What We Are Learning • July – August 2021 Edition

Stakeholder Report
Alabamians currently have these concerns about the COVID-19 Vaccine:

**CONCERNS**

- Side Effects of the Vaccine
- The Speed in Which the Vaccine Was Developed
- Breakthrough Infections
- The Impact on a Woman's Fertility
- The Impact on Pregnancy & Infants
- Efficacy of the Vaccine if Booster Shots Are Needed
- Fears & Distrust from the Tuskegee Study
- Sufficient Representation of African-Americans and Diverse Participants in the Vaccine Clinical Trials

Alabamians are facing these barriers to getting the COVID-19 Vaccine:

**BARRIERS**

- Time of Recovery from the Side Effects of the Vaccine
- Transportation Issues Getting to and from Vaccine Sites
- Lack of Vaccination Sites Within Local Communities, Especially in Rural Counties
THE FOLLOWING MISINFORMATION IS CIRCULATING THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF ALABAMA

01 People are dying from the vaccine.

02 The vaccine contains a microchip or tracking system.

03 Taking hydroxychloroquine will protect against COVID-19, making the vaccine unnecessary.

04 People are injected with the virus when they receive the vaccine.

05 Enough immunity is gained by contracting COVID-19 so the vaccine is unnecessary if you've had it.

06 The vaccine is not helping the pandemic.

07 People are getting sicker from the vaccine than from COVID-19.

08 Ivermectin can cure COVID-19.
Alabamians who are vaccinated have been motivated to get the COVID-19 vaccine because:

- They want to save lives; their own and the lives of others
- To avoid serious illness
- They have experienced personal losses due to COVID-19
- They work in an environment that has mandated the vaccine or they do not feel safe at work without vaccination
- To see family/friends
- Incentives
- They desire to participate in events requiring vaccination
- They want to travel again
- They want to help those who are vulnerable or who can’t get vaccinated
- They have heard personal stories from people who have received the vaccine that calmed their fears of vaccination
CURRENT MESSAGING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALABAMA

- Hyper-local vaccination and messaging campaigns
  - Door-to-door; one-on-one communication
  - Messaging about the vaccine from trusted community members at the local level
    - Personal Physicians
    - Pastors/Faith Leaders
    - Non-profit Leaders
    - Community Agencies
  - Messaging should focus more on the positive outcomes of vaccination; there is currently too much focus on the negative (side effects, breakthrough infections, etc.)
  - Messages focused on social gains through vaccination (seeing family/friends, return to social activities, etc.)
  - Messages focused on positive statistical outcomes from vaccination (less severe disease, high vaccination rates=lower infection rates, etc.)
- Engage Pastors/Faith Leaders in vaccination efforts to communicate how the vaccine and faith work together
- Avoid images of syringes and vials
- Focus on statistics and research in messaging for younger (gen z) individuals.
- Focus on compelling, compassionate messaging for older individuals (millennial +).
ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide opportunities for vaccination in communities at local events
- Develop a Vaccine Ambassador Program that engages local community members as vaccine ambassadors to their social networks.
  
- Train ambassadors to be able to talk about vaccine myths and truths with their community.
- Ambassadors dedicate 1-3 hours per week to engage family, friends, and local organizations in conversations about COVID-19 vaccination.

Models:

- Atrium Health COVID-19 Community Vaccine Ambassador Program: [COVID-19 Community Vaccine Ambassador Program (atriumhealth.org)](atriumhealth.org)

- Los Angeles County COVID-19 Community Ambassador Program: [COVID-19 Community Ambassador Program (lacounty.gov)](lacounty.gov)
For more information about The Alabama Vaccine Confidence Network and its work:

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Visit our website:
Alabama Vaccine Confidence Network | The Center for the Study of Community Health (uab.edu)

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