



To: Interested Parties
From: United States of Care
Date: January 19, 2022
Re: A year of lessons and shared work around COVID-19

About the Vaccine Researchers Consortium

In early 2021, United States of Care led the way on organizing and convening a Vaccine Researchers Consortium consisting of the nation's leading public health and data research experts. Meeting weekly throughout the year, the Consortium provided a forum for unprecedented collaboration. Members from across the field work together to produce and test effective messaging and to strategize on reaching pockets of vaccine hesitancy and resistance. The Vaccine Researchers Consortium utilized its collective expertise to create data-grounded content and messaging on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine, in support of nationwide vaccination efforts.

USofCare's leadership in creating this group has made a profound impact on the way advocates, policymakers, and public health professionals talked about the importance and safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, which helped break through initial barriers of hesitancy. The research conducted by these organizations was openly shared among peers. That partnership has led to better coordination of research, elevation of key findings across broader audiences, and fostered unparalleled collaboration among research colleagues and organizations. Critically, this collaboration allowed researchers to rapidly learn and share vital information and avoid duplication during a historic public health crisis.

The Consortium includes experts from [United States of Care](#), [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), [the de Beaumont Foundation](#), [the Ad Council](#), [Made to Save](#), [Colorado Health Foundation](#), [INTRVL](#), [Up to Us](#), [Global Health C3](#), and federal liaisons from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) — as well as a bevy of other individuals who have played a vital role in this historic effort. Partners have released numerous polls, messaging documents, articles, maps, and heavily engaged with media based on the findings shared among this Consortium.



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About this document: This memo highlights research from our partners in the 2021 Vaccine Researchers Consortium. It was created by assembling studies and polling results conducted over the past year, engaging with Consortium members, and interpreting their findings. The analysis and resulting messaging recommendations in this document can inform how we, as health and vaccine advocates, continue the effort to address people's concerns and help the country reach maximum vaccination levels.

A year of lessons and shared work around COVID-19

Vaccination Landscape

As of [December 21, 2021](#), more than 207 million people have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. More than 245 million have received at least one dose. Additionally, more than 73 million boosters have been administered to those eligible – a number which must continue to grow in order to meet recent CDC [recommendations](#).

While boosters are growing more commonplace as people gain eligibility after their initial vaccination(s), the reality remains that only 62% of all people are fully vaccinated. Information is more important than ever, and the goal remains to provide people with the trusted information they need as they make vaccination decisions for themselves and/or their children.

As the country faces more uncertainty in the face of the new Omicron variant, the data continue to make the case for clear and straightforward messaging that relays the basic facts about vaccines and encourages people to seek guidance from their personal physicians.

Vaccine & Booster Uptake Amid Yet Another Variant

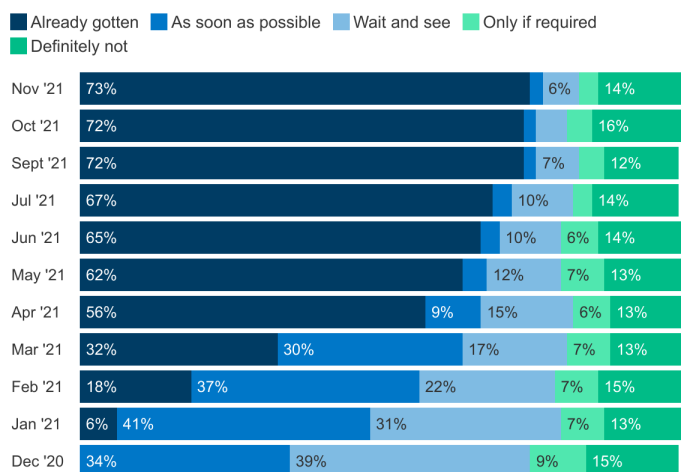
With [full and expanded FDA approval](#), vaccine uptake has continued to grow. However, the group of those who remain unvaccinated are the most intransigent. Coupled with the challenges that health care professionals and advocates face with convincing resistant communities to receive the first dose of the vaccine, we now need to commit resources toward getting the vaccinated their booster shots.

The [Kaiser Family Foundation's COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor](#) has been tracking vaccine uptake over time, most recently finding that 73% of respondents have received one dose of the

Figure 1

One In Four Adults Remain Unvaccinated, Including One In Seven Who Say They Definitely Won't Get A COVID-19 Vaccine

Have you personally received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or not? As you may know, an FDA-authorized vaccine for COVID-19 is now available for free to all adults in the U.S. Do you think you will...?



