

MATERIALS RELATED TO COVID-19 VACCINE CONFIDENCE

Wynne Health has compiled a series of resources related to COVID-19 vaccine confidence that we think you may find helpful for your work relating to the pandemic. This includes a summary of what is included in the Biden-Harris Administration's national strategy, recent relevant Executive Orders, the End-of-Year Spending Package, CDC resources, and a couple of additional helpful items.

Details follow.

Building Vaccine Confidence

In its [COVID-19 National Strategy](#), the Biden administration outlines a number of strategies it will adopt to, among other priorities, build confidence among communities of color for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. These strategies include:

- **Working with provider associations** – The Biden administration says it will partner with major provider associations to provide the most up-to-date information on vaccine safety and efficacy. The goal of this initiative is to ensure the providers have the information they need when engaging with patients to build trust through communicating reliable information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- **Public education materials** – Building on the [CDC Vaccinate with Confidence campaign](#), the Biden administration says it will work with federal partners to develop and distribute culturally competent, multilingual public education materials to inform the public on the vaccine's safety and efficacy. Moreover, the administration says it will identify campaigns whose intent is to spread misinformation about the vaccine and ensure that individuals are receiving science-based information about the vaccine instead.
- **Work with trusted partners in the community** – The Biden administration also plans to partner with local organizations – including religious institutions, civil rights organizations, unions, trade associations, and foundations – to encourage individuals to get vaccinated. The administration also says it will launch a national campaign to highlight the stories of individuals who have been vaccinated to encourage others in their communities to get vaccinated. The administration is calling this latter initiative the “COVID-19 Vaccination Ambassadors Program.”
- **Vaccinating in communities** – The Biden administration says it will reach communities of color by working with community-based organizations and trusted health care providers, such as community health centers, to administer vaccines where individuals are more comfortable visiting. The administration will also deploy mobile vaccination units in “hard-to-reach areas,” again with the intention of vaccinating individuals in their own communities. To ensure all individuals are vaccinated, the administration will make the vaccination free of charge and regardless of an individual's citizenship status.

Recent Executive Orders & the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force

In line with the above strategies, on January 21, 2021 President Biden also issued an [Executive Order](#) (EO) establishing a COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, which will in part focus on efforts to increase trust

and uptake of the vaccine among communities of color. The EO directs the Task Force to provide recommendations for how to mitigate the health inequities caused or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including recommendations regarding effective, culturally aligned communication and messaging to communities of color and other underserved populations. Relatedly, and in line with the Biden administration's vaccination strategy, the EO directs HHS to conduct outreach campaigns to promote vaccine trust and uptake among communities of color and to engage with leaders in those communities when doing so. The Task Force will be comprised of a diverse array of experts in public health, health care, and social services, and will include officials from the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture, and Labor.

End-of-Year Spending Package

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 ([P.L. 116-260](#)) provides \$300 million to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to support vaccine distribution and administration in high-risk and underserved populations and includes authorizing provisions aimed at increasing public confidence in vaccine safety and efficacy.

Authorization of New Grants for a Public Awareness Campaign

The package requires the CDC to award competitive grants or contracts to one or more public or private entities to implement activities aimed at (1) increasing vaccine uptake, particularly in communities with low vaccination rates, and (2) reducing and eliminating vaccine preventable diseases. The package authorized \$15 million for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 to carry out this public awareness campaign.

CDC is required to consult with public health and medical experts, including the National Academy of Medicine and medical and public health associations, and nonprofit organizations, in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the evidence-based public awareness campaign.

A number of activities are required, including the dissemination of scientific and evidence-based vaccine information to public health departments, health care providers, and health care facilities. CDC is directed to include information on vaccine safety and the systems in place to monitor vaccine safety. In addition, information must be culturally and linguistically appropriate and address the specific needs of communities and population with low vaccination rates.

Revision to Existing Section 317 Immunization Grants for Public Awareness Activities

The package amends the Section 317 Immunization Program by authorizing the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to award Section 317-funded grants to state, localities, and public and nonprofit entities for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of activities to address vaccine-preventable diseases. The Section 317 Immunization Program is discretionary grant program (subject to annual congressional appropriations) that supports immunization program operations at the local, state and federal levels and provides states with federally-purchased vaccines for uninsured or underinsured adults, fully insured adults during public health response activities, and incarcerated individuals. The program is funded \$613.647 million for fiscal year 2021. Grants are generally divided using a population-based formula.

Newly authorized activities include:

- Piloting innovative approaches to improve vaccination rates
- Partnering with community organizations and health care providers to develop and deliver evidence-based interventions; and
- Improving the ability of public health department to engage communities at high risk for outbreaks.

Update of 2015 National Vaccine Advisory Committee Report

The package also requires the [National Vaccine Advisory Committee](#) (NVAC) to update the [report](#), “Assessing the State of Vaccine Confidence in the United States: Recommendations from the National Vaccine Advisory Committee.” The deadline for the report was not specified.

NVAC is [meeting](#) on February 4 and 5 to discuss vaccine safety, communication activities for COVID-19, and immunization equity. Last September, NVAC issued [recommendations](#) on building confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine. This may inform the broader report.

HHS Partnership to Address COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Last June, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Minority Health (OMH) [awarded](#) \$40 million to the Morehouse School of Medicine (MSM) to spearhead a three-year initiative titled, “National Infrastructure for Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 within Racial and Ethnic Minority Communities (NIMIC).” With this funding, MSM established the National COVID-19 Resilience Network (NCRN) to coordinate a network of national, state, territorial, tribal, and local public and community-based organizations that will disseminate COVID-19 related resources to help reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on rural and ethnic minority, rural, and other socially vulnerable populations.

NCRN has funded an array of [national organizations](#), particularly those with strong partnerships with community-based organizations. Its priority populations are:

- African Americans
- Latinos
- Asian Americans
- Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders
- Native Americans
- Alaska Natives.

Though a national network, NCRN is focused on providing support to the following areas:

- Arizona
- Alaska
- California
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Louisiana
- Los Angeles
- New Mexico
- Texas
- Utah

While NCRN is no longer offering funding to new partners, organizations are welcome to join as a dissemination partner by subscribing to their [website](#). In addition, NCRN states that it is seeking to continue to develop partnership within every state, territory, and tribal lands. Additional information about NCRN is available [here](#) and contact information, including about partnerships, is available [here](#).

Center for Disease Control Resources

The CDC has a [website of resources](#) related to COVID-19 and information for patients, etc. This includes a [slideshow](#) to support healthcare teams as they build confidence among their patients (see attached) as well as many [posters](#) that include photos of BIPOC individuals.

Additional Resources

Resources such as this article from [NPR](#) talks about the importance of recognizing why communities of color are hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccine, acknowledging the history behind it, and then linking communities to accurate and accessible information.

Some providers indicate that their patients have concerns that the vaccine trials did not adequately include BIPOC communities. In light of those concerns, it is helpful to know that approximately 20% of the trial volunteers (approximately 70k between Moderna and Pfizer) were Black (10%) or other non-white (10%). The following articles are helpful: [NEJM](#), [Moderna](#) (10.2% Black; 20.5% Hispanic or Latino), and [Pfizer](#) (9% Black; 28% Hispanic or Latino).