



TENNESSEE  
**HEALTH CARE**  
c a m p a i g n

# **COVID-19 Vaccine Listening Sessions: The Voices of People of Color in Rural Tennessee**

The Tennessee Health Care Campaign (THCC) is a non-profit, non-partisan health justice organization. Our mission is to advocate for programs and policies that improve the health of Tennesseans.

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## Introduction

Tennessee Health Care Campaign was awarded in the Spring of 2021 a one-year grant to improve COVID and Influenza vaccination in 7 of the most at-risk counties in the State: Hamblen, Bedford, Hardeman, Haywood, Lauderdale, Crockett and Madison. As a part of the grant, THHC held two listening sessions. All of the participants were unvaccinated. The goal of the sessions was to identify the barriers to vaccination and learn what sources community members trust to provide accurate and culturally appropriate information. Before THHC employed a marketing campaign to encourage vaccinations, we wanted to first hear and learn from a sample of the people and communities we are trying to impact.

There has been much talking to and about the unvaccinated. THHC wanted to talk *with* those that were unvaccinated, without any pressure of persuasion. The listening sessions were intended to be completely conversational, with the participants taking the lead. There was a facilitator to keep the conversation moving and guided. The voices and perspectives of the participants were the center and purpose of the sessions.

The first listening session was held in Hamblen County, Tennessee. Considering the high proportions of Hispanic or Latino people in this area the listening session was conducted completely in Spanish. The session was held in conjunction and cooperation with Hola Lakeway, a nonprofit organization in Morristown, TN serving Hispanic and Latino families. The focus group consisted of 10 people (9 women and 1 man). The session was held at the HOLA Lakeway premises in Morristown, TN on Wednesday, August 18th 2021. It was facilitated by María Inés Gadea, an Interpreter with AR Language Solutions.

The focus group of the second listening session sampled the populations of Madison, Crockett, Haywood, Hardeman, and Lauderdale Counties in Western Tennessee. Due to the uptick in COVID-19 cases, this session was held virtually (Zoom). The listening session was led by Patrick Davis, Ed.D., Dean of Academic Support at Jackson State Community College. The session had four participants (3 women and 1 man). All of the participants were African-American.

Collectively, both of these listening sessions provided key insights as to how to better reach unvaccinated individuals. THHC used the feedback that these listening sessions illuminated to develop more effective PSAs and other educational materials.

## Covid19 Vaccine Listening Session

### Tennessee Health Care Campaign & HOLA Lakeway

1045 S Cumberland St, Morristown, TN 37813

#### Summary

Tennessee Health Care Campaign and HOLA Lakeway organized a focus group about Covid19 Vaccine. The aim of the discussion was to talk with people who have not yet been vaccinated for COVID 19 to find out what they are thinking and what barriers they face in getting vaccinated. The first part of the discussion was a non-judgmental conversation to understand people's questions and concerns. The second part consisted of showing some videos, fliers and a personal story to see if they think any of these are helpful in promoting vaccines.

#### Introduction

The focus group consisted of 10 people (9 women and 1 man) of Latino origin who have not yet been vaccinated for COVID 19 and who attended the discussion session at HOLA Lakeway premises at 1045 S Cumberland St, Morristown, TN 37813 on Wednesday August 18<sup>th</sup> 2021. The focus group session was designed to gather information from the attendees in regard to the following outcomes:

- To find out what these unvaccinated people are thinking and what barriers they face in getting vaccinated.
- To understand attendees' questions and concerns.
- To show some videos, fliers and a personal story in order to receive some feedback about them and to ask if they are helpful in promoting the vaccine.

#### Attendees' Perspectives

##### Listening Session Part 1

- **Outcome 1:** To know if they regularly get the flu vaccine.
- **Question asked during focus group:** Many of us have made decision on the flu vaccine. Do you regularly get a flu vaccine? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** Most of them seemed to be positive about the flu vaccine. They expressed that every year the children's doctor recommends them to get it, and it is their kids who receive the vaccine.

*Attendee: [Well, I haven't get it either. But my children did get it because it is the time of their check-up and they have to do it].*

The participants who answered negatively expressed that they don't feel the need to do so saying that they feel healthy. One of them said that the times she got the flu shots, she got sick. That is why she has decided not to get it anymore.

*Attendee: [I used to get it in the past and it made me very sick. I fell in bed for about