NOTE: December 2020 survey did not have an option for respondents to indicate they had already been vaccinated. Jan-Apr 2021 question wording: "When an FDA authorized vaccine for COVID-19 is available to you for free, do you think you will...?" See topline for full question wording.

SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor

KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

vaccine. Though there has been no statistically significant increase in uptake since September, the number of respondents with one dose has grown substantially over time, positively reflecting the efforts and coordination of this nationwide public health effort. The challenge to boost vaccination rates now includes ensuring that eligible children receive the vaccine and that all vaccinated individuals secure their booster shots.

Figure 3

Double The Share Of Vaccinated Adults Have Received Their Booster Since October

Have you personally received a booster or additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine after you were already fully vaccinated? When the FDA and the CDC recommend a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for vaccinated people like you, do you think you will...?

■ Already got booster ■ Definitely get ■ Probably get ■ Probably not get ■ Definitely not get



NOTE: Among fully vaccinated adults. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor

KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

In its November monitor, KFF also concluded that the number of fully vaccinated adults who report receiving a booster dose has more than doubled in the last month – with nearly one-fourth of fully vaccinated adults (23%) having already received a booster dose. In an [Omicron focused survey](#), KFF found that Omicron has additionally

resulted in increased booster uptake with 54% of vaccinated adults saying they are more likely to get their booster due to the new variant.

However, despite increased booster uptake, confusion around the booster has been commonplace. Twenty-three percent of adults (including 21% of vaccinated adults) said they are unsure whether it is recommended for all adults to get a booster dose or that they don't believe the CDC has recommended doing so.

Figure 4

About Half Of Vaccinated Adults Who Aren't Boosted Say The Omicron Variant Makes Them More Likely To Do So, One In Eight Unvaccinated Adults Say Omicron Motivates Them To Get Vaccinated

Does news about the new omicron variant of the coronavirus make you more likely to..., or not?



NOTE: Vaccinated adults are those who have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Early Omicron Update (Dec. 15-20, 2021)

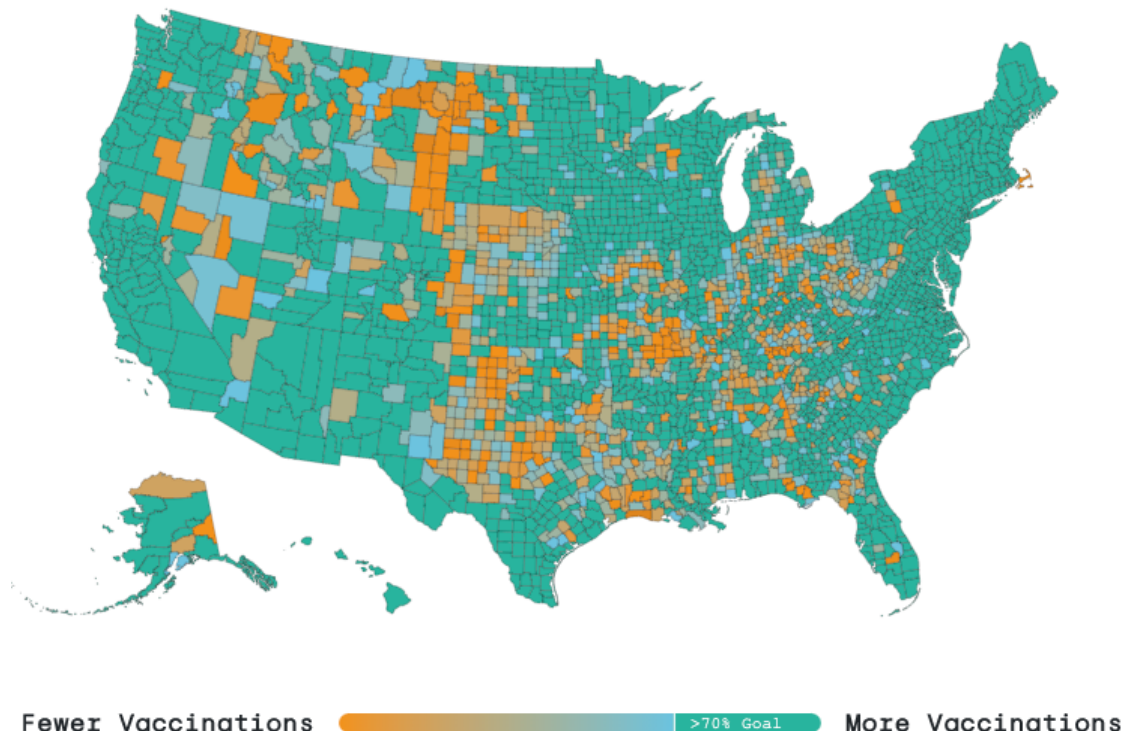
KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

Hesitancy

As national vaccination numbers continue to increase, overall hesitancy remains a significant challenge throughout the country. In early November, before the detection of Omicron, [Morning Consult](#) and the deBeaumont Foundation conducted a poll of unvaccinated adults, asking their primary reason for their uncertainty or unwillingness. Their concerns are consistent with findings throughout 2021.

