

Vaccine Hesitancy: Implications for COVID-19 Vaccine

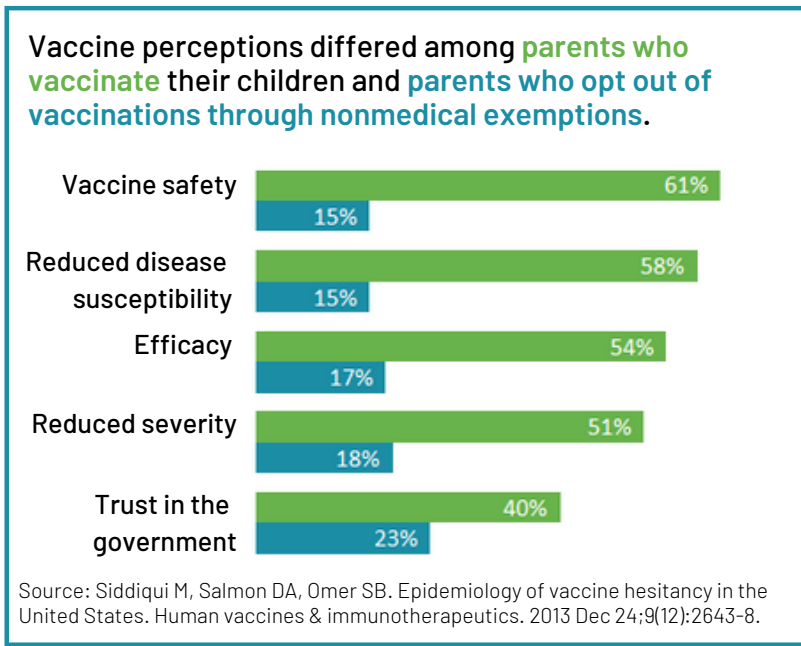


As the United States distributes COVID-19 vaccine, confidence and trust in its safety and benefit will be critical to ensure widespread acceptance, especially as the disease disproportionately burdens communities of color.

Vaccine Hesitancy in the United States and Colorado

Despite overwhelming evidence that vaccines are safe and effective and preventing disease, a growing number of people in the US are hesitant to receive recommended vaccinations or refuse them altogether. In 2019, the World Health Organization named vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 global health threats, citing access barriers and a lack of confidence as factors.

In the US, only half of children aged 19-35 months are up-to-date on all recommended vaccines. Colorado reports some of the highest rates of nonmedical vaccine exemptions in schools and vaccination rates for MMR, Dtap, and Varicella are well below the national average for Kindergarteners. These low vaccination rates make Colorado particularly vulnerable to vaccine-preventable outbreaks.

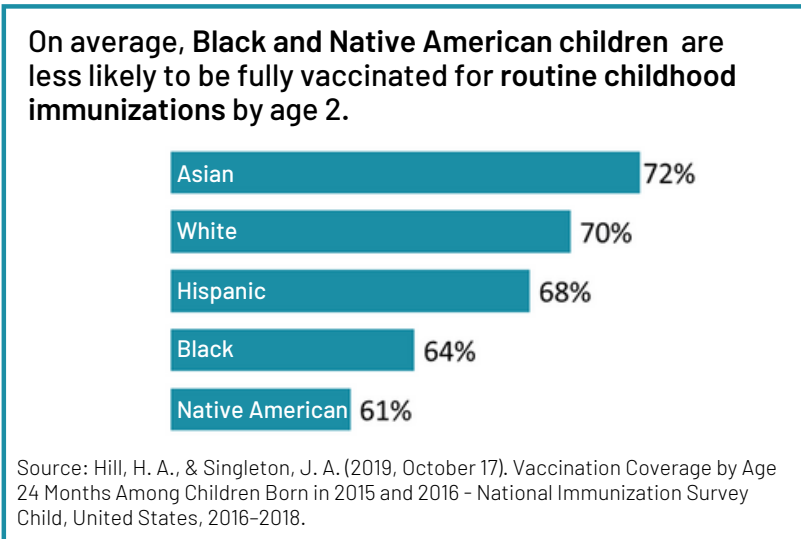


Vaccine Hesitancy in Communities of Color

Vaccine hesitancy in communities of color stems from a long history of systemic racism and resulting structural inequities in healthcare.

- Studies have shown that people of color are **routinely under-treated for pain and report lower quality of care** from medical professionals.
- People of color are widely underrepresented in the medical field; in the US, **just 5% of practicing physicians are Black**, 5.8% are Hispanic, and 56.2% are White.
- People of color have been historically **underrepresented in clinical trials**, despite the results being generalized to larger populations.
- Anti-vaccine activists have been especially **targeting communities of color with false information**.

