



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin, Bellin Health, and Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics Partner to Host Sensory Friendly Vaccine Clinic in De Pere

The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin, Bellin Health, and Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics are partnering to host a sensory friendly vaccine clinic for individuals five and older and their families.

The clinic will be Friday, March 18th from noon to 4 p.m. at Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics, 2073 Lawrence Drive, De Pere WI. The follow up clinic for the second dose will be Friday, April 8th from noon to 4 p.m. at the same location.

Pfizer vaccines will be available for those getting their first COVID-19 vaccine. Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson booster shots will be available for those 12 and older.

“Getting a vaccine can be challenging for anyone, and can be even more challenging for those with Autism and other disabilities,” said Sherry LaFond, Primary Care Business Operations Team Leader for Bellin Health. “The purpose of this event is to reduce stress and remove barriers to vaccination for those with Autism or anyone else who wants to get vaccinated but is challenged by the typical vaccination setting.”

Private rooms and other supports will be available to facilitate a positive, calm, and supportive environment for all. Participants can expect a lower sensory environment, sensory fidgets and distraction strategies, and other individualized accommodations can be made as needed. Three areas will be available for observation post-vaccine: a sensory gym, playroom, and lounge area.

“Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics is thrilled to offer our clinic as the location for this event,” says Kirsten Masrelian, CEO/Clinical Director of Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics. “Our staff is trained to support autistic individuals and we welcome the opportunity to use our expertise to support the Autism community through the vaccination process.”

Clinic staff and volunteers are committed to flexibility, patience, and support throughout the vaccination process. Prior to the vaccination appointment, a social narrative will be available to help prepare participants for vaccination. Participants will have the opportunity to share more about past vaccine experiences, specific vaccine challenges, and ideas for modifying the experience to meet their needs after scheduling an appointment.

“The Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin recognizes this partnership as a unique opportunity to create connections between individuals, families, and their local healthcare systems while empowering individuals to advocate for their needs, and equipping providers with the tools needed to meet the needs of the Autism community,” says Kirsten Cooper, executive director of the Autism Society of Greater Wisconsin. “The Autism Society is grateful to Bellin and Milestones Behavioral Pediatrics for their partnership to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines.”

There is no cost to participants for the vaccine. If you have insurance, an administrative fee will be billed to your insurance. Please bring your insurance card with you.

Schedule an appointment by calling Bellin at 920-445-7313 and asking to schedule an appointment at Milestones clinic in De Pere. Scheduling is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.