Overcoming COVID Vaccine(s) Reluctance and Hesitancy in the African American Community

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Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities

Greater Flint Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Inequity

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Vaccine hesitancy/rejection is high in African American communities

- Adult vaccination rates for Blacks and Whites are only slightly lower for Hepatitis, Influenza, Pneumonia, and HPV
- Childhood vaccination rates are nearly identical for DTaP, Hib, Hepatitis B, MMR, Polio, and Chicken Pox
Vaccine hesitancy in African Americans stems from ‘old stuff’ like the Tuskegee Experiments

• Modern day inequity in health care and systems are also driving people’s is-trust and sense of fair play
COVID vaccine(s) resistance in the African American community is due to mis-information and mistrust

Some people are well-informed:
‘No’
‘No for now’
‘I will wait and see’
‘You go first’
A Path Forward: The 3T’s

1. Transparency
2. Trust
3. Time
Transparency: Multiple Layers Improve Success

Multiple Layers Improve Success

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.

**Personal responsibilities**
- Physical distance, stay home if sick
- Hand hygiene, cough etiquette
- If crowded, limit your time

**Shared responsibilities**
- Ventilation, outdoors, air filtration
- Quarantine and isolation
- Masks
- Avoid touching your face
- Fast and sensitive testing and tracing
- Government messaging and financial support
- Vaccines

Source: Adapted from Ian M. Mackay (virologydownunder.com) and James T. Reason, Illustration by Rose Wong
A Path Forward: How do we build trust?

Relationships are built on trust and trust takes time

- Isaiah Oliver, CEO Community Foundation of Greater Flint & Founding Chair, Flint Task Force on COVID Inequity
A Path Forward: Trust

1. Trusted Messages
   • Use the science of health communication
   • Rely on the best, accurate, science, data & information (at the time)
   • Validity and reliability checks are necessary → what’s the lived experience?

2. Trusted Messengers
   • Pass the mic
   • Elevate the voice of community
   • Strengthen the voice of local trusted sources
   • Explore the role of influencers
Time heals wounds, in the absence of further injury
-Debra Furr-Holden

• Respect where people are
• Honor the ‘No’, it may be a’ no for now’
• Invest the time and resources
Contact Information and Questions

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