

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Taking Stock of the Aging Policy Landscape for 2021

Action Conversation

Vaccine – Coordinate and Share Best Practices for Communication and Distribution

We're grateful to Alameda County Public Health Department staff who joined us in this session and paid such close attention. The following captures the conversation the group had and ideas that were elevated in response to a series of questions. As you read through the brainstorming you'll see ideas that PH has already taken and run with, including contracting with 211 so that people can do vaccination appointments by phone.

What are your "ah-ha" moments and take-aways from this morning's presentations as they relate to the pandemic, its impact on older people, and the efforts to vaccinate at-risk community members?

- One take away from today's session is that there are always needs/gaps to fulfill. concerns regarding access + ripple affect of the Pandemic to our older adults

What concerns do you have that you think we should all be mindful of? What outstanding questions do you have?

- Very concerned about the high levels of fears in the community. the myths that lots of people die from vaccine.
- Lots of concern about accessibility, digital divide, transportation for COVAX.
- Concerns and questions about home care workers who don't work for a company or government program; the disproportionate number of Black and Latinx people vaccinated; the need to vaccinate high-risk older people (and younger adults)
- No access to appointments for seniors who do not have ability to even do phone appointments.
- I'm concerned about the homeless receiving the vaccinations.
- The more technology is required to sign up for testing or vaccination, the harder it is for seniors and the economically disadvantaged to access these treatments.
- How to address people avoiding getting the vaccine due to distrust of medical/government institutions
- We have a lot of senior volunteers keep the nutrition safety net going...how do we ensure they are covered too
- Concerns about what to believe regarding the current vaccine covering the new strains.
- The under reporting of deaths in nursing homes.
- Concern about timing of vaccines, access. misunderstandings / expectations.
- I'm very concerned about inequity in vaccine distribution so far. We need to know why that is happening in order to fully address it.
- Disconnect between messaging from the state/governor and what is actually happening/available in Alameda County

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How can the unique needs of older people be addressed through coordination and communication?

- Could IHSS workers be leveraged to vaccinate vulnerable seniors?
- I feel we need outreach, media to encourage communities of color African American, Latin X, etc.. Also dealing with the misinformation about vaccines.
- More community outreach... make info available by phone, radio, tv, not just internet
- Plan vaccinations at people's homes. While there are obvious technical challenges to this, we need to find solutions for people who are homebound or not able to travel.
- Clear calendars/schedules from the County to all of us (health, CBO, pharmacies) to let people know when/where they can get a vaccine. it's confusing for those on Kaiser or Sutter health vs not on that.
- Coordinated vaccine information.
- Use churches for outreach and messaging.
- Use 211 to help callers register and make appointments, and maybe to contact people and schedule appointments when it's their turn. Multi-lingual call center is needed (can 211 do this?).
- In addition to 211, could we leverage the IOA Friendship Line or another statewide or local hotline to call out to seniors and provide them with information about COVID vaccines?
- For transportation, would it be possible to connect with local school bus lines to transport seniors to COVID vaccine clinics? This may not be feasible given considerations for mobility issues (i.e. getting on and off bus) as well as considerations for spacing on the bus to limit transmission risk, but it could be a helpful partnership to support both older adults and local bus lines.
- Has it been considered to use a mobile unit to go to people's homes and doing the vaccinations in the van?

What concrete resources do you have to offer?

- I have been registering seniors in Berkeley for the vaccination appts. and most seniors don't have emails. I have been using mine for the seniors we work with. We at the senior centers have been calling those 75 and up at higher risk or on Meals on Wheels or food deliveries and just sent flyers with lunch deliveries. It has been difficult when each facility is a different place with vaccine distribution, Kaiser, Sutter, John Muir and having to go to each website to find information with seniors.
- The board of election officials could be helpful in identifying where the seniors are and contacting them with info on how to secure a vaccine.
- 211 has the ability to set up free rides for seniors, and could use those for vaccine appointments. [Alison DeJung, 211, adejung@edenir.org]

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- Mayor Schaaf was interested in institutionalize the Great Oakland Check-in. Can we work with them again to cold call seniors with COVAX information? (Lauren from Public Health says PH has been in conversation with City of Oakland about the Great Oakland Check in-that's a great idea. They are anticipating their next Check in is in March.)
- Using Meals On Wheels to outreach to homebound seniors (may not work for tasks that require time, as there are strict temperature requirements).
- Senior Centers can call and inform their members.
- Can senior centers become vaccine "hubs"? San Leandro Senior Center has offered to serve as a vaccination hub, when County is ready and vaccine supply allows. City of Fremont is also set up for drive through and is very willing.
- United Seniors is ready to be a channel to communicate to seniors county-wide. USOAC / Mary Bradd/510-729-0852
- Senior & Disability Action has a google doc COVID-19 info page:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bAPrAXuA2rC7Oz-evT65S2ScfdtMHmCAz3soQSNwZdU/edit>

What do you need in order to inform and assist your community?

- Information about how to travel safely in a care with a passenger (or as a passenger).
- highlighting alternative practices for those who do not want the vaccine (improving immune system, exercise, proper nutrition, stress reduction.. etc)
- Accurate and updated information, literature.
- I think we need more community forums to have seniors be able to discuss their concerns about the vaccine, distrust from communities of color, about the vaccine. These forums need to have phone vaccine.
- Have trustworthy people at our senior meals sites and other places where seniors can talk - physically distanced - about the issues around the vaccines.
- Loosen up the requirements for Paratransit for people seeking 1-time rides.

What does equity look like and feel like in relation to vaccine distribution?

- Multi-language, clear and simple flyers.
- Outreach to faith base organizations.
- Once the positivity rates and death rates look like the population.
- When communities of color and seniors are receiving the vaccines at the same rate. The rates of vaccination for African American, LatinX, Native communities are at such lower numbers.