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Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Justice Department Secures Agreement with Hy-Vee Supermarket Chain to Make Online COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Accessible for People with Disabilities

The Justice Department today announced that it has secured a settlement agreement with Hy-Vee Inc. that will help people with disabilities get information about COVID-19 vaccinations and book their vaccination appointments online. The Hy-Vee supermarket chain has more than 280 stores in Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Today's resolution is the department's second agreement on this critical issue, following a November 2021 announcement of its settlement with Rite Aid Corporation.

Hy-Vee's COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Portal, currently located at www.hy-vee.com/my-pharmacy/covid-vaccine, was not accessible to some people with disabilities, including those who use screen reader software and those who have a hard time using a mouse. For instance, people who used screen readers would not hear the questions on the medical screening forms, and people who used the tab key instead of a mouse could not select available appointment times.

"Individuals with disabilities must be able to get potentially lifesaving healthcare like COVID-19 vaccines on equal terms, without sacrificing their privacy or independence," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "Ensuring that people with disabilities can schedule COVID-19 vaccination appointments the same way that people without disabilities can is not only a public health necessity, but a key civil rights issue under the Americans with Disabilities Act."

Under today's settlement, Hy-Vee will make content about the COVID-19 vaccine, including the forms for scheduling an appointment to get the vaccine, conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), Version 2.1, Level AA. WCAG is a set of voluntary industry guidelines for making information on a website accessible to users with disabilities. Hy-Vee also must regularly test the pages of its website about vaccine scheduling and information and quickly fix any problems that keep people with disabilities from being able to use these pages.

This matter was handled jointly by the Disability Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Iowa. Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public accommodations like drugstores and grocery stores to provide individuals with disabilities with full and equal enjoyment of goods and services, such as vaccines. The ADA also requires public accommodations to ensure effective communication with people with disabilities, including by using auxiliary aids and services like accessible technology.

For more information on the Civil Rights Division, please visit www.justice.gov/crt. For more information on the ADA, please call the department's toll-free ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301 (TDD 800-514-0383) or visit www.ada.gov. ADA complaints may be filed online at www.ada.gov/complaint.

Topic(s):

Coronavirus

Civil Rights

Disability Rights

Component(s):

Civil Rights Division

Civil Rights - Disability Rights Section

Press Release Number:

21-1184

Updated December 1, 2021