Opportunities for States to Drive Equitable Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine

Manatt Health and Health Equity Solutions
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www.shvs.org
About State Health and Value Strategies

State Health and Value Strategies (SHVS) assists states in their efforts to transform health and health care by providing targeted technical assistance to state officials and agencies. The program is a grantee of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, led by staff at Princeton University’s School of Public and International Affairs. The program connects states with experts and peers to undertake health care transformation initiatives. By engaging state officials, the program provides lessons learned, highlights successful strategies, and brings together states with experts in the field. Learn more at www.shvs.org.

Questions? Email Heather Howard at heatherh@Princeton.edu.

Support for this webinar was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.
Housekeeping Details

All participant lines are muted. If at any time you would like to submit a question, please use the Q&A box at the bottom right of your screen.

After the webinar, the slides and a recording will be available at www.shvs.org.
COVID-19 Resources for States

State Health and Value Strategies has created an accessible one-stop source of COVID-19 information for states at www.shvs.org/covid19/. The webpage was originally designed to support states seeking to make coverage and essential services available to all of their residents, especially high-risk and vulnerable people, during the COVID-19 pandemic. As we transition to a new phase, this continues to be a good resource for states as they focus on vaccinations and recovery.
About Manatt Health

Manatt Health, a division of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, is an integrated legal and consulting practice with over 160 professionals in nine locations across the country. Manatt Health supports states, providers, and insurers with understanding and navigating the complex and rapidly evolving health care policy and regulatory landscape. Manatt Health brings deep subject matter expertise to its clients, helping them expand coverage, increase access, and create new ways of organizing, paying for, and delivering care. For more information, visit www.manatt.com/ManattHealth.aspx
About Health Equity Solutions

Health Equity Solutions (HES) promotes policies, programs and practices that result in equitable health care access, delivery and outcomes for all people. HES works with State Health and Value Strategies (SHVS) to guide the program’s health equity work generally while also providing targeted technical assistance to states. In partnership with state health officials and consumers, HES initiates and catalyzes policy programs and practices that advance and sustain health equity. HES is based in Hartford, Connecticut and focuses its work outside of the support it provides to SHVS on achieving health equity in Connecticut.
Agenda

- Introduction
- Background and Key Barriers to Equitable Vaccine Distribution and Administration
- Opportunities for States to Drive Equitable Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine
- Looking Ahead
- Questions
Introduction
Introduction

Equity in COVID-19 Vaccines: Emerging Lessons from the Front Lines (April 2021)

Strategies for States to Leverage Local Partnerships for Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccinations (June 2021)

Strategies for States to Drive Equitable Vaccine Distribution and Administration (August 2021)
Barriers to Equitable Vaccine Distribution and Administration
COVID-19 Vaccine Rates and Disparities

Since December 2020, the United States has administered more than 350 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, with 167 million people or 50% of the population completing a full vaccine series. However, disparities in vaccination rates for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) persist.

- Across 40 states with available data, the percent of White people who have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose was roughly 1.3 times higher than the rate for Black people and 1.2 times higher than the rate for Latino(a) people as of late July 2021.
- Less than half of Black and Hispanic people have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose in nearly all states reporting data.
- But gaps in vaccination rates for Black and Latino(a) people are beginning to close at the national level.

Percent of Total Population that Has Received at Least One COVID-19 Vaccine Dose by Race/Ethnicity, March 1 to July 19, 2021

Sources: Kaiser Family Foundation, Latest Data on COVID-19 Vaccinations Race/Ethnicity.
CDC, COVID Data Tracker, August 2021.
States Face an Imperative to Address Inequities in Vaccine Distribution

COVID-19 variants are driving new outbreaks in communities with low vaccination rates, including communities of color, which often have populations at higher risk of severe health outcomes from COVID-19 due to underlying health status.

High vulnerability, high vaccination rate

Northeastern states have low vulnerability scores and high vaccination rates

While many Southern states are highly vulnerable with low vaccination rates

Source: Axios, States Most Vulnerable to COVID are also Some of the Least Vaccinated
# Barriers to Equitable COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and Administration

Early vaccination efforts reached those most eager and able to access the vaccine, but efforts going forward must address the harder to reach populations, including BIPOC who are experiencing disparities in vaccination rates. The reasons for vaccination disparities vary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access Challenges</th>
<th>Misinformation and Vaccine Confidence</th>
<th>Data and Operational Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for more localized vaccine access points where people live, work, and engage with available supports to respond to questions and concerns from the community</td>
<td>• Misinformation, some aimed specifically at communities of color, amplifies concerns around vaccine safety, efficacy, cost and immigration status</td>
<td>• Limited granular race/ethnicity data availability beyond federal standards inhibits identification and surveillance of health disparities to inform and course-correct culturally appropriate approaches</td>
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<td>• Structural barriers, including workplace flexibility, childcare, transportation, and digital literacy, which make it harder for those who want the vaccine to access it</td>
<td>• Distrust in the health care system rooted in structural racism and the history of medical mistreatment and trauma in the U.S.</td>
<td>• Need for more continuous and integrated feedback loops across states, counties, localities and CBOs</td>
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<td>• Need for continuous access and outreach strategies that are effective for following up and administering both doses of two-dose vaccines</td>
<td>• “Wait and see” mindset often tied to the desire for more evidence-based information about the vaccine’s safety and efficacy</td>
<td>• Complex state procurement processes preventing states from distributing dollars quickly to CBOs and partners working on the ground in communities to promote vaccine education and take-up</td>
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Source: KFF, COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor Dashboard; Manatt Health interviews with state officials (June 2021)
Opportunities for States to Drive Equitable Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine
Strategies to Promote COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake

Informed by discussions with state officials, insights from CBOs, and a review of available literature, we identified the following strategies states can employ to increase equitable distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.

