

CHCF CHIP Summary

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CHIP title: The Road to COVID-19 Immunity: Building Trust while Combating Misinformation

Project Description:

The politicization and circulating misinformation on the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine has led to increased vaccine hesitancy. In particular, Black and Latino communities have suffered the burden of infections and death, yet lag in their vaccination rates. Based on experience, and research done on these local communities, we know that if information is scientifically accurate, but not adapted to the local contexts, people are less likely to trust the information and may look elsewhere for answers. Through my CHIP project I worked to develop a program where organizations trusted by the community (schools, CBOs, religious organizations etc.) could look to their local healthcare facility/system to tap into health experts that could deliver accurate information on the pandemic and vaccine. Ultimately building trust while combating misinformation.

Key Findings and Lessons Learned:

- The project was started in December of 2020, after the COVID-19 vaccine was available.
- Did interviews with Harbor-UCLA leadership, physicians working with CBOs, LAUSD leaders and SAUSD leaders.
- Developed a diverse speakers bureau with a focus on Black and Latino physicians: Recruited 20 individuals to speak on rotating basis.
- The first rollout was done at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, with hesitant staff, and identified questions and concerns they had, adjusting the PowerPoint deck to include the information.
- We partnered with local Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Los Angeles Unified School District: Gardena Community of Schools and Santa Ana Unified School District; which were the “trusted platform” and hosted these events prior to vaccine rollouts.
- Depending on what the need was, we would send Spanish or English-speaking physicians to participate by giving the townhalls or answering chat questions in real time.
- Had more than 45 town halls, reaching thousands of community members.

Next Steps:

- Develop an online presence, where the physicians can be showcased, and where organizations can contact us for assistance.
- Increase our involvement with elementary schools to promote vaccination among 5-17y school aged children, as the vaccination mandate loops in the near future.
- Expand the network of CBOs that use the local physician speakers bureau and expand to other communities with low vaccination rates.
- Switch from discussion on COVID-19 to other illnesses/pathogens and other vaccines.
- Partnering with groups like Immunization Coalition of Los Angeles Committee (ICLAC) to build a program that can scale and incorporate other health systems, insurance companies, FQHC etc.