



#### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioners MIKE AINSWORTH CRAIG A. POPE LYLE MORDHORST

GREGORY P. HANSEN Administrative Officer

May 21, 2021

Dear Governor Brown,

We have each reviewed the attached responses to all questions and affirm that the LPHA jurisdiction will continue to make meaningful efforts to offer culturally-responsive, low-barrier vaccination opportunities, especially for populations in our jurisdiction experiencing racial or ethnic vaccine inequities. We commit to implementing this plan to close the racial and ethnic vaccine inequities in our jurisdiction.

The LPHA and its partners will continue to ensure that vaccine sites are culturally-responsive, linguistically appropriate and accessible to people with physical, intellectual and developmental disabilities and other unique vaccine access needs.

Thank you,

Craig A. Pope Board Chair

Dr. Jeffrey Humphrey DO Public Health Officer

Jacqui Umstead Public Health Administrator

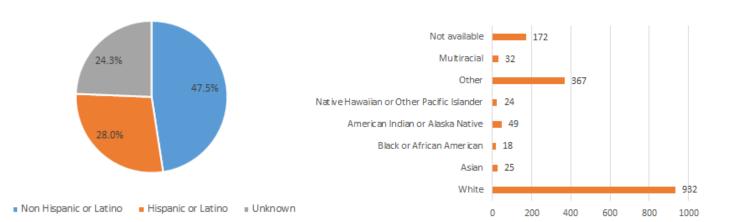
#### May 21, 2021

#### Polk County COVID-19 Vaccination Equity Plan

Polk County is committed to advancing Oregon's goal of reaching parity in vaccination rates by closing gaps in race and ethnicity vaccination rates by August 31, 2021 through:

- Ensuring vaccine access to all populations with a focus on populations experiencing racial and ethnic vaccine inequities
- Encouraging and facilitating local public health partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) and employers in their jurisdiction

This plan will serve as a foundation for post-COVID-19 equity work. The partnerships built among LPHA and Polk County Health System partners, school districts, Community Based Organizations, and the Coordinated Care Organization throughout the pandemic response have been the most robust in recent years. The new collaboration model developed will allow us to be intentional and impactful in reinventing how we will address health inequities in the future. Our commitment as a community to ensure everyone in our county has access to the resources and services needed relating to COVID-19 has given us the opportunity to become nimble, create new systems and openly recognize where there are existing gaps and opportunities for further collaboration. This has been a transformative change to enhance community health in Polk County that will become sustainable with our new model of collaboration which is built on transparency, excellent communication, and trust.



#### 1/1/2020-12/14/2020

Disease Burden of COVID-19 in Polk County

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<u>County</u>

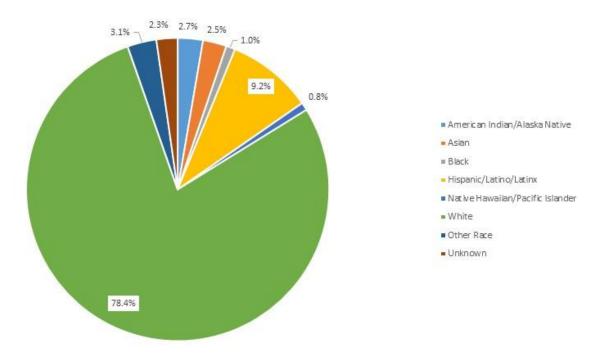


The collective efforts across the county have resulted in positive outcomes for our communities of color. The burden of COVID-19 disease from the onset of the pandemic for our Hispanic/Latino community was at 28% through December 14, 2020. Beginning December 15, 2020 that rate has decreased to 17%. The multi pronged approach to safety measures promoted through our collaborative efforts demonstrate that current strategies have been successful in reducing the burden of disease for this population, but there is still more work to be done. As we look at reducing the burden of disease among our community members of other enthic groups, we will look at implementing best practices and tailored approaches to outreach and engagement to truly understand the needs of all of our community members.

