Updates on COVID-19 Health Inequities and Community Vaccination Strategies in New York City

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Focus on Pride: Serving LGBTQ+ Patients During COVID-19

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NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Provider Webinar
June 18, 2021
Updates on COVID-19 Health Inequities and Community Vaccination Strategies in New York City

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• COVID-19 has caused more than 100,000 hospitalizations and 30,000 deaths in NYC to date

• Black and Latino people have experienced the highest rates of illness, hospitalization, and death, with several neighborhoods harder hit than others

• The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted numerous injustices for historically marginalized groups in the US, including Black, Indigenous and people of color and lower-income New Yorkers¹,²

New York City COVID-19 Totals
January 2020 – June 2021

COVID-19 Data (as of June 17, 2021)

953,076 Cases

109,248 Hospitalizations

33,370 Deaths
New York City COVID-19 Rates*
January 2020 – June 2021

*Rates per 100,000 people (age-adjusted)
COVID-19 Data (as of June 17, 2021)
The disproportionate impact on people of color is a result of historic and persistent structural and institutional racism. Examples include:

- Policies and discriminatory practices that prevent communities of color from accessing vital resources (such as health care, housing and food)
- Limited opportunities (such as employment and education), and negative effects on overall health and well-being

Such policies and practices have led to inequitable health, social, and economic outcomes in the U.S., including NYC.

### Percent of Adult COVID-19 Vaccinations by Demographic Group in NYC

**Race/ethnicity** | At least 1 dose | Fully vaccinated
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Asian/Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | 80% | 72%
Black | 37% | 33%
Hispanic/Latino | 51% | 44%
Native American/Alaska Native | 75% | 63%
White | 54% | 49%

**COVID-19 Data: Vaccines** (December 12, 2020 through June 17, 2021)
COVID-19 Vaccination Rates by Zip Code in NYC
Fully Vaccinated, All Ages

NYC residents fully vaccinated
30% 40% 50% 60% 70%

ABOUT THE DATA FOR THIS MAP

COVID-19 Data: Vaccines (December 2020 through June 10, 2021)
COVID-19 Vaccination Rates by Zip Code in NYC

COVID-19 Death Rates by Zip Code in NYC

NYC residents fully vaccinated

Deaths per 100,000 people

COVID-19 Data (December 2020 through June 10, 2021)

COVID-19 Data (January 2020 through June 10, 2021)
COVID-19 Vaccination Intentions, Uptake, Motivators, and Barriers
New York City, HOP Survey Results

- NYC Health Opinion Polls (HOP) were conducted in multiple languages to ask New Yorkers about COVID-19 vaccination intentions, uptake, motivators, and barriers

- Among those already vaccinated, reasons for getting vaccinated included:
  - Prevent illness among others in community or household
  - End the pandemic

- Among those unsure or who did not intend to get a COVID-19 vaccine, reasons included:
  - Wanting to learn more about the vaccine
  - Concerns that COVID-19 vaccines developed too quickly without enough information about safety and effectiveness

Peebles K, Deng WQ, Dongchung TY, et al. COVID-19 Vaccination Intentions, Uptake, Motivators, and Barriers — New York City, October and December 2020 and March 2021. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Epi Data Brief (124); May 2021
Partners report New Yorkers express mistrust of the Health Department, CDC, and medical institutions.

Misinformation about the vaccine is circulating:
  - Examples include a meme of people missing limbs, social media posts with the myth that vaccine will change a person’s DNA or lead to infertility.

Some New Yorkers have concern about vaccine safety, including fear of side effects or an allergic reaction and concerns about the safety of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen Vaccine.

