Responding To The COVID-19 Vaccine Infodemic: Experiences from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Misinformation Unit

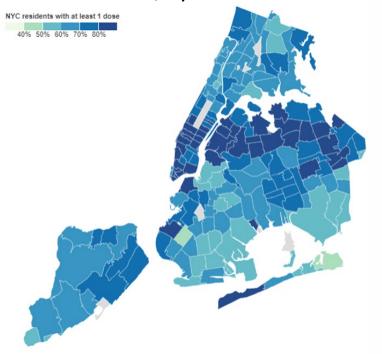
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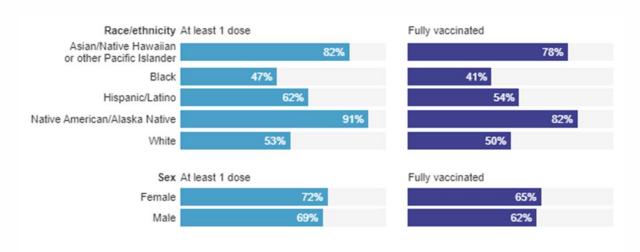


Low Vaccine Uptake Driven By Variable Information Environments

Percentage of NYC Residents that Received One or More Doses, by ZIP Code



Vaccination of NYC Residents by Race/Ethnicity

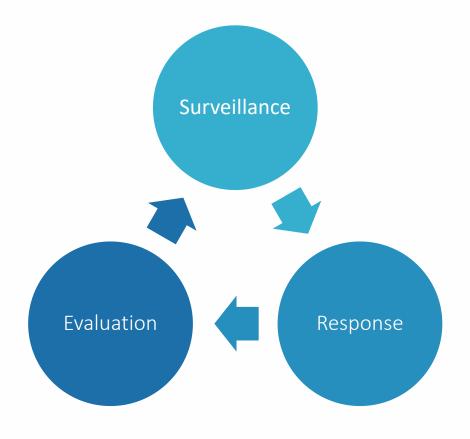


As of October 7, 2021. www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-vaccines.page



Vaccine Misinformation Unit

- Misinformation Unit was formed in 2021 as part of the Agency's Vaccine Equity Action Plan to address the unequal impacts of COVID-19
- The Unit was located within the agency's emergency response structure, initially it was in the Vaccine Operations ERG but it moved to the Integrated Data Team ERG
- The Unit used the framework of 'infodemic surveillance' to identify challenges to vaccine confidence
- The Misinformation Unit was responsible for leading weekly cross-agency discussions about prevalent vaccine hesitancy trends and supporting equitable misinformation response activities





Surveillance: Data Sources

External Information Environment Surveillance Industry Reports and Surveillance Tools

- US Center for Disease Control Vaccine Insights
- Kaiser Family Foundation Surveys
- U.S. Spanish-language fact checks from El Detector
- Virality Project, First Draft News

Cyber Security
Contractor

• Conducted multi-lingual surveillance for misinformation most likely to influence vaccine confidence in New York City communities

Health Dept Scans

- Local news
- Research and Equity focus
- · Social media-active and passive surveillance

Directly Conducted by DOHMH

Community feedback

- Town Halls
- NYC Health Opinion Polls and other surveys
- •Focus groups (e.g. nursing home staff, youth leaders, frontline workers)
- Community engagement and operational staff feedback
- Community-based organization report-outs
- Outreach to providers and congregate setting partners
- •ICS situation reports and operational data



Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration

Provider Engagement Public Information
Office

Center for Health and Wellness Centers

External Affairs

Vaccine Operations

General Council

Integrated Data Team Bureau of Maternal and Reproductive Health

CongregateSettings Unit

Immunization
Justice Workgroup

School Health

Environmental Health



Recommendations

Prioritize
Equity and
Accessibility

Think Globally, Act Locally

Grow External Relationships

Foster Internal Collaboration

Build Capacity for Monitoring and Evaluation



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