1. Please review race/ethnicity data for the LPHA jurisdiction on the OHA website and the race/ethnicity vaccination rate data shared weekly with the LPHA. Based on the experience of the LPHA and its partners, including community-based organizations, what are the operational, policy, and systemic barriers or strengths demonstrated in these data?

#### Total Vaccinated by Race/Ethnicity (all ages) in Polk County, %

As of 5/24/2021



#### Vaccination Rate by Race/Ethnicity in Polk County

As of 5/24/2021

Demographic Group	Estimated Population	Number Vaccinated	Percentage Vaccinated
American Indian/Alaska Native	3,423	1088	32%
Asian	2,677	1024	38%
Black	1,596	393	25%
Hispanic/Latino/Latinx	12,472	3,712	30%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	824	340	41%
White	79,863	31,794	40%
Other Race	3,254	913	28%

Current data demonstrates the lowest percentage of vaccination among our *Black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino/Latinx* and our community members identifying as *Other Race.* 

- Operational Barriers:
  - Limited staff capacity to focus on race/ethnicity and culturally specific outreach
  - No weekend or evening opportunities for vaccination
  - Transportation barriers (especially for rural areas)
  - Identifying and outreaching to our transient population that travel daily across county boundaries
- Systemic Barriers:
  - Lack of confidence in the vaccine, perception that it was created too quickly and other misinformation
  - Historical trauma and lack of trust in the government among our non-white community
  - Identifying the right messenger(s) for each population group
  - Lack of organizational infrastructure to strengthen communication strategies to reach diverse populations (diverse media outlets such as youtube, tik tok, instagram)
- Policy Barriers:
  - Some local pharmacies and healthcare entities are requiring health insurance, identification and/or social security information in order to secure a vaccination appointment.
  - Multiple vaccine clinic appointments are only available online. Some pharmacies do not offer online vaccination registration in languages other than English.
- Operational strengths:
  - Established relationship with Salem Health; primary vaccinator in Polk County. In addition to the Polk County mass vaccination site at Western Oregon University, the mobile vaccine unit's capability has allowed us to expand targeted event opportunities. Weekend and evening hours are currently being explored.
  - The Federally Qualified Health Center, Northwest Human Services with two locations in Polk County is now offering walk-in vaccine access which will facilitate access for communities of color that do not feel comfortable accessing a mass vaccination site
  - School Based Health Center (SBHC) in the county has started offering the vaccine
  - Plans for mobile vaccine clinics at local high schools in May and June
- Systemic strengths:
  - Forming relationships with Community Based Organizations who are new to serving Polk County
  - Collaboration with existing Community Based Organizations to inform and educate community members using culturally appropriate methods

- Policy strengths:
  - Change in information required to make an appointment (requiring minimal information by registering as a guest) and increased communication to ensure individuals know that identification, health insurance and social security information are not required
  - Warm line created by LPHA to assist community members who lack internet access/know how to schedule vaccination appointments
  - State of Oregon considerations around equity and vaccine access

### 2. What steps have the LPHA and its partners already taken to address specific racial and ethnic vaccination inequities in the community?

- Targeted vaccine events led by Salem Health partners. This is ongoing and consists of multiple mobile vaccination clinics being held at agricultural sites, large employer groups and a faith based organization primarily employing and serving individuals of various backgrounds (majority from the Latino and Latinx communities). Other event locations include Wallace Marine Park to offer vaccination to our houseless population as well as Polk Free clinic during a health screening day to vaccinate individuals without insurance. Over 2200 vaccine doses have been administered at these mobile vaccine events.
- Scheduled blocked time at the Western Oregon University mass vaccination site for smaller farms or businesses to send their employees to be vaccinated. Additional Spanish interpreters were made available.
- Increased language access support (on site interpreters and materials available in multiple languages) at mass vaccination clinic at Western Oregon University
- The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have held vaccination clinics available to their tribal members and then opened to surrounding communities early on in the vaccination process
- Kaiser Permanente sponsored a vaccine clinic targeting the Pacific Islander community, utilizing multiple local CBOs to encourage participation. It was available to both Marion and Polk County community members and resulted in 159 vaccinations.
- Formation of the Polk County Vaccine Access and Equity committee which consists of community based organizations, community health partners and other stakeholders to identify and address gaps and barriers to vaccine access, focusing on groups with health disparities such as communities of color. Current representation includes: Polk County Public Health, Salem Health/West Valley Hospital, Interface Network, Mano a Mano, Western Oregon University, Northwest Human Services (FQHC), Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub, Kaiser Permanente, Pacific Source Community Solutions, Polk County Behavioral Health, Polk County Developmental Disability Services, Northwest Senior and Disability Services, Capaces Leadership, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN), City of Independence, COFA Alliance National Network, Family Building Blocks, Catholic Community Services.
- Polk County Public Health has activated a warm vaccine line with bilingual (Spanish) personnel and access to other languages as needed. This line is supported by Public Health workers hired by the LPHA for Covid response.
- Collaboration with community based organizations and community partners such as Interface Network, Mano a Mano, Farmworker Housing Development Corporation,