Some New Yorkers lack an understanding of how the vaccine works and terminology associated with immunity.
Focus groups conducted in the US by the Rockefeller Foundation found:

- Black and Latino respondents have many of the same top concerns as White respondents:
  - The vaccine was created too quickly
  - It may have significant side effects

A concern more significant among communities of color is access:

- They need to see, hear and believe that they’ll be able to access vaccines through a place and provider they trust.
Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

• The NYC Health Department places equity at the foundation of all aspects of its COVID-19 response, including vaccine access

• We must address mistrust of the medical community and government due to historical and continued mistreatment of people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other groups, especially as New Yorkers face the decision of whether to get vaccinated

• We are committed to gaining community trust, combatting misinformation, and ensuring free and easy access to COVID-19 vaccines for all New Yorkers

• Use a framework to prioritize efforts, particularly in the 33 neighborhoods identified by The Taskforce on Racial Inclusion & Equity (TRIE) as being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and with significant racial and economic disparities in health outcomes
Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

Steps NYC and the Health Department are taking:

• Opening vaccine sites and bringing vaccines to communities most impacted by COVID-19, including pop-up sites, mobile units and events
• Making sure New Yorkers have the information they need in the language they speak to make clear and informed decisions about the vaccines
• Working closely with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), clinical partners, faith-based organizations, and community leaders
• Listening and responding to community concerns and input
• Monitoring data and community feedback to identify needs and gaps in access
Make Vaccine Sites Available and Accessible

- NYC Vaccine Hubs
- Pharmacies
- State/FEMA sites

To find a vaccination site nearby use the City’s **Vaccine Finder**

(not accessible with Internet Explorer)

https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/
Bring Vaccines to People/Places

- Vaccines at home
- Walk-up vaccination sites
- NYC mobile vaccine vans and buses
- Vaccination events

For more information visit the City’s Vaccine Commander Center

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/covid-19-vaccines.page
Bring Vaccines to People/Places and People to Vaccines
Homebound Vaccination Program

• Delivering in-home vaccination to New Yorkers who are:
  • Homebound, 75 and older, disabled, NYCHA resident, employee or retiree of NYC, or referred by their union, vaccination team member or a City partner
    • Providers or the patient can fill out form at nyc.gov/homebound or call the NYC Vaccine Hotline at 877-VAX4NYC (877-829-4692)
    • The City schedules the home visit appointment and can also make appointments for any homecare worker or other eligible person in the household
  • Health care providers already serving homebound patients can arrange to give in-home vaccination for their existing patients
    • Provided vaccine allocation for both homebound patients and their eligible health aides or caregivers

For more information, call the NYC Vaccine Hotline: 877-VAX4NYC (877-829-4692) or visit nyc.gov/homebound
Bring Vaccines to People/Places and People to Vaccines

Free Transportation

• Free transportation for residents ages 65+ and individuals with disabilities (ages 16-64) to and from vaccination sites
  • Eligible passengers can request to be picked up anywhere in the five boroughs and taken to any vaccination site located within the City
  • Request free transportation by calling 855-491-2667

For more information, call the NYC Vaccine Hotline: 877-VAX4NYC (877-829-4692) or visit nyc.gov/homebound
Many vaccination sites in the city no longer require appointments.

To find a walk-up vaccination site nearby use the City’s Vaccine Finder.

(not accessible with Internet Explorer)

https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/
Bring Vaccines to People/Places
NYC Mobile & Pop-Up Vaccine Sites

• Temporary vaccination sites across the City to better meet New Yorkers where they live, work, go to school, and play
  • Mobile and pop-up sites

• Mobile language units now available with staff who speak different languages including Spanish, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, Russian, French and Yiddish

• Fully staffed with intake personnel and nurses to safely and conveniently administer COVID-19 vaccines and observe patients

• Appointment not required but can be made in advance at many of these sites online or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/covid-19-vaccines.page
To find mobile and pop-up sites by borough visit the City’s Vaccine Commander Center.
Bring Vaccines to People/Places

Vaccine Events

Upcoming Event Themes

• Juneteenth 6/19
• Pride Month
• Gun Violence Awareness Month
• Make Music New York 6/21
• Father’s Day 6/20
• Senior Vax Van
• July 4th

To learn about current vaccine events, visit the City’s Vaccine Events Page

https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/vaccines/vaccine-events.page
Support Providers
Public Health Detailing Teams