- **Concerned about side effects:**
 - 34% of Uncertain
 - 23% of Unwilling
- **Worried the vaccines moved through clinical trials too fast:**
 - 29% of Uncertain
 - 23% of Unwilling
- **Don't trust the companies making the vaccine:**
 - 10% of Uncertain
 - 17% of Unwilling
- **The risk of me getting COVID-19 is too small:**
 - 7% of Uncertain
 - 6% of Unwilling
- **Against vaccines generally:**
 - 9% of Uncertain
 - 9% of Unwilling

Measuring the overall national uptake, the INTRVL and Up to Us [Vaccine Progress and Hesitancy Map](#) provides a glimpse of where pockets of hesitancy continue to prevail at the county level. This information is valuable, especially when coupled with our understanding of hesitancy, to identify the places where accurate messages are most-needed and can be most effective.



Looking Forward: Approaching Misinformation and FDA Approval

The [de Beaumont Foundation](#) also recently highlighted the dire state of misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine, finding that one's source of news plays a vital role in the levels of misinformation they encounter.

- 51% of unvaccinated respondents who named social media as a primary news source said social media was pushing them to wait or not get vaccinated.
- 70% of respondents said they use social media when seeking information about COVID-19, and 60% have shared information about the virus on social media.
- 67% of all respondents said they had received at least one vaccine dose, compared with just 56% of those who said social media is one of their main sources of information.
- 53% said social media companies should “restrict and/or remove what they determine to be misinformation or disinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccines,” while 47% said companies should “leave the content about COVID-19 and the vaccines alone and let the reader/viewer decide for themselves.”

The Kaiser Family Foundation came to similar conclusions regarding vaccine misinformation, finding that belief or uncertainty about COVID-19 misinformation is widespread. While there are notable differences in belief in misinformation based on vaccination status, party identity, and age, the adjacent image shows some of the most widely believed falsehoods about COVID-19 and the vaccine.

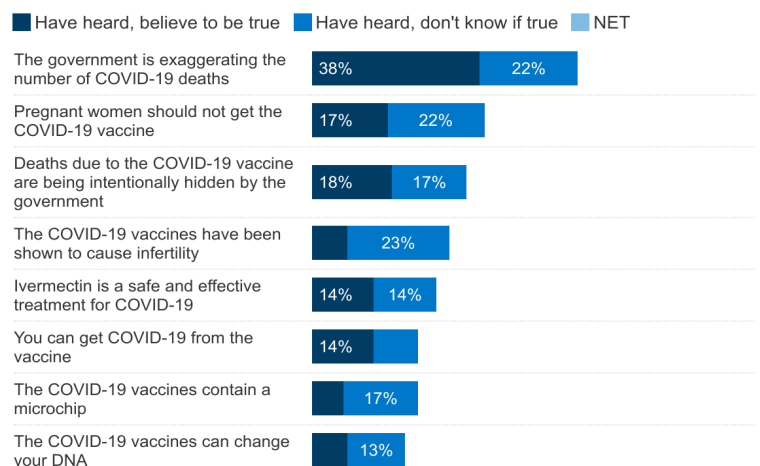
FDA Approval for Children 5-11

On October 29, the FDA approved Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in children ages 5-11. While FDA approval should quell some concerns, it is inevitable that further questions for parents surrounding their decision to get their child vaccinated will remain.

Figure 1

Nearly Eight In Ten Believe Or Are Unsure About At Least One Common Falsehood About COVID-19 Or The Vaccine

Have you heard anyone say or have you read anywhere that...? IF YES: To the best of your knowledge is that true or false, or do you not know whether it is true or false?



NET who have heard at least one of these myths, and either say it is true or are not sure if it is true

78%

NOTE: See topline for full question wording.
SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (October 14-24, 2021)

KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

With the threat of variants, confusion around the booster, and winter underway, relaying facts around an individual's *first* dose is as important as ever.

[Made to Save](#) and the Public Health Communications Collaborative have found the below messages – stressing health and community – to be the most effective in parents of children ages 5-11.