Micronesian Islander Community and Salem Health to provide support at low barrier targeted vaccine events

- Collaboration in the Vaccine Outreach and Education committee established by Pacific Source Community Solutions, the CCO covering Polk and Marion counties that focuses on creating and identifying low barrier vaccine opportunities for populations experiencing health disparities such as communities of color
- Participation in the Marion and Polk Houseless Outreach Coordination meeting established by Pacific Source Community Solutions which meets weekly to identify and address barriers to vaccination for our houseless population and results in planned vaccine events
- Participation in the Marion and Polk County Mobile Vaccine Committee weekly meeting established by Salem Health to identify gaps in vaccination and plan mobile vaccine events to address those gaps
- Support budget proposals of CBOs that are participating in vaccine outreach and education
- Participation in bi-weekly meeting with Polk County school superintendents to review Covid disease trends and vaccination; identifying gaps and barriers
- The FQHC is operating a vaccine clinic out of one of our Behavioral Health clinics in West Salem, initially offering vaccination to their clients but has now been expanded to offer vaccination to the community through appointment or walk in. Language interpreting services are available onsite.
- Case investigator and contact tracing staff discuss vaccine options with case and/or close contact and answer vaccine related questions/provide information as necessary during the interview. Interpreting services in multiple languages are available for these interviews

# 3. What steps do the LPHA and its partners plan to take to continue to address these inequities in the jurisdiction?

- Continue to offer targeted mobile vaccine clinics to agriculture sites, local businesses and faith based organizations that have a workforce or population that consists of communities of color
- Explore additional vaccine events in collaboration with Kaiser Permanente or other community medical partners focusing on the Pacific Islander community
- Increase collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to explore ways to increase vaccination rates of American Indians/Alaska Natives in our community through mobile vaccination clinics or other identified needs
- Continue to partner with trusted community based organizations and community partners to identify vaccine opportunities with minimal barriers to reach our hardest to reach populations that may be experiencing inequities
- Continue participating and partnering with Marion and Polk partners through the Vaccine Outreach and Education committee to continue producing outreach materials and identifying outreach strategies for our communities of color
- Continue to participate in the Marion and Polk Houseless Outreach Coordination meeting established by Pacific Source CCO to identify and help address barriers to vaccination for our houseless community

- Continue to convene the Polk County COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Equity committee meetings to review current vaccination rates of populations experiencing health disparities and make plans to address any gaps or barriers identified. This will include using our CBOs to outreach to these populations for information, education and offer targeted vaccine events when need is determined.
- OHA Covid Response and Recovery Unit is actively planning multiple targeted vaccination events at a pharmacy chain in Polk and Marion counties. Event is planned with low barrier scheduling, minimal documentation requirements and offered during evening hours for increased accessibility. These events will be targeted to communities of color.
- SBHC will begin producing videos around health and wellness featuring students and families that will include vaccine promotion. Video to premiere on June 15th, 2021.
- Strengthen current partnerships and explore new partnerships with faith based organizations with intent to offer mobile vaccine events, provide outreach material and education
- Continue to leverage funds to support ongoing CBO and LPHA work related to addressing health inequities in the county. OHA has funded 12 CBOs that will work in Polk County providing vaccine outreach and education. These CBOs include: Catholic Community Services, Community Services Consortium, Creating Opportunities, Family Building Blocks, Interface Network, Mano a Mano, Metropolitan Affordable Housing Corporation, Recovery Outreach Community Center, Salem Leaders Foundation, Seed of Faith Ministries, We Can Do Better, Western Oregon University Foundation.