• Detailing teams visit providers and staff in priority neighborhoods
  • Promote communication best practices and opportunities to increase access and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines
  • One-on-one education
    o Review key recommendations
    o Share provider resources and patient education materials
    o Overcome barriers and objections to patient vaccination

• Collect information
  • Perception of patient barriers to COVID-19 vaccination
  • Provider/practice barriers to offering COVID-19 vaccinations on site
  • Wishlist for tools and resources to assist in building vaccine confidence among patients
  • Experience with Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) enrollment and if there is a need for technical assistance to facilitate enrollment
Building Confidence

• Conducting:
  • Town Halls
  • Community Conversations
  • Train the Trainer sessions
  • On-the-ground canvassing, robocalls, mailers, texts
  • Flyers, palm cards, factsheets, posters in 13+ languages
  • Videos: Doctors of the NYC Department of Health Public Service Announcement

• Identifying barriers to vaccine uptake or confidence in specific populations
• Addressing COVID-19 vaccine misinformation
• Working to support vaccine confidence among healthcare personnel
• Engaging community partners and trusted messengers
Building Confidence

Providers are trusted messengers

• Among New Yorkers who were unsure or who did not intend to get vaccinated, 35% reported they would like to hear from their doctor or pharmacist to feel comfortable receiving the vaccine\(^1\)
• Build trust with patients and speak to the benefits of vaccination
• Explain that side effects are to be expected
• Counter myths and misinformation

Provider resources

• Vaccine Facts Video Campaign to address key drivers of vaccine hesitancy and bust myths: [https://youtu.be/q0GDExe-FVY](https://youtu.be/q0GDExe-FVY)
• Watch: The Conversation: Between Us, About Us: Black and Latino/a health care professionals answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccines
• Provider Vaccine Communications pages [www.nyc.gov/vaccinetalks](http://www.nyc.gov/vaccinetalks)

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1. Peebles K, Deng WQ, Dongchung TY, et al. COVID-19 Vaccination Intentions, Uptake, Motivators, and Barriers — New York City, October and December 2020 and March 2021. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Epi Data Brief (124); May 2021
Focus on Pride: Serving LGBTQ+ Patients During COVID-19

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LGBTQ+ and COVID-19: A Quiet Inequity?

• **LGBTQ+ people as a group** may be at higher at risk of severe COVID-19 and of pandemic-related challenges to well-being
  • In a CDC 2017-2019 national survey, people who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual were more like to have health conditions that would put them at increased risk of severe COVID-19 (e.g., asthma, heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, stroke, current smoking)¹
  • A Kaiser national poll from December 2020 and January 2021 found that LGBTQ+ people were more likely to have experienced job loss and mental health challenges related to COVID-19²

• **Reliable data is lacking** on rates of COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccination among LGBTQ+ people

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LGBTQ+ Access to Care
Ensuring LGBTQ+ Access to Care

• **Full access to comprehensive medical care** can help prevent COVID-19-related health issues through testing, treatment and vaccination

• **People need a provider they trust**
  • Many LGBTQ+ people avoid care or do not disclose their sexuality to providers
  • Among men who have sex with men, Black men are less likely to disclose their sexual identity\(^1\) and their access to care may be undermined by experiences of discrimination\(^2\) and mistrust of medical institutions\(^3\)

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Promote LGBTQ+ Patient Trust and Comfort

- **Establish** a clinical approach that welcomes LGBTQ+ people
- **Avoid** any appearance of judgment or bias
  - **Avoid** questions that imply a right answer: e.g., Ask sexually active patients: “What are the genders of your sex partners?” instead of asking “Do you have a husband?”
  - **Be mindful** of non-verbal reactions to what a patient shares
- **Ask** patients about their goals for their health and wellness
  - **Allow** for dialogue
  - **Recognize** that patients are experts in their own lives
- **Display** images that celebrate LGBTQ+ health and LGBTQ+ pride
- **Post** the [LGBTQ Health Care Bill of Rights](#) and a confidentiality statement
- **Train** clinical and frontline staff on LGBTQ+ health (T-TAP)
Effectively Serve Transgender and Gender Non-binary People

