

Vaccine Equity Progress
Curry County
November 2021

Describe any improvements in vaccine equity gaps since Spring 2021 as evidenced in the data. Provide a status update on progress to eliminate vaccine access barriers and implement plans to close vaccine equity gaps among specific racial and ethnic populations. Please be specific, provide an example of work about which OHA and its partners are particularly proud, and describe any tangible impacts in the community.

- The Curry County Board of Commissioners voted April 28, 2021 to transfer its local public health authority to the state agency. As a result, Oregon Health Authority has provided limited public health services beginning May 2, 2021. Dedicated COVID-19 vaccination support from OHA in Curry County began in March 2021.
- Overall vaccination rates increased 42.5% from March to November 2021, a 4.7% increase per month. As of November 24, 2021, 64.3% of residents 18+ have received at least one dose.
 - Total Doses
 - Administered = 27,139
 - Pfizer = 3,521
 - Moderna = 22,363
 - J&J = 1,184
 - Unspecified = 71
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 42
 - White = 11,896
 - Other Race = 37
 - Unknown = 481
 - **Rarest Race/Ethnicity¹**
 - American Indian/Alaska Native = 262
 - Asian = 130
 - Black = 91
 - Hispanic = 384
 - **Sex¹**
 - Female = 7,044
 - Male = 6,230
 - Unknown = 49
 - **Age Groups¹**
 - 5 to 11 = 54
 - 12 to 17 = 410
 - 18 to 19 = 175
 - 20 to 49 = 2,775
 - 50 to 64 = 3,446
 - 65+ = 6,463

¹ Reflect number of individuals with at least one dose as of 11/24/2021.

- Awarded two additional \$10,000 lottery prizes to adult residents.
- OHA completed a survey to assess health equity needs in Curry County; the survey was completed by OHA staff and county partners.
- OHA drafted an internal Curry County Vaccine Equity Assessment & Planning report on August 30, 2021. This report outlines OHA's efforts to address vaccination equity gaps among communities of color and other underserved community members in Curry County.
- Rarest race and ethnicity and age-related data are tracked weekly and shared during meetings and via a biweekly vaccination report.
- A diversity, equity, and inclusion workgroup for the vaccine equity efforts in Curry County was created and meets every other week.
- OHA initially funded two community-based organizations (CBOs) to support COVID specific work (including outreach/engagement and wraparound service support) for the COVID-19 response and were later able to secure funding for a third CBO. These organizations are Curry Homeless Coalition (CHC) in Gold Beach, and Brookings Harbor Community Helpers (BHCH) and St Timothy's Episcopal Church ("St Timothy's") in Brookings.
- OHA has supported culturally sensitive COVID-19 vaccination efforts and events within Curry County with an emphasis on serving low-income, houseless, Hispanic/Latina/o/x and communities of color.
- All vaccine messaging from OHA is translated into Spanish.
- Mobile vaccination efforts support the needs of the houseless community and community members who may otherwise not be able to travel to a vaccination site.
- OHA has secured support from all three county school districts to increase vaccination rates in residents under 18.
- Brookings-Harbor School District has offered their sites for vaccination events and have remained steadfast in their support of vaccinations and testing.
- OHA Field Operations coordinates a standing weekly vaccination event in Gold Beach. CHC is onsite each week to support the needs of houseless residents, and provide Spanish interpretation as needed.
- St. Timothy's operates as a primary vaccination, testing, and Covid education site with a focus on low-income and houseless communities, while making service available to all residents. Residents who test positive are provided needed wraparound services onsite immediately following the test result.

- Aware of the low vaccination rates among 12-17 year olds in Curry County, BHCH began working with the Youth Leadership Group at Brookings High School to develop a vaccine awareness event, now scheduled for December 5th from 1-4pm in Brookings. The youth are planning the event and developing fun activities, prizes, and surfacing questions that youth are asking around the school that make them hesitant to get vaccinated. These questions will be addressed as part of the event, and vaccinations will be made available.

Please provide an update on OHA and partners' efforts to address the vaccine needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the jurisdiction and share the outcomes of these efforts.

- OHA is working with agricultural employers to identify ways to vaccinate willing employees. However, many agricultural employers are reluctant to work with OHA.
- BHCH has engaged their bi-lingual staff to provide outreach in the fields where migrant seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) are working.
- Our partner, Del Norte County in California, has provided vaccines and testing to MSFW residing in Smith River, CA. These individuals often work in Curry County.
- OHA-CRRU mobile vaccination units have conducted outreach with MSFW.
- OHA has had limited success vaccinating timber industry employees. Efforts have been made to facilitate employee vaccinations with a local lumber company, but they have not been willing.

The pandemic has demonstrated and elevated the structural barriers that perpetrate health inequities. To dismantle those structural barriers in the long-term so that health equity can be achieved across all populations statewide, transforming how public health works with communities to engage in multi-directional communication and dialogue with, share power with and center in decision making communities most affected by those inequities is essential.

- a. Please provide an example of feedback OHA and its partners have received from a community experiencing vaccine inequities, how OHA and its partners worked collaboratively with***

the community to address the feedback and then shared back with the community the outcome of the resolution.

- During the first FEMA supported vaccination event in Brookings, it was noted that FEMA's association with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may create a barrier for the Hispanic/Latina/o/x community. After collaborating with our partners, OHA recreated its messaging materials for FEMA supported events to minimize the extent to which FEMA's name or logo were used. These changes reduced barriers to access and increased vaccine confidence in the Hispanic/Latina/o/x community.
- All three OHA-funded CBOs engage regularly with the unsheltered community in Curry County. The CBOs heard from this community that they were afraid to get the vaccine because they didn't have a place to recover if they had a reaction. CBO staff engaged OHA, shifting the use of ESF6-funded rooms to also offer shelter for two nights following vaccinations to ensure houseless community members had a safe place to respond to the effects of the vaccine.
- CHC and St Timothy's heard from the unhoused community that they "were going to get Covid so they'd have a place to sleep for two weeks". CHC utilized this feedback to lead a collaborative effort that engaged the OHA-funded CBOs, OHCS, DHS, OHA and their local Community Action Agency to offer non-Covid related warming shelters through this coming winter.
- All three OHA-funded CBOs doing COVID specific work report an increase in engagement of their services by the Latina/o/x population. All three now have bi-lingual staff who are part of the Latina/o/x community, and educational materials in Spanish, particularly for farmworkers. St Timothy's reports now going line by line through educational materials or applications with people in their homes with bi-lingual staff to ensure people understand the information and address their needs and concerns. BHCH reports an increase of approximately 22% in their services to the Latina/o/x community in south Curry County and Smith River (in CA). BHCH attributes this to the building of relationship and trust with this community and having staff who are bilingual/bicultural and part of the Latina/o/x community.

b. Please provide an example of how OHA and its partners have shared power with and centered the communities experiencing inequities in decision making to determine strategies to increase vaccine access for communities.

- OHA and its partners hold Town Halls and other meetings as opportunities for community members to share concerns, ask questions and learn about services.
- All three OHA-funded CBOs routinely invite feedback from low-income, houseless, and Hispanic/Latina/o/x communities to better understand needs and be responsive to community disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- All three OHA funded CBOs are developing trust and relationships with Latina/o/x communities in Curry county. This investment in building trust and relationships should lend to more pro-active engagement with Latina/o/x community in Curry county in future public health efforts and decision-making.