# 4. What plan does the LPHA and its partners have to close the specific vaccine equity gaps among specific racial and ethnic populations?

- Partnering with Marion County Health & Human Services, Interface Network, and Salem Health to initiate a media campaign with Univision to reach our Latino/Latinx communities in the region. This campaign will have a multipronged approach to reach communities through social media platforms, television and text messages.
- Explore possibility of offering the vaccine within the Polk County Public Health clinic which provides safety gap vaccines to our community including our communities of color
- Provide CBOs with education/information to give to individuals who are receiving wraparound services. Vaccine education training for staff will be offered by the LPHA and/or Boost training.
- Explore a bilingual (Spanish) Vaccine Navigator to be housed in a CBO who can answer vaccine related questions and help individuals sign up for vaccine events
- Increase communication and outreach for CBO led vaccine events in Polk and surrounding counties through media campaigns
- Collaborate with the 12 local CBOs who are funded by OHA to provide vaccine outreach and education. These CBOs serve different populations in our county including Black/African American, African Immigrant, Immigrant and Refugee, Latinx, Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers, Asian and Pacific Islander, Slavic/Russian Community, Tribal members as well as LGBTQIA+, older adults, youth and families, People with disabilities and their families, houseless, faith communities, Individuals experiencing Mental Health or Substance Abuse Disorder. Each CBO has developed a vaccine outreach and education plan which will be reviewed monthly at the Polk Collaborative Meeting. Plans

for LPHA support will be determined but can include assistance with vaccine event promotion, vaccine event logistics, or other needs as identified.

- Offer support to the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde for vaccination of American Indian/Alaska Native population through mobile vaccination clinics
- OHA Covid Response and Recovery Unit will be setting up a mobile vaccine event for a week this summer. Plan to offer the vaccine during evening and weekend hours to target populations, including MSFWs that work during the weekdays.
- 5. OHA has provided LPHAs county level survey data from OHA funded CBOs indicating their preferred involvement in vaccination efforts. In reviewing the CBO survey results that outline the interest of CBOs in your community to host, support, and/or promote vaccine events in your jurisdiction:

What steps are the LPHA and its partners taking to engage and actively partner with these and other organizations to increase meaningful, culturally responsive, low-barrier access to vaccines?

- See answer #4 plus this additional information:
- Working with specific CBOs to create educational materials and advertising in multiple languages
- Working with CBOs who serve Latinx population to offer low barrier vaccine events
- Collaborating with CBOs on providing culturally appropriate educational information about the Polk County mass vaccination site at Western Oregon University
- Collaboration with CBOs serving Asian and Pacific Islander communities to assess language needs of vaccine information and ensure adequate access to vaccine opportunities
- Continued collaboration with Salem Heath to identify access points in the community for vaccination. Consider pop up vaccine clinics in parking lots and other highly visible locations in the community for walk in vaccinations. Interpreting in multiple languages will be available.
- Leverage partnerships with EMS for in home vaccination and other vaccination efforts as needed

# 6. How will the LPHA and its partners ensure that CBOs and navigators are aware of vaccine events so they can assist with registration and outreach as able?

- Create a monthly newsletter (or more frequently as needed) for CBOs and other community partners to ensure that all vaccine event information is available for dissemination
- Advertise CBO vaccine events on our Facebook page
- Strengthen and improve communication between LHPA and OHA Community Engagement Coordinators to ensure adequate communication about upcoming events is shared with CBOs and navigators
- Explore non-traditional and traditional communication strategies to ensure vaccine events in the county are promoted across our communities, including opportunities for partnership and volunteering

 Invite CBOs to attend the Marion and Polk community partner meetings such as the Marion and Polk County Outreach and Education Committee and the Marion and Polk County Mobile Vaccine Committee

7. The agricultural employer survey results were shared with the LPHA and the LPHA has provided information to its Regional Emergency Coordinator (REC) about how the LPHA and its partners plan to use the survey results. OHA will be reviewing the information provided by the LPHA to the REC. Does the LPHA have any additional updates regarding work to serve agricultural workers in its jurisdiction since the LPHA last provided information to the REC?

