Community Program Improves COVID Vaccine Rates in Black and Latino Communities

Partnering with community leaders improved access to vaccines in communities most impacted by COVID-19.

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New research from Boston Medical Center (BMC) published in Annals of Internal Medicine reveals the importance of bringing COVID-19 vaccination centers directly to Black and Latino communities.

BMC partnered with community leaders in the hope of increasing vaccination rates among African Americans and Latinos, who develop COVID-19 at 1.5 times the rate of their white peers.

BMC implemented vaccination sites in churches and community centers, spearheaded mobile vaccination events in schools and grocery stores and at community functions and offered vaccines on its medical campus.

Between December 2020 and November 2021, the program administered over 100,000 first doses: 86% at community sites and 2% at mobile vaccination sites, boosting vaccination rates among Black and Latino individuals.

“The BMC vaccination effort shows that in order to reach vaccine equity goals, we need to reach individuals where they are by bringing vaccines to the community,” Sabrina Assoumou, MD, MPH, an infectious diseases physician at BMC, said in a news release. “These intentional and collaborative approaches that led to the creation of programs developed for COVID-19 could serve as a foundation for other initiatives that will tackle other health disparities including maternal and child health.”

“Building vaccine confidence takes time; it might take multiple encounters for individuals to decide to get vaccinated and our experience demonstrates that an initial lack in vaccine confidence is not necessarily permanent,” Ellen Ginman, executive director of population health at Boston Medical Center, said in the news release. “With access to reliable information, many individuals who were initially wavering might decide to get vaccinated.”

To learn more about long COVID in the Black community, click here.

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