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Center for Closing the Health Gap to Present Latest Research Findings on Impact of COVID-19 Vaccines on Black Community to Hamilton County

CINCINNATI, OHIO – JANUARY 11, 2021 – The Center for Closing the Health Gap – in partnership with Hamilton County – has completed its latest round of comprehensive research to understand the evolving attitudes, perceptions and barriers regarding the COVID-19 vaccines among Black Hamilton County and Greater Cincinnati residents. The Health Gap, which has been at the forefront of education and awareness about COVID since the pandemic started, continued its focus on research with the goal of raising awareness, building knowledge, and expanding capacity to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable Black and Brown communities. Nearly 200 African Americans were recruited via community outreach. The data was collected between August and early November 2021.

Key research findings include:

- 53% of the 168 participants in the quantitative study have received the vaccine; 47% have not. This percentage is higher than the county, state, and national reported vaccination rates for African Americans as of Nov 1, 2021.
- 47% of 168 surveyed have not been vaccinated. More than half of unvaccinated respondents said they are unlikely to get vaccinated.
 - 39% Extremely Unlikely
 - 15% Unlikely
 - 22% Neutral
 - 20% Likely
 - 4% Extremely Likely
- Of the 24% unvaccinated who plan to get vaccinated, about 40% intend to do so within a few weeks of taking the survey.

<u>Top reasons for getting vaccinated within the next three months:</u>	
33%	I have enough information on the vaccine to make my decision
28%	The number of cases are rising, so I want to get the vaccine
17%	My family and friends have got the vaccine
11%	Enough time has gone by to prove that the vaccine is safe
6%	My employer has mandated vaccination
6%	Concerts, theaters, clubs and other public events are starting to require vaccination proof

<u>Top reasons for not getting the vaccine</u>	
I do not trust the vaccines are safe	30%
I am worried about the long-term effects	29%

I don't trust the government	27%
I don't trust the medical field	19%
COVID-19 pandemic is basically over so there is no need	6%

Renee Mahaffey Harris, President and CEO of the Center for Closing the Health Gap and lead architect of the research, said the results show that the effort to raise awareness and ease vaccine hesitancy among African Americans has been effective, but continued outreach is needed in the face of new surges and continued high rates of cases, hospitalizations and death.

“We’re approaching two years of dealing with the pandemic but the fight is not over,” said Harris. “Vaccination still remains our best path to ending COVID-19, so remain vigilant in sharing facts, answering questions, and meeting people where they are in their vaccine decision-making. This latest research gives us an important glimpse into how our Black community is processing information and making decisions for themselves and their families. It also gives us a clear mandate to continue educating and engaging communities to improve health outcomes related to COVID and improve health disparities for future generations.”

The Health Gap recently launched a new campaign featuring powerful video testimonials from high school students across the region who have received the vaccine, sharing their stories about why they did it and the potential impact it will have on their families, schools and neighborhoods.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve been working non-stop to fill the information gap with facts and data for people and families who may not otherwise have access to a trusted data source,” added Harris. “We know people are looking at all the information in different ways and at different speeds, so we want to be proactive in providing more stories, more facts and more resources to meet people where they are in the decision process.”

To access the full research report, and see campaign materials and other resources, visit <https://WeMustSaveUs.com> and <https://covid19communityresources.com>.

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