

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black Car Fund and Independent Drivers Guild Hand Out 3,000+ Test Kits to For-Hire Drivers

Partnered with Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Drivers Benefits + 360 Health Services as Omicron variant continues to spread

On Wednesday, the Black Car Fund and Independent Drivers Guild handed out more than 3,000 at-home test kits to for-hire drivers at LaGuardia. The Black Car Fund and Independent Drivers Guild have partnered with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Drivers Benefits and 360 Health Services to deliver kits, ensuring the safety of drivers and passengers as the Omicron variant of COVID-19 persists in New York.

As the highly contagious Omicron variant continues to spread, at-home COVID-19 tests have become difficult to find and prohibitively expensive in some cases, [with major retailers like Walmart and Krogers recently raising prices on the least expensive tests](#). The federal government rolled out a program for individuals to order four free at-home test kits last week, but those kits will take several weeks to arrive, [and the program initially received criticism for failing to recognize individuals in apartment or dormitory buildings, with roommates, or other non-solitary living situations](#). The need for testing is urgent as the region continues to combat the Omicron variant, which is why the Black Car Fund, Independent Drivers' Guild and others teamed up to fill the gap in access.

In the early days of COVID-19, the Black Car Fund and the Independent Drivers Guild distributed over 20,000 PPE kits to drivers, which included masks, gloves and hand sanitizer at a cost of over \$175,000. The Fund is also distributing plastic vaccination card protectors to drivers. The Black Car Fund also offers Safe Driving programs, First Responder training, AMBER Alert response, workers' compensation insurance and a driver death benefit of a \$50,000 payment for the family in case a driver passes away while on the job.

The Fund has continued to deliver all these benefits and advocate for all drivers [despite for-hire-vehicle trips dropping 28 percent since the beginning of the pandemic](#).

For registered members, the Black Car Fund also offers expanded additional health related benefits which includes, telemedicine coverage, vision coverage, dental insurance, prescription, urgent care and diagnostic imaging discounts – at no cost to the driver through its Drivers Benefits program. The Fund encouraged drivers to sign up for benefits at the distribution event. **Any drivers who are [interested can sign up here](#).**

“Driving-for-hire requires a supportive workforce model, and we want our members and their families to know that they are protected. I’m so glad to be joined by the Independent Drivers’ Guild, the Port Authority, Drivers Benefits and 360 Health Services in this effort to keep drivers and passengers safe through the Omicron wave of COVID-19. Every driver should know about the benefits available to them through the Fund and

that it is completely free to join,” **said Ira Goldstein, the Executive Director of The Black Car Fund.**

“The Black Car Fund has worked tirelessly through the pandemic to ensure the safety of drivers, their families and passengers. As the Omicron variant continues to spread, we’re glad to partner with Independent Drivers’ Guild, the Port Authority, Drivers Benefits and 360 Health Services in our efforts to promote health and safety as we New York comes back to life,” **said Berj Haroutunian, Executive Chairman of The Black Car Fund.**

“Uber and Lyft drivers are frontline workers who keep our cities moving and they need easy access to regular Covid testing for the protection of themselves, their families and our communities. A single ride-hail driver can transport more than a dozen riders per day. Providing free Covid tests is another way we can help support working drivers while also protecting our communities. In times like these, it is important to have strong partners, and we are grateful to the Black Car Fund and the Port Authority for being those partners,” **said IDG Executive Director Brendan Sexton.**

"It's been hard to find test kits so this is a real help. The last thing I want to do is bring the virus home to my family," **said IDG member and Lyft driver Chris Constipoulus.**

"It's a privilege to partner with The Black Car Fund and IDG as they supply COVID-19 home test kits to hard-working rideshare and Black Car drivers," **said Nicholas Pape, CEO of medical supplies company [360 Health Services](#).** "We delivered thousands of test kits to New York City earlier this week, and have seen first-hand the incredible dedication of both organizations to get them distributed quickly as part of a coordinated effort to protect the health of the public and their drivers."

About the Black Car Fund

The Black Car Fund is a non-profit organization created by New York State to protect New York's for-hire drivers and their passengers — so that every ride is a safe ride. Black car drivers are independent contractors who enjoy workers' compensation coverage and additional health and wellness related benefits through The Black Car Fund. The Fund also pays drivers to attend wellness seminars and safety trainings to meet the highest professional standards, serving as a model in the new “gig economy.” The Fund has approximately 300 member bases throughout New York State, covering 100,000+ affiliated drivers.

About Independent Drivers Guild

The Independent Drivers Guild is the nation's largest rideshare driver advocacy group, representing and advocating for more than 250,000 app-based drivers, including more than 100,000 in New York State alone. The Guild has organized to win landmark victories for drivers since its launch in 2016, including a pay raise and the nation's first minimum wage for app-based drivers, free benefits, and requiring Uber to have a tipping option in the app. The IDG is a non-profit worker center affiliated with the Machinists Union.