1) Increase Access Points
2) Address Barriers to Vaccination
3) Combat Misinformation and Build Vaccine Confidence
4) Carefully Consider Vaccine Incentives That Promote Equity
5) Address Data and Operational Challenges
1. Strategies to Increase Vaccine Access

Key Strategies

✓ Stand up vaccination sites in trusted and convenient locations based on community input

✓ Fund mobile or pop-up clinics in neighborhoods and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, staffed by local municipalities, health departments and CBOs

✓ Drive education and access through local clinics, independent pharmacies and family physician offices

✓ Partner with community-based providers to offer home-based vaccinations

Sources: New Jersey, Agricultural Vaccine Program; Alabama, National Guard Vaccination Clinics; Manatt Health interviews with state officials (June 2021)
2. Strategies to Address Barriers

Key Strategies

- **Encourage or incentivize employers to give paid time off (PTO) to employees** to get vaccinated and recover from any side effects (and lead by state example)

- **Subsidize childcare/eldercare** to help parents and other family caregivers get vaccinated

- **Provide or pay for transportation** to and from vaccination sites

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As of May 2021, 21% of adults who are employed and not vaccinated say they would be more likely to get vaccinated if their employer gave them PTO.

**New York** Governor Andrew Cuomo signed legislation granting public and private employees paid leave to get the vaccine.

3. Strategies to Combat Misinformation and Build Vaccine Confidence

Source: North Carolina, NCDHHS Teams up with NC Counts Coalition to Get Shots in Arms; Manatt Health interviews with state officials (June 2021)

Key Strategies

- Engage in, learn from and fund trusted leaders and organizations to **provide consistent messaging in local communities**
- **Work with CBOs and community leaders to design messaging** and modes of engagement tailored to specific communities of focus
- **Develop communication materials and outreach efforts accessible to all**

**North Carolina** partnered with the NC Counts Coalition, a private organization that conducts the census, to conduct face-to-face canvassing, and provided paid staff and grants to community organizations.

**Arizona** established a call center with Spanish language services, offer town halls in English and Spanish, and deploy promotores (i.e., community health workers) to conduct outreach.
4. Carefully Consider Vaccine Incentives That Promote Equity

Considerations

- A growing number of states, companies and organizations are establishing incentives to encourage vaccine uptake.

- States should proceed with caution when considering vaccine incentives, as:
  - Limited data is available about effectiveness of incentives.
  - Approaches could backfire and potentially diminish trust.

- If pursuing incentives, states should *work with communities of focus to design incentives that resonate, are empowering and are non-coercive*.

Examples of Empowering and Non-Coercive Incentives:

- Transportation vouchers
- Paid Leave
- Free state university, community college, trade school credits

Sources: National Governors Association, COVID-19 Vaccine Incentives; JAMA, Lottery-Based Incentive in Ohio and COVID-19 Vaccination Rates; Manatt Health interviews with state officials (June 2021)
5. Strategies to Address Data and Operational Challenges

Key Strategies

- Track vaccination data in real time and at granular geographic and demographic levels
- Engage local leaders through focus groups and listening sessions; include them in a meaningful way on state and local task forces, commissions and COVID-19 response teams
- Fund community leaders and CBOs to ensure their engagement in quantitative and qualitative data gathering efforts

Some states developed information feedback loops through strategic partnerships to learn from the community about barriers to vaccination and rates of success for current strategies

States are leverage existing vendors to subcontract with CBOs to expedite or streamline state procurement requirements

Source: SHVS, Ensuring Equity: State Strategies for Monitoring COVID-19 Vaccination Rates by Race and Other Priority Populations; Manatt Health interviews with state officials (June 2021)
Looking Ahead
With Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) already in place to administer COVID-19 vaccines to teens and adolescents aged 12 or older and EUAs expected for children as young as age 5 early this fall, states are adapting vaccine distribution efforts for new populations.

**Strategies to Rollout the Vaccine to Children and Youth**

**Key Strategies**

- **Work with pediatric providers** to help parents and guardians understand the importance of vaccination.
- **Create communications toolkits to personalize vaccine messaging** to parents’ language, cultural beliefs, vaccine concerns and literacy levels.
- **Align vaccination campaigns with “back to school” activities**.
- **Consider requiring vaccination** for school enrollment and attendance.
- **Distribute adequate supply of the vaccine to children and adolescents residing in congregate settings**.

Experts anticipate lower vaccine uptake among children and adolescents given low risk of severe disease or mortality and parents’ fear of potential adverse outcomes from the vaccine.

Long-term Opportunities to Address Health Equity

States can leverage new and existing funding to grow relationships with CBOs and other community partners to create a foundation for long-term structural change in public health.

Vision for More Equitable Public Health Systems and Infrastructure

- Center public health infrastructure on the experiences and needs of community members, especially in communities that have been historically excluded and underserved
- Build trust among community members in government, public health, and health care systems
- Reimagine a health care system that addresses the multitude of factors that influence health and wellness, including the social drivers of health
- Focus investment in areas where community members identify the greatest need to avoid perpetuating systems rooted in structural racism

Key Strategies to Build from COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts to Advance Equity

- Sustain and build on funding for canvassing, focus groups and outreach strategies beyond just COVID-19
- Use new federal stimulus dollars to build a broader public health workforce with strong ties to the community
- Maintain and fund robust quantitative and qualitative public health data infrastructure to better scale and evaluate new efforts
- Ensure equitable access to current and future dollars to streamline and address any bias in procurement processes
Questions
Thank You

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