

Vaccine Hesitancy In Black Communities

Inequalities create fertile ground for misinformation to thrive. Let's work together to build trust and confidence around vaccines so all children have the chance to grow up healthy.

WHY IS THERE VACCINE HESITANCY?



- Hesitancy is often an expression of mistrust. Concerns about vaccine safety are prevalent around the world and may be rooted in negative experiences of health interventions.
- Neglected or abused communities are less likely to be confident in the government, healthcare system, or others involved in vaccination processes.
- Black communities have disproportionately experienced clinical neglect and abuse that can inform their skepticism and mistrust of healthcare systems.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT & BACKGROUND



- Dangerous, involuntary and non-therapeutic experimentation on African Americans has been practiced widely and documented extensively since at least the 18th century.
- On average, when Black people visit their doctors, their visits are shortened, they are interrupted more often and discouraged from productive patient-doctor dialogue.
- Experts say that when Black Americans seek medical care they are less likely to have their symptoms believed and less likely to receive adequate treatment.

BLACK COMMUNITIES & THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



- For many low-income, urban and rural communities, inequity has been the narrative of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- White Americans are being vaccinated at a rate 3 times higher than Black Americans.
- Residents in higher-income ZIP codes are also getting a disproportionate higher share of vaccinations than the general population.
- By some measures, Black Americans have died from the coronavirus at the highest rate of any group in the country. Despite that alarming statistic, they are among the most skeptical of getting the new vaccines.

VACCINES ARE SAFE!



Discover more by scanning the below code!

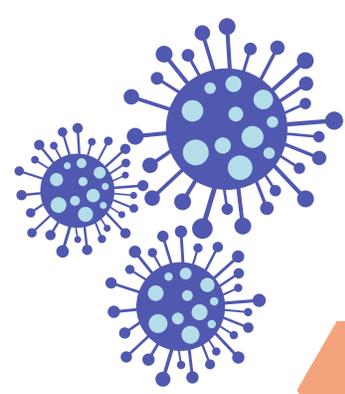


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HOW DO WE SOLVE THIS ISSUE?

To address vaccine hesitancy, experts say medical authorities should listen to concerns and connect communities with accurate and accessible information. The key is for families to feel a sense of empowerment and control over their own health and their own decisions.

Acknowledge the Issue

- Mistrust has deep roots, and recognizing racism in the healthcare system is a key first step to reaching Black communities.
- Empathize with your patients – say you understand this is an issue.

Messaging is Key

- Combat rumors and information that are not fact-based.
- Build trust. Conversations may not happen immediately and may occur over time as trust is built. If families are not ready now, revisit conversations at a later time.
- Exercise transparency in vaccine development, trials, and deployment. Clearly communicate what vaccines are made of, how they work, and acknowledge uncertainties when they arise.
- Provide a strong recommendation...do not give a “so-so” recommendation. Tell your personal story, say “I got the vaccine” or “my child will get the vaccine when it becomes available”.

How to Deliver the Message

- Education begins with clear messages, but also with “messengers” like church leaders who are often trusted in Black communities. Church and other trusted leaders can help amplify myth-busting messages.
- Townhall and Facebook live opportunities with community leaders and physicians are an easy and great way to spread information to a wide audience.
- Utilize compelling communication strategies including storytelling, emotion, and appeals to empathy and altruism. Facts and traditional authority don’t always work.
- A doctor’s body language also sends a message to patients about their level of engagement and empathy.
- For many, messaging means more when it comes from someone who looks like them or speaks like them, but the majority of pediatricians in the US are white. Pediatricians can take a more participatory style when seeing Black patients to help encourage them to speak up and ask questions during their appointments. (i.e. “Have I addressed all of your concerns?”)

Vaccination Strategies

- Offering vaccinations in a church setting may make people feel more comfortable and confident.
- Expand vaccine sites to include office space, practices, and locations that are easy to get to by people in the Black, Hispanic, and Indigenous tribal communities.

