicans seeking flu shots will be directed to an area set up under the State Fair Pavilion tent located in the middle of the fairgrounds. Flu shots are FREE with presentation of an insurance card. Medicaid and Medicare recipients are also eligible to receive a \$0 copay flu shot at the event. The New Mexico Department of Health recommends getting a flu shot in 2020 to protect yourself and your family from getting severely ill. A flu vaccine this year can also help reduce the burden on healthcare workers and facilities responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and save medical resources for care of COVID-19 patients.

The deadline for New Mexicans to fill out the 2020 Census is September 30, 2020 and volunteers will be present at the event to assist residents who have not filled out their census information. The census is one of the best ways to ensure New Mexico communities are treated fairly in the distribution of public goods and services, and ensure they are equally represented. An accurate count of New Mexico's citizens is critical in determining the distribution of federal dollars for schools, health care, housing, roads, and more.

The pandemic has also affected blood donations in New Mexico. Vitalant Blood Services reported a 45% drop in blood donations in 2020, and across New Mexico hospitals are in critical need of blood supplies. Individuals looking to donate blood are encouraged to make an appointment before attending. Temperature checks will be performed before entering the collection site and masks are required. All blood collection stations will be placed at least six feet apart. Vitalant follows COVID safe practices recommended by the CDC, FDA, State of New Mexico, and other regulatory agencies. Visit [www.Vitalant.org](http://www.Vitalant.org) or call 505-246-1457 to make an appointment.

For more information on this one-of-kind community outreach event please visit [www.exponm.com](http://www.exponm.com).

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