White (49%) and Asian Americans (47%) receive the flu shot at higher rates than Black (39%), American Indian



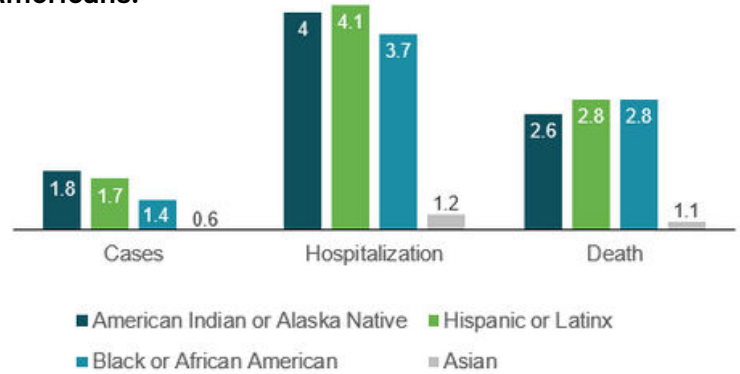
and Alaskan Natives (38%), and Hispanic (37%) Americans. People of color are 8.6% less likely to complete the HPV series than Whites. This disparity is especially problematic as Black and Hispanic women are twice as likely to die from cervical cancer than white women.

The Impact of COVID-19 on Communities of Color

Communities of color bear the greatest burdens of health disparities in the US medical system due to systemic racism and income inequality.

- Social determinants of health, such as **access to health care, socioeconomic status, education, and housing** affect health outcomes.
- People of color are more likely to live in densely populated areas and **depend on public transportation**, increasing risk of transmission.
- People of color are overrepresented in **frontline jobs**.
- Over 50% of Latinx and 38% of Black workers **cannot earn paid sick leave**, making income dependent on health.

Communities of color have been **disproportionally impacted by COVID-19** and have higher case, hospitalization, and death rates are compared to white Americans.



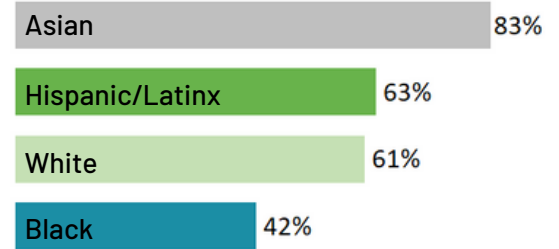
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (updated Nov 30, 2020)

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Communities of Color

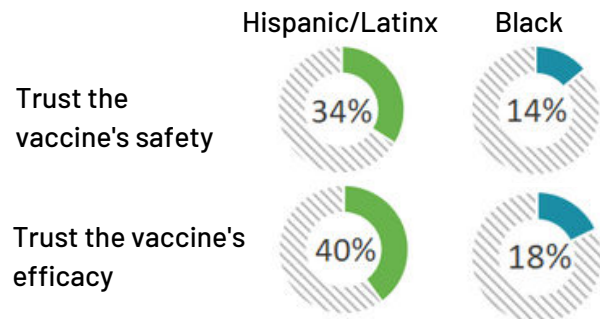
Vaccine hesitancy remains a key barrier for COVID-19 vaccine administration. While vaccine hesitancy continues to change as vaccine development and administration proceeds, a November 2020 poll by Pew Research showed Black Americans continue to be most hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine. A poll by Healthier Colorado conducted in November 2020 showed a similar breakdown of vaccine hesitancy for Black Coloradans (52%) and Hispanic Coloradans (56%) compared to white Coloradans (61%).

The strongest predictor for vaccine uptake among Black and Latinx adults is trust in vaccine safety, which is scarce in these communities. Trust in vaccine safety is predicted by levels of confidence in the institutions involved in vaccine production, the US government and the medical system generally to look out for the interests of Black and Latinx people, which is also low in these communities.

Less than half of **Black Americans** are willing to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.



Source: Pew Research poll conducted Nov 18-29, 2020. n = 12,648 American adults (Asian Americans surveyed were English-speaking only)



Source: Langer Research Associates. COVID Collaborative Survey: Coronavirus Vaccination Hesitancy in the Black and Latinx Communities.

How Can We Improve Vaccine Acceptance and Equitable Distribution?



Provide transparent information on vaccine development and approval processes



Build trust in the COVID-19 vaccine by leveraging community partnerships and systems



Prioritize equitable vaccine administration with no out-of-pocket costs for patients



Advance policies and increase funding to ensure equitable access to immunization