From: Chambers, Blair
To: Chambers, Blair
Subject: United Way and Lyft Launch RIDE UNITED NC to Help Get Underserved Communities to COVID-19 Vaccinations Statewide
Date: Monday, March 29, 2021 3:19:47 PM

Dear Transit Partners,

The Ride United NC program, funded primarily through private contributions, will provide free Lyft rides statewide for trips to/from vaccine appointments starting in mid-April 2021. NCDOT has been involved in program development on a limited basis and will be announced as a program partner. The press release and other communications about Ride United NC will clarify that this program is supplemental to the great work NC transit agencies are already doing to enhance access to the vaccine.

There are two ways that eligible individuals will be able to access transportation to coronavirus vaccines through Ride United NC, beginning in early-April:

1. Through local nonprofits: United Ways across North Carolina will work with local community-based organizations to identify nonprofits that serve communities of color, seniors, and the underinsured. These organizations will help educate individuals about the vaccination process and provide ride codes that can be used to access transportation to already scheduled appointments.
2. Through a dedicated call center: Dedicated call specialists will be able to schedule roundtrip transportation for individuals without access to or understanding of Lyft's rideshare technology, those without bank accounts, and seniors. All individuals must still have pre-scheduled coronavirus vaccine appointments to be eligible for a ride.

IMD will provide further detail on collaborative opportunities with systems and details as the Ride United NC program launches. Please consider this program as a potential supplemental resource to help your customers in the event you are not able to meet increasing demand in later phases of the vaccine rollout. We will provide additional information, including a central call center number, once it is announced for the project.

The official press release is below.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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United Way of the Greater Triangle and Lyft Launch RIDE UNITED NC to Help Get Underserved Communities to COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Statewide

Campaign is now open for donations to support 100,000 rides for communities of color, seniors, and uninsured individuals across the state's 100 counties.

Durham, NC — March 29, 2021 — United Way of the Greater Triangle, in partnership with Lyft, announced today the launch of RIDE UNITED NC, a statewide campaign designed to remove transportation barriers for low-income North Carolina residents who are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The campaign has a goal of providing access to 100,000 roundtrip rides across all 100 North Carolina counties and is currently accepting donations to support efforts.

The launch of RIDE UNITED NC is made possible by initial investments totaling more than $400,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC), Coastal Credit Union, and Duke Energy along with initial coordination support from North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). This program builds on the longstanding relationship between United Way and Lyft, and this extension is part of Lyft's Vaccine Access Program, which is designed to provide support to individuals in need in select cities.

"Everyone needs access to the vaccine if we are going to end this pandemic. That's especially true for communities of color, seniors, uninsured individuals, and other vulnerable populations that are facing greater impacts from COVID-19," said Eric Guckian, United Way of the Greater Triangle's President and CEO. "RIDE UNITED NC is literally the opportunity to work in partnership with our community to save lives. United Way of the Greater Triangle is so proud to join Blue Cross NC and many other partners to ensure that thousands of North Carolinians can access the vaccine through a reliable and simple Lyft ride. We're honored and humbled for the opportunity to continue to rise up as we continue to respond and recover from this crisis."

Beginning in mid-April, RIDE UNITED NC will connect eligible individuals who already have a vaccine appointment to roundtrip transportation credits through local nonprofits and a dedicated call center. These resources will help educate individuals about the science behind the COVID-19 vaccine and support individuals experiencing a range of barriers including lack of access to the Lyft App, bank accounts, and more.

"Now more than ever, we need to think differently about the health care needs of our underserved communities," said Cheryl Parquet, Director of Community Engagement and Marketing Activation at Blue Cross NC. "And that means meeting them where they are and eliminating barriers to care, like transportation."

For more information, or to learn how to contribute, go to www.unitedwaytriangle.org/rideunitednc.

About United Way of the Greater Triangle:
United Way of the Greater Triangle's mission is to eradicate poverty and increase social mobility through the power of partnerships, with support provided across four counties: Durham, Johnston, Orange, and Wake, NC. Through three impact focus areas – Cradle to Career, Healthy Families, and Equity in Leadership – United Way supports 85 nonprofit organizations doing the on-the-ground work needed to break the cycle of poverty. To learn more, visit www.unitedwaytriangle.org.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina:
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC) is committed to making health care better, simpler and more affordable. We have been driving better health in North Carolina for generations, working to tackle our communities' greatest health challenges. We serve our customers and communities of more than 3.8 million members, including approximately 1.1 million served on behalf of other Blue Plans. Blue Cross NC is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Visit Blue Cross NC online at www.bluecrossnc.com. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

About Lyft:
Lyft was founded in 2012 and is one of the largest transportation networks in the United States and Canada. As the world shifts away from car ownership to transportation-as-a-service, Lyft is at the forefront of this massive societal change. Our transportation network brings together rideshare, bikes, scooters, car rentals and transit all in one app. We are singularly driven by our mission: to improve people's lives with the world's best transportation.

About North Carolina Department of Transportation:
As part of its mission, the N.C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT) provides funding and technical assistance to transit agencies statewide to ensure residents have access to opportunities and services, including the vaccine. Earlier this year, NCDOT and the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services distributed $2.5 million in federal Coronavirus Relief Funding to transit agencies in every county to help pay for rides to vaccination sites. So far transit systems have provided more than 5,000 trips to vaccination sites covering over 35,000 miles. The RIDE UNITED NC initiative is a supplemental part of this larger effort led by NCDOT and NCDHHS. For its part, NCDOT will be ensuring transit agencies are familiar with RIDE UNITED NC as a way to supplement their existing services and ensure residents with transportation challenges can get to their vaccine appointments. For more information on the state-led effort, go to: https://bit.ly/39byIkT.

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