

**Embargoed Until
March 25 at 6:00 am**

FACT SHEET: Biden Administration Announces Historic \$10 Billion Investment to Expand Access to COVID-19 Vaccines and Build Vaccine Confidence in Hardest-Hit and Highest-Risk Communities

Administration Makes Essential Workers Eligible for Vaccinations at Community Health Centers in Federal CHC Vaccination Program

Administration Also Announces New Program to Vaccinate Dialysis Patients Nationwide

As part of President Biden's continued efforts to ensure COVID-19 vaccines reach all people and all communities, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing a series of actions to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines to the hardest-hit and highest-risk communities across the country. With funding in large part from the American Rescue Plan, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will invest nearly \$10 billion to expand access to vaccines and better serve communities of color, rural areas, low-income populations, and other underserved communities in the COVID-19 response. This funding will expand access to vaccines for vulnerable populations and increase vaccine confidence across the country.

Equity is at the center of the Administration's COVID-19 response. The President has set up federally-run community vaccination centers in hard-hit areas; sent vaccines directly to local pharmacies and Community Health Centers that disproportionately serve vulnerable populations; launched hundreds of mobile clinics to meet people where they are; and created the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force.

These actions are garnering initial results. In the past two months, 60 percent of doses at federally-run Community Vaccination sites were administered to people of color. In the federal retail pharmacy program, 45 percent of sites were located in zip codes with high social vulnerability scores – a CDC index that uses 15 U.S. census variables to identify communities that may need support. Finally, over 65 percent of the federal doses allocated to Community Health Centers have been administered to people of color.

But there is more work to do. That is why we're doubling down on the progress we are seeing through federal programs. Today's announcements include:

\$6 Billion Investment in Community Health Centers to Expand Access to Vaccines in Underserved Communities. HHS will invest more than \$6 billion from the American Rescue Plan into Community Health Centers nationwide to expand COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and treatment for vulnerable populations; deliver preventive and primary health care services to people at higher risk for COVID-19; and expand health centers' operational capacity during the pandemic and beyond, including modifying and improving physical infrastructure and adding mobile units. The Health

Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), will provide funding starting in April to nearly 1,400 centers across the country. Community Health Centers serve 1 in 5 people living in rural communities. More than 91% of health center patients are individuals or families living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, and more than 60% are racial or ethnic minorities.

For detailed information on how this funding is being distributed to health centers nationwide, including state-by-state breakdowns and an interactive health center funding map, please visit: <https://bphc.hrsa.gov/program-opportunities/american-rescue-plan/awards>.

Expanding Eligibility for Vaccines to Patients Served by Community Health Centers. In addition to today's historic investment in Community Health Centers, Community Health Centers participating in the federal Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program are invited to expand eligibility to populations in the ACIP's 1C eligibility tier – this includes frontline essential workers and all persons 16 years and older with high-risk medical conditions. This means approximately 83% of the adults seen at Community Health Centers participating in the federal Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program will now be eligible for vaccinations. This follows the President's announcement that all adults will be eligible for vaccinations no later than May 1. Today's news will enable more people in need to receive vaccine doses.

\$3 Billion to Strengthen Vaccine Confidence. HHS, through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will invest \$3 billion to support local efforts to increase vaccine uptake and equity. This funding will go directly to states, territories, and some large cities, enabling them to support local health departments and community-based organizations in launching new programs and initiatives intended to increase vaccine access, acceptance, and uptake. This funding will focus on reaching communities hit hardest by the pandemic, including those with a high social vulnerability index, minority communities, and rural areas. The awards will be made in early April and administered through CDC's existing immunization cooperative agreement with 64 jurisdictions. More than half of this funding is being made available thanks to the American Rescue Plan.

Examples of new programs this funding to jurisdictions could support include:

- A rural, faith-based organization could receive funding to conduct door-to-door outreach to schedule vaccination appointments in partnership with a community health center;
- A food assistance and housing nonprofit in a high-poverty community could receive funding to conduct vaccine outreach and education, and to ensure its clients, including those with disabilities or limited mobility, have transportation to a FEMA-supported mass vaccination site;
- Funding could support hiring or extending the hours of community health workers who do culturally-competent bilingual health outreach, so they can make sure uninsured people who are receiving care also have the information they need to get a free vaccination.

Launch a Partnership to Vaccinate Dialysis Patients. The Administration is announcing a new partnership with dialysis clinics to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to people receiving dialysis and health care personnel in outpatient dialysis clinics. Kidney disease disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities as 34% of patients on dialysis are Black and 19% are Hispanic. People on dialysis who contract COVID-19 often have severe health outcomes and have a 50% hospitalization rate and a mortality rate between 20-30% from COVID-19. There are about 500,000 people in the U.S. who receive regular dialysis treatment. Through this partnership, the Administration will provide vaccines directly to dialysis treatment centers so patients who typically go three times a week for treatment are able to get vaccinated at their place of care.

\$330 Million to Invest in Community Health Workers. HHS, through CDC, will provide \$300 million to jurisdictions for community health worker services to support COVID-19 prevention and control, and an additional \$32 million for training, technical assistance, and evaluation. This funding will be used to address disparities in access to COVID-19 related services, such as testing, contact tracing, and vaccinations, and it will help address factors that increase risk of severe COVID-19 illness such as chronic diseases, pregnancy, and food insecurity. For example, this funding could support nurses who are serving hard-hit areas or local community health workers conducting outreach efforts to make those at highest risk aware of vaccination opportunities. This effort will benefit populations with increased prevalence of COVID-19 and disproportionately impacted by long-standing health disparities related to sociodemographic characteristics, geographic regions, and economic strata.

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