

COVID COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUPPORTED BY PHI - TTH

Grant Period: June 01, 2021 – April 30, 2022

BACKGROUND & TARGET POPULATION

While Black individuals are overrepresented in severe COVID-19 cases and deaths, **in Fresno the Black population vaccination rate is the lowest** across all race and ethnicity.

Although COVID-19 vaccines were recommended for pregnant populations since the summer of 2021, **effective messaging to pregnant persons was not prioritized adequately**. Considering that Black women and babies disproportionately experience preterm birth and Black babies are over 3 times more likely to die during their first year of life, it is essential to build COVID education campaign that prioritizes Black women.

"Taking care of yourself is the first step of taking care of your baby."

APPROACH / FOCUS

To best increase safety in the community, we are intentional about building durable relationships and positioning ourselves as a trusted partner of local stakeholders, CBOs and community.

Regarding the planning of our operations, **our work also followed needs/ trends in the community**. Before the school year started, we focused our efforts on reaching out to youth, and offering testing and vaccination (led by the African American Coalition) through pop-up clinics where the schools are located in the prioritized zip codes. This also helped reach mothers.

As more data came on vaccination being safe for pregnant populations and how we learn about breastfeeding, and COVID and preterm birth, we started to solely focus on pregnant population and create messaging around the protection of babies.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Community outreach** through canvassing, phone banking, social media promotions, online panels, providing support for homebound individuals, and town hall meetings
- **Community health briefs** (increasing trust in vaccines, mask guidance)
- **Special stakeholder engagement:** raising awareness of specific pregnancy and birth-related experiences due to COVID-19 and beyond (doula support, power-sharing guidance)
- Supported leadership efforts of United Way of Fresno Madera Counties to **build the framework for and launch the African American Advancement Project** - Strengthening Black capacity
- **Special community events** - "Back to School Nights" led by the African American Coalition; Sunday Funday's hosted by FMBCC--thank you Central Valley Black Nurses Association for representing BWPC!)
- **Drive -thru event** / COVID preparedness bags / at-home test distribution

PRIORITIZED ACTIVITIES

Learn the facts! As we have been seeing fear and misinformation in the community, at mid-point of this grant, we allocated more resources to COVID-19 education. We have been using our social media and website to share facts and direct the community toward information resources. www.blackwpc.org/covid

Stakeholder engagement: Increasing BWPC's visibility and building confidence through providing a roadmap to our work, strategy and the ways in which we engage with the community.

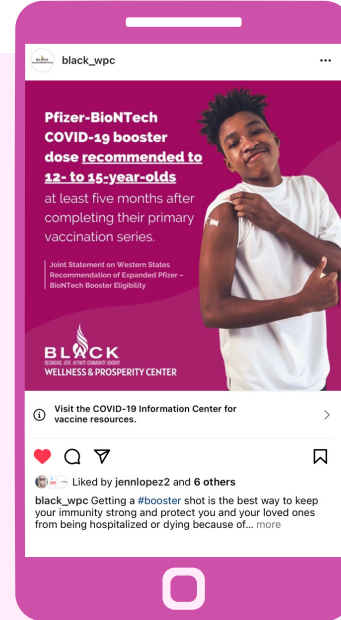
LEARNINGS

- **Protecting staff:** essential to have sufficient equipment to protect staff- also pay attention to their mental health
- **Conversations about vaccinations need to come after** and be coupled with comprehensive health education
- **Input from the community, especially from women,** showed that COVID skepticism is not the core factor behind vaccine hesitancy. Black women place their trust in prevention methods (sanitizing, masks), natural remedies (vitamins, immune boosting) because they fear potential side effects, it's impact on pregnancy, and breastfeeding.



FUTURE STEPS

- **Deeper provider engagement** through building partnerships with provider offices
- Engaging a **VISTA LEADER** to continue the work



Key successes over the grant period: People that would probably never have considered getting a vaccine got vaccinated.

PARTNERSHIPS

We have managed to build partnerships with local institutions, including schools, colleges, and local agencies and adapt to the changing needs. with support from subawardees and partners.

Partners:

- FEOC- African American Coalition led testing & vaccination- June- November, 2021
- Fresno City College - September, October, and November, 2021
- United Way of Fresno and Madera Counties
- Central Valley Black Nurses Association

To download our resources, visit:
<https://www.blackwpc.org/>