

COVID-19 Vaccine & Childcare Providers



What we've learned through our interviews with childcare providers

As part of our COVID-19 vaccine engagement, Washington State Department of Health resident interns conducted key informant interviews with childcare providers in order to transparently share with you what we've learned through our action efforts.

Between Dec. 4, 2020, and Dec. 9, 2020, nine participants representing King County and Kitsap County, along with individuals working with statewide organizations, were interviewed. The topics of the interviews included workplace experiences, attitudes toward vaccines, anticipated barriers to distributing vaccine, and suggestions for prioritizing and distributing vaccine.



Workplace experiences

- In childcare centers, people are worried about illness due to COVID-19 and about the financial impact of the pandemic.
- In childcare centers, the most difficult restriction is keeping kids 6 feet apart; otherwise, health protocols are easy to follow.
- Schools are significantly affected by students with limited academic engagement, especially those without privilege, like students of color or those without the resources to participate virtually. Those with an Individualized Education Program are most affected by virtual learning.
- Schools are wellness centers and places of community support, and it's hard for the communities when they are shut down.
- Many schools and childcare centers struggle with inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The community has been confused about the inconsistencies in the government's health plan, e.g. closing parking lots to parks but keeping businesses open.

Attitudes toward vaccines

- People in the community are looking forward to the vaccine.
- Many informants are worried about the safety of the vaccines, given how quickly they were developed.
- People are concerned about side effects and are eager to see the reactions of those who were part of the first wave of people to receive the vaccine.
- Informants think it will be essential to have clear information from the state Department of Health about what to expect in terms of a vaccine timeline and side effects, but to "keep it simple."
- One informant reported that "clergy members of the Catholic Church have been messaging that the vaccine is bad due to use of stem cells" and that they have spent a lot of time trying to dispel this myth.

Potential barriers to distribution

- Many compared poor experiences with COVID testing rollout (specifically the lack of materials to test, long wait times, and inconvenient locations) to their concerns about logistics.
- Most concerns are about the logistics of vaccine distribution — timing, cost, location, after-hours appointment availability, etc.
- Some informants voiced concerns about those without health insurance or documented immigration status not being able to receive the vaccine.

Suggestions

- Prioritize black, Indigenous and people of color, the elderly, people with pre-existing health conditions, childcare providers and teachers.
- Some informants are most likely to get the vaccine from their primary care physician, but, overwhelmingly, they think their places of work — especially schools — would be excellent sites for most people in the community.
- One informant suggested that mobile vaccine clinics would be the best way to reach remote communities.
- Recommended sources of information for people include Seattle Education Association, YMCA, MomsRising, and the state Department of Health.