- **COVID-19 is one of the top ten causes of death among children. The COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect your child from getting sick, being hospitalized, or developing long-term symptoms.**
- **Having your child vaccinated will protect family members and friends, especially those who may be at high risk.**
- **Being vaccinated will help kids be kids. It will enable them to safely do more of the activities they enjoy, like attending birthday parties, playing sports, and spending time indoors with friends and family members.**

Made to Save found that the above messages were more effective than messages about rigorous safety reviews and keeping kids in school, specifically among parents of younger kids, vaccinated parents, and parents of color. However, for *parents of ages 12-17*, messages stressing keeping their child in school were the most effective.

The [Ad Council](#) concluded that parents need to feel that messages are directly relevant to their specific concerns and questions around vaccinating children against COVID-19 (not vaccination generally). After FDA approval, the Ad Council polled the efficacy of messaging among *unvaccinated parents* of children ages 5-11. These are the most-effective messages that Ad Council found, followed in parentheses by the percentages of unvaccinated parents who found them compelling.

- **The COVID-19 vaccines prevent deaths, I.C.U. admissions, and significant long-term adverse outcomes in children. (13%)**
- **To protect our kids, we need to get them vaccinated so they are no longer in danger as the virus mutates. (13%)**
- **Clinical trials showed the Pfizer COVID -19 vaccine was more than 90% effective in preventing symptomatic infection in children. (12%)**
- **The COVID-19 vaccines have gone through extensive clinical trials and scientific reviews, just like any other vaccine – including those your child has likely already received. (11%)**
- **Getting kids vaccinated is crucial to protect the vulnerable people in their lives. (11%)**

Although hesitancy and resistance are persistent concerns, we must acknowledge the success and scale of the nationwide vaccination effort. As misinformation continues to spread, the goal remains to provide simple facts and encourage hesitant people to speak to their personal physician about the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine.

United States of Care and the Vaccine Researchers Consortium will continue to strive to ensure that fellow advocates are equipped with factual information as we move on to a pivotal winter of 2022. We thank so many partners for their support, including the financial contributions of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, The Rockefeller Foundation, the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and the Minneapolis Foundation.

Catalog of Vaccine Researchers Consortium Findings

United States of Care

- [“While Immense Progress Has Been Made, Much Work Remains” 11/9/21](#)
- [“Back to School: Celebrating vaccine progress, navigating questions” 9/27/21](#)
- [“COVID-19 Vaccine Interest and Questions Among Parents” 7/7/21](#)
- [“COVID-19 Vaccines: Meeting People Where They Are” 5/25/21](#)
- [“Just the Facts on COVID-19 Vaccines” 3/26/21](#)

Kaiser Family Foundation

- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor Dashboard COVID Dashboard](#)
- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: November 2021](#)
- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Early Omicron Update](#)
- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Winter 2021 Update On Parents' Views Of Vaccines For Kids](#)
- [KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: Media and Misinformation](#)
- Previous KFF findings used in United States of Care products
 - <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-september-2021/>
 - <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-trends-among-children-school/>
 - <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-october-2021/>
 - <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-rural-america/>

de Beaumont Foundation

- [de Beaumont: Changing the COVID Conversation](#)
- [Study: Americans Who Get COVID-19 Information from Social Media More Likely to Believe Misinformation, Less Likely to Be Vaccinated](#)
 - Partnered with [Morning Consult](#)
- [de Beaumont: Poll: 9 In 10 Americans Say Doctors Should Be Held Accountable For Covid-19 Disinformation](#)
- Previous de Beaumont findings in United States of Care products:
 - [de Beaumont: Poll: Unvaccinated Americans Consider Vaccine Requirements A Greater Health Threat Than Covid-19](#)
 - <https://debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation/gopattitudes/>
 - <https://debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation/jj/>
 - <https://debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation/gopattitudes/>

Ad Council

- [Ad Council & COVID Collaborative: COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative](#)
- [Ad Council: Strategic Brief for Parents of Kids 5-11](#)
- Previous Ad Council findings in United States of Care products:
 - <https://www.adcouncil.org/all-articles/6-ways-to-educate-rural-americans-about-the-covid-19-vaccines>

- <https://www.adcouncil.org/press-releases/young-adults-and-parents-are-focus-of-new-psas-from-the-ad-council-and-covid-collaboratives-groundbreaking-covid-19-vaccine-education-initiative>
- <https://www.adcouncil.org/press-releases/ad-council-covid-collaborative-enlist-network-of-evangelical-leaders-healthcare-professionals-to-reach-evangelicals-with-trusted-information>

Made to Save

- [Talking to Parents about the COVID-19 Vaccines for Children](#)

[INTRVL](#) and [Up to Us](#)

- [Vaccination Progress & Hesitancy Map](#)