- Additional outreach to agricultural employers by LPHA resulted in multiple successful mobile vaccine events
- LPHA made multiple outreach attempts to farms that have not yet engaged with the LPHA to assess need and offer a vaccine event that was either on-site or at a vaccine clinic with a time reserved specifically for their employees. This resulted in smaller farms being offered vaccination at the Western Oregon University mass vaccination site during blocked time periods.
- Disseminate information about local and regional vaccine events to county agricultural employers
- Establish additional communication pathways with agricultural employers through local farmers and farming agencies for disseminating information on vaccine opportunities in the county
- Continue to work with CBOs who work with migrant farm workers to offer further mobile vaccination clinics as need indicates

# 8. What steps have the LPHA and its partners taken to actively address vaccine confidence in the community?

- Participation in the Vaccine Outreach and Education committee facilitated by Pacific Source CCO. The committee produced a variety of outreach materials including:
  - A video in <u>English</u> and English with <u>Spanish</u> subtitles for Marion and Polk Counties featuring trusted community leaders advocating for the COVID-19 vaccine
  - An <u>English</u> and <u>Spanish</u> video discuss safety and effectiveness of the covid vaccine
  - Fliers featuring local community leaders from a variety of ethnic/racial backgrounds. These were disseminated to the Vaccine Outreach and Education committee and shared broadly on social media. Two examples:



- Participation in and promotion of a Spanish Vaccine Informational <u>video</u> produced by Salem Health that includes vaccine promotion from a local community faith leader
- Created a <u>video</u> to explain mRNA vaccines in English with Spanish subtitles available when Pfizer and Modern vaccines were first made available
- Pacific Source Community Solutions partnered with Boost to provide a provider training on addressing vaccine hesitancy with patients on 3/11/21 and 3/12/21
- Consistent promotion of vaccine information on Facebook including OHA supplied vaccine promotional materials, City of Woodburn sponsored video about Johnson & Johnson vaccine in English and Spanish
- Western Oregon University Community Health project staff distributed door hangers in English/Spanish with vaccine access information
- Maintain PCPH website updated with latest Covid vaccine information

# 9. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to continue addressing vaccine confidence?

- Ongoing work with Interface Network, PSCS, Salem Health, MCHHS to create a Spanish multimedia campaign promoting Covid vaccination
- Continue to disseminate Covid vaccine information and promotion at weekly public Board of Commissioner meetings
- Continue to disseminate Covid vaccine promotion information via Facebook and our website using materials from multiple partners including OHA, Pacific Source Community Solutions and CBOs
- Utilize Boost to provide a a 'train the trainer' vaccine confidence training with community leaders and CBOs

- Partner with CBOs who work with our communities of color, specifically African American/Black and Asian and Pacific Islander communities to understand barriers or misinformation that deters vaccination. Use this information to inform specific communication strategies. Utilize existing vaccine promotion tools such as <u>Woven with</u> <u>Elders</u>. Utilize surveys and focus groups as necessary to gather sufficient information.
- Partner with tribal communities to develop a multimedia campaign to promote vaccine confidence

10. What is the communications plan to dispel misinformation through a comprehensive, multi-modal communications strategy for communities experiencing racial and ethnic vaccine inequities in your jurisdiction?

Examples could include: Spanish language radio spots, physically distanced outdoor information fair, training local faith leaders and equipping them with vaccine facts and information to refer a community member to a health care professional for follow up, etc.

