

It is now widely understood that the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted Latinos in the U.S., resulting in higher risk of infection, hospitalization, and death than their white counterparts. Unfortunately, this extends to Hispanic children as well. In fact, [a new study](#) by the CDC found that Hispanic children were eight times more likely than white children to be hospitalized because of COVID-19¹. Expanding vaccination rates among Latino children and families is crucial if we want to ensure that this already vulnerable population can vigorously overcome the virus.

Sadly, the vaccination rates in the Latino community are significantly lower than they need to be, leaving families at increased risk. The National Hispanic Health Foundation (NHHF) has been making strides to disseminate educational resources to Hispanic/Latino communities in America with lower rates of vaccination to increase awareness of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. In Texas, 38% of the state's population is Latino, yet only 25.8% of vaccinated people in the entire state are Latino as of [January 24, 2022](#)². Clearly, there is still a lot of work to be done and NHHF is ready to collaborate with community leaders to ensure that the Latino community is equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to protect themselves and their families.

In order to mobilize our community, NHHF is proud to partner with The Rockefeller Foundation to support chapters/partners affiliated with the Hispanic Dental Association, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, National Hispanic Medical Association or community-based organizations focused on Hispanic health to participate in The COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness and Equity Education Program. Grants will be available for the above groups who apply to organize events or programs in three target communities — Houston, Oakland, and Chicago — to increase vaccination uptake of the seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccines. To apply for a grant, please visit: <https://www.nhmafoundation.org/rockefeller>.

Studies are showing that the [racial gap in vaccinations is closing](#)²; however, in some states, the gap in vaccination rates for Latinos persists. Misinformation, cultural differences and fear of deportation as well as limited Hispanic physicians and access to healthcare are major reasons for this challenge. Moreover, Latinos have endured some of the worst economic disparities exacerbated by the pandemic, leaving them more susceptible to increased risk of infection and financial tumult. The [Houston Health Department Health Authority](#)³, Dr. David Persse, said there's nothing to suggest that people of Latin descent are predisposed to being infected with coronavirus. "It appears that this is really more a function of the social determinants of health and poverty," Dr. David Persse said.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7015e2.htm?s_cid=mm7015e2_x

² <https://salud-america.org/covid-vaccine-data/>

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<https://www.khou.com/article/news/health/coronavirus/houston-health-experts-highlight-hispanic-communities-hardships-during-covid-19-crisis/285-b80077f3-7dc8-4bf6-b45f-ae78dc80100e>

This solidifies the absolute imperative to spread educational and economic resources to the Latino community so they are comfortable getting vaccinated and can utilize social safety nets. Building trust in marginalized communities must go beyond immaterial conversations. This is why it is incumbent upon us to work with community leaders to encourage vaccination uptake so that Latino families can protect themselves without fear. One of the objectives of the NHHF-Rockefeller Program includes establishing an Advisory Committee of healthcare and public health experts and community leaders from targeted areas who will guide us to develop messages/toolkits to empower the Hispanic community, create awareness and address COVID-19 confidence and mistrust. We also plan to build capacity of our partners who will be supported to participate in media activities and distribution of COVID-19 materials to schools. Additionally, disseminating public information and resources with Spanish translation is essential considering Spanish speakers are at [elevated risk for COVID-19](#)⁴. Language barriers can leave vulnerable populations unaware of critical health information regarding case rates, vaccination for children, booster shots, etc.

NHHF is dedicated to working with community leaders, organizations and the vibrant Latino community at large in Houston to ensure that lifesaving information is properly disseminated. Including the following:

Public Health Departments local resources: [Register for COVID-19 vaccines](#)

- “Free COVID-19 Vaccine appointments for 5-17-year-olds are available through HCPH! No appointments are required and parental consent forms will need to be filled out prior to vaccination. Call 832-927-8787 or [sign up online](#) to schedule your child's appointment.
 - Make sure to check out our [5-17-year-old local provider list](#) for additional vaccination opportunities.”
- **Booster doses now available:** Schedule your COVID-19 vaccine shot or booster dose in advance, by calling 832-927-8787 or [register online](#). The registration site is not compatible with Internet Explorer. If you do not have transportation for your vaccination appointment, call 832-927-8787.

Public health page: <https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/>

Participating [pharmacies](#) for COVID-19 vaccination

Ordering COVID Test kits: <https://special.usps.com/testkits>

Benefits of testing at home: It usually takes about 15 to 30 minutes to receive results from rapid at-home tests, but be sure to closely follow instructions that accompany your COVID-19 test. Though not as accurate as lab-based PCR tests — which are able to detect the virus in smaller amounts of genetic material — at-home antigen tests “can be a critical piece of solving the pandemic puzzle,” Young said. They eliminate the hurdle of having to schedule or wait days for test results and can prompt those who test positive to isolate and prevent virus spread, he said.

⁴ <https://salud-america.org/health-experts-spanish-speakers-at-elevated-risk-for-covid-19/>

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), if an individual tests positive while at home, they should stay at home or isolate for at least five days, and if they are suffering a severe bout of the virus they should [isolate for 10 days](#).

A patchwork of places offers tests across the state, with many at no cost, according to the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#). However, recent demand has made access to testing limited.

Major pharmacies like [Walgreens](#) and [CVS](#) offer testing but require visitors to schedule appointments ahead of time. And be aware that some stores and pharmacies that sell at-home tests [may limit](#) the number of tests you're able to purchase. Texans can also check with their city and county governments online to see if they're operating any local test sites.

Covid-19 vaccine information:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine.aspx>