

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pitt County Over-the-Counter Medicine Giveaway, Being Held This Weekend for the First Time in Bethel, Includes New Mobile Grocery Store

Bethel – This year, not just the medicines are free, but so are fruits and vegetables, and many other grocery items as well.

The Pitt County Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicine Giveaway, being held from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday at the Bethel Youth Community Center, 7449 Main St., Bethel, will include a new feature, a mobile grocery store offering fresh local produce, as well as a variety of other food items.

The OTC giveaway itself provides participating members of the public with such health products as cold/flu/allergy medicines, pain relievers, indigestion aids, vitamins and some smaller first-aid items. This **free** event, to be held rain or shine, will be primarily **drive-thru**; no identification, nor income or residency requirements, are needed to participate.

Volunteers will hand pre-registered participants their requested orders through their car windows – or, for as long as supplies last, individuals 18 and older who are **not** pre-registered can receive a pre-packed bag with about eight OTC items. Pre-registration is now closed.

New to the giveaway this year, however, is the mobile grocery store, a small, temporary **walk-up** grocery providing a selection of **free** locally sourced produce, plus a variety of regular grocery food items as well.

“Bethel no longer has its own grocery store, to bring the community, among other things, a larger selection of fresh fruits and vegetables,” explained Shantell Cheek, Director of Access East Uninsured Programs, which includes HealthAssist.

The mobile grocery is a partnership with the Rev. Richard Joyner’s Edgecombe County-based Conetoe Family Life Center, which donated produce from its 25-acre sustainable fruit-and-vegetable farm, and with Beast Philanthropy of Greenville, which operates a sizeable food pantry with a mobile food-distribution network.

The OTC event, while generally held annually in Pitt County, is for the first time being held in Bethel.

“We picked Bethel for this year because HealthAssist had just done some outreach work there, and it’s just a good fit,” Cheek noted. “Some of the more rural communities, and communities on the outskirts, can get overlooked for assistance.

“We’re just trying to bring some health equity, and make sure that we’re taking care of our own,” Cheek continued, “There’s a great need to meet people where they are.”

The OTC Medicine Giveaway is a recurring collaboration between NC MedAssist, a statewide nonprofit pharmacy providing free prescription medicines to low-income, uninsured North Carolinians, and HealthAssist, which helps meet the medical needs of qualifying uninsured and underinsured residents of Beaufort, Greene, Edgecombe, Hertford, Martin and Pitt counties. HealthAssist is part of Greenville-based nonprofit Access East, Inc. (www.accesseast.org), an ECU Health affiliate coordinating patient-focused, provider-driven health care for the Medicaid and uninsured populations across most of eastern N.C.



WHAT: Free Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicine

Giveaway and Mobile Grocery Store

WHERE: Bethel Youth Community Center, 7449 Main St., Bethel

WHEN: Saturday, June 25, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

COST: Free, for all adult individuals, and families; OTC items available only as supplies last.

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