- See answer #9 plus this additional information:
- Spanish language radio ads through La Campeona
- Univision campaign with a multipronged approach to reach Latino/Latinx communities through social media platforms, television, and text messages
- Bilingual (Spanish) utility bill inserts through the county with general information on the vaccine
- Quarterly newsletter for older adults and Latinx families developed by WOU Community/Public Health program in collaboration with local partners
- Postcards, emails and social media posts to WOU students, families, faculty and staff by WOU Community/Public Health program
- Salem Health video tour of the WOU vaccine clinic in Spanish published on PCPH website and facebook
- Explore reaching out to additional Faith Based Leaders for collaboration to provide accurate, factual information for dissemination to their parishioners and help dispel any vaccine myths

### 11. How has and how will the LPHA and its partners ensure language accessibility at vaccine events?

- Onsite Spanish interpreters have been available at vaccination clinics throughout the county
- Access to additional languages (200+) have been available via telephone or video through Salem Health
- Information for vaccine events is posted on Polk County Public Health's Facebook page in both English and Spanish
- Utilize CBOs with staff who speak language of targeted events to assist with events. This can include multiple languages in addition to Spanish such as Marshallese, Chuukese, Russian, Chinese
- For community members who are unable to sign themselves up for a vaccine appointment due to lack of internet access, low English proficiency the Polk County

Public Health warm line is available. Multiple languages can be access through our interpreter service

#### 12. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to decrease transportation barriers to accessing the vaccine?

- Explore using COVID funding to pay for transportation for people unable to access a vaccine clinic
- Continue to offer vaccines to our homebound population through a mobile vaccination program for those who are physically unable to access a vaccine site
- Potential onsite vaccination at rural local high schools in collaboration with Rite-Aid
- West Valley Health/Salem Health will be hosting vaccine clinics at two local school districts; modeling off the success at St. Patrick Church in Independence
- Continue to partner with CBOs to host new vaccination sites based on zip code vaccination rate data and vaccine deserts
- Kaiser Permanente has a contract with Medical Teams International for a mobile vaccine unit as needed

# 13. What plans do the LPHA and its partners have to ensure meaningful, low-barrier vaccine access for youth, especially those from Black, Indigenous, Tribal and other communities experiencing inequities in COVID-19 disease, death and vaccination?

- Partner with schools and the school district to provide vaccination opportunities to the 12 and older population. Three mobile vaccine events are currently planned for three different school districts. Further outreach to the other two school districts is planned.
- Covid vaccine is now available at the School Based Health Center located in the Central School District. Promote this option on Facebook and on our website.
- Update information on Facebook and county website regarding vaccination opportunities for youth, including information on consent
- Collaborate with tribal partners to assess need for a mobile vaccination clinic at schools located on tribal land
- Conduct an online survey of parents addressing vaccine intention and barriers to vaccination of their children
- Utilize Boost Oregon to provide a virtual community education forum for parents to provide information about the vaccine and answer questions Use results from the parent online survey to guide the information provided in the forum. Host forum in multiple languages as determined by need
- Continue to meet with multiple school superintendents every 2 weeks to discuss vaccination data, identify gaps and barriers
- Consider summer programs for youth as potential sites for mobile vaccination events
- Consider incentives for youth and young adults

14. How will the LPHA and its partners regularly report on progress to and engage with community leaders from the Black, Indigenous, Tribal, other communities of color to regularly review progress on its vaccine equity plans and reassess strategies as needed?

- Continue to regularly convene our COVID Vaccine Access and Equity committee to review data, trends and strategies. We will re-invite our tribal partners and both OHA funded and non OHA funded CBOs to ensure representation of communities of color. Minutes of the meeting will be disseminated to all interested parties.
- Continue assessing needs through the Marion-Polk County Mobile Vaccine Committee work based on data and feedback from our community partners and members
- Data brief developed by the WOU Community Health + Polk County COVID-19 Project to include more information related to vaccination progress among different groups
- Continue participation in the Vaccine Outreach and Education committee facilitated by Pacific Source CCO
- Continue participation in monthly Polk Collaborative meeting with CBOs
- Continue to report progress and provide current vaccination rates by race/ethnicity on our website, Facebook and presented to our Board of Commissioners at the public weekly meeting
- Include vaccination data in our CBO/community partner newsletter