COVID-19 Vaccination Information & Uptake

Vaccines

Vaccinations provide a level of protection from viruses that may otherwise cause temporary or permanent harm. For responders working the frontlines who experience high risk of exposure, vaccination is an important step in protecting their health and enabling them to continue to protect the health of the public (CDC, March 21, 2021). Findings indicate opportunities for improving vaccine uptake.

Vaccine-Related Encouragement & Information

A sizeable number of participants felt vaccination was strongly encouraged at their organizations (INT. 1403, INT. 2395, INT. 5116, INT. 5548, INT. 7639, INT. 8985, INT. 4156). Those whose organization did not actively encourage the vaccine outright tended to provide responders with informational resources.

I don't know if they are encouraged. I don't know if they're discouraged. I think they made it eventually really readily available. They said, here's your dates and here's an open date. And they gave a lot of information if you chose to do it. (INT. 3693)

Participants reported incentives were generally not promoted as a way to encourage their vaccination (INT. 6542, INT. 5116, INT. 2395). One responder who does firefighting and EMS response reported that incentives were “kind of a sore subject that we've been talking about lately. You know, why doesn't our insurance give us a discount or why doesn't the city incentivize it somehow?” (INT. 3932)

Responders reported seeking accurate information about the vaccine from resources such as the CDC, local hospitals, health departments, and their management teams (INT. 3602, INT. 5116, INT. 6542).

Social media was not seen as a reliable place to access information (INT. 1403, INT. 3602, INT. 3693, INT. 6542). One firefighter stated, “we both know that the reality is that whatever you read on social media has got about a 10 percent truth factor to it.” (INT. 5548)
**Vaccine Availability**

First responders were primarily informed about vaccination availability through email. Emails contained links for registration, information about the locations and dates, and included informational resources. This made responders feel vaccination was readily available (INT. 2395, INT. 3693, INT. 3932).

Participants who reported issues with accessibility cited a lack of preparation by their local health departments and delays in qualifying for vaccination due to limited supplies (INT. 3602, INT. 5116, INT. 7639). These responders often came from rural communities (INT. 3062, INT. 5116).

**Ways to Encourage Vaccine Uptake**

Vaccine uptake improves the ability of frontline responders to safely support their communities by reducing their likelihood of infection and transmission to at-risk community members. There are opportunities to improve uptake among first responders through facilitated trainings and direct information sharing. Predicted emergency plans, established at agency, local, and state levels, are also essential to delivering vaccines to responders, managing the logistics of timely distribution, and preparing for future crises. Research shows that vaccine acceptance rates increase when first responder leadership provides education on the safety, efficacy, and benefit of vaccination, along with ensuring minimal associated costs and barriers to access (Glaser et al., 2011).

**References**


**Additional Information on Vaccines**

- Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines (cdc.gov)
- Safety of COVID-19 Vaccines (cdc.gov)
- State Strategies to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake in Rural Communities (National Governors Association)
- Visit our Covid-19 Topic Dashboard for further insight into how the first responder community can be supported in the future.

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This project is funded by the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Social Science Technology Center as Task 2 of “Advance Situational Awareness Capabilities in Support of Targeted Violent and Threat Prevention in the United States” (award #70RSAT20FR000082). The views and conclusions contained in the document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the University of Maryland, Second Sight Training Systems, or START.