• Accurately document, and respect, each patient’s gender
  • Document and update in patient’s electronic medical record:
    • Name and pronouns they use
    • Their gender identity and sex assigned at birth
  • Instruct all staff to address each patient by their name and pronouns

• Avoid questions about patients’ bodies or transgender experience that are motivated more by curiosity than relevance to clinical care
  • Explain how you will use the information you collect
  • Mirror patients’ language when speaking about their bodies

• Provide access to gender-affirming hormones
• Provide integrated physical and mental health care

1. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. City Health Information Bulletin: Providing Primary Care to Transgender Adults. 2015.
LGBTQ+ Access to COVID-19 Vaccines
NYC Efforts to Increase LGBTQ+ Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

- Ensure City-run vaccine sites are welcoming to LGBTQ+ people
- Place pop-up vaccine sites at Pride events
Providers Can Promote Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

- **No missed opportunity:** A provider’s recommendation to get vaccinated is the strongest predictor that someone will get a vaccine.

- **Inform people with health conditions** including HIV, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, heart disease, cancer that vaccines are safe for them.
  - People with these conditions may be more likely to get very sick if they get COVID-19 and can particularly benefit from vaccination.

- **Share the many benefits of vaccination:** Two weeks after being fully vaccinated, people can have close contact with others (including sex!) with little risk of getting sick with COVID-19.

- **Allow people whose ID does not match their preferred name** to receive care without imposing barriers (including COVID-19 vaccines).
Address Patients’ Concerns About Vaccines

- **Ask** if they have any questions about COVID-19 vaccines
- **Acknowledge** any concerns or past negative experiences they bring up
  - Including medical mistrust or experiences of abuse
- **Share** guidance that may be relevant to LGBTQ+ patients
  - **HIV**: Patients with HIV or other immunocompromising conditions can safely receive COVID-19 vaccines\(^1,2\)
    - Severely immunocompromised people (e.g., with low CD4 counts) should avoid possible COVID-19 infection even after vaccination
  - **Hormones**: Patients taking gender-affirming hormones can safely get a vaccine
    - Experts do not believe hormones will interact with the vaccines
  - **Other COVID-19 precautions**: Encourage people who are not ready to get a vaccine to wear masks and avoid close contact with others

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Restoring Non-COVID-19 Health Care
A Return to Routine Care

• **Address potential gaps and delays in care**
  • STI screening fell sharply during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic\(^1\)
  • High rates of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental health conditions reported in various national populations\(^2\)

• **Encourage patients to get routine care** as COVID-19 transmission declines, including by reaching out to patients

• **Offer to patients** who experienced delays in routine care:
  • Mental health screening
  • HIV and other STI testing, especially if currently sexually active
  • Counseling on HIV prevention and unintended pregnancy
  • Screening for other diseases and chronic conditions

• **Refer LGBTQ+ patients** to affirming providers listed in the [NYC Health Map](#), as appropriate

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Additional COVID-19 Resources

COVID-19 Vaccines

• NYC Health Department - COVID-19 Vaccine:
  • Providers:
    • General vaccine information: nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider
    • Vaccine communication resources: nyc.gov/VaccineTalks
    • Provider hotline to schedule vaccine appointments: 877-VAX-4NYC (877-8229-4692); press 2 at second prompt
  • Public: nyc.gov/covidvaccine

• Citywide Immunization Registry Reporting Assistance
  • https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/reporting-and-services/cir-how-to-report.page#electronic

• Vaccine Provider Assistance: nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov

General COVID-19 Resources

• Provider page: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page
• Data page: nyc.gov/coviddata
• Dear Colleague COVID-19 newsletters (sign up for City Health Information subscription at: nyc.gov/health/register)
• NYC Health Alert Network (sign up at https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/resources/health-alert-network.page)
• Provider Access Line: 866-692-3641
CME Accreditation Statement for Joint Providership
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