



Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution January 2021

EverThrive Illinois is a maternal and child health nonprofit with over 30 years of experience advocating for better health outcomes through timely vaccination throughout the lifespan. We are concerned about widespread vaccine hesitancy related to the COVID-19 vaccine. Based on our immunization expertise and our experience in community outreach and vaccine education, we share the following recommendations to be considered by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Governor's Office. State leadership must act swiftly to address the causes of and barriers limiting widespread vaccination that Illinois needs to save lives and protect communities.

1. **The Governor's Office and Illinois Department of Public Health should use their positional authority to address the history of racism in the U.S. and the abuse of Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC) in the medical and health care system**
 - a. Release a statement acknowledging the history of mistreatment that has caused distrust in the medical system by folks of marginalized communities
 - b. Conduct targeted outreach to vaccine providers, especially primary care physicians and pediatricians, providing guidance on speaking to vaccine hesitant people
 - c. Promote person-centered, culturally respectful communication between providers and families
2. **Prioritize vaccine promotion in places where people seek services and information**
 - a. Consider using targeted social media campaigns that can serve as relatively inexpensive models promoting accurate COVID-19 information where people frequently gather evidence and form opinions
 - b. Develop messaging and materials to be shared with hair salons, barber shops, educators, food pantries, WIC Clinics, and other places where people build community together
 - c. Ensure translation service information is included on all access point websites and materials
 - d. Ensure distribution locations have translation services available in multiple languages, including American Sign Language
 - e. Allow distribution locations to protect personal information of individuals who might be hesitant to share their immigration status or other identities
3. **Reduce barriers to full vaccination**
 - a. Designate family-friendly distribution centers to support whole families being vaccinated once the vaccine is approved for people under the age of 18, and support parents of young children in bringing them to current appointments

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- b. Consider designating WIC clinics and social service locations that provide on-site childcare as family-friendly pop-up vaccine locations
- c. Create mobile or pop-up locations to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to zip codes in Illinois that have insufficient access to hospitals, pharmacies, and medical centers
- d. Provide financial and operational support to school-based health centers who can serve as vaccine distribution sites

4. Address the true cost of the vaccine and potential barriers

- a. Explain the true cost of the vaccine and any co-payments that might be required to the patient before inoculation
- b. Ensure no one is turned away due to their inability to pay for the vaccine or any follow-up care that is necessitated by unexpected side effects
- c. Issue guidance to insurers and providers that any associated cost for the vaccine or related follow-up care beyond copay or coinsurance is not passed down to the patient

5. Provide honest and transparent information on the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine

- a. Provide explicit information about what people can expect to build and reinforce trust and eliminate subjective descriptions of side effects; for example, describe specific symptoms, as opposed to the medical community standard of describing side effects of the flu vaccine as “mild”
- b. Provide targeted and specific information on safety for people who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or who are breastfeeding, as these individuals may have specific concerns about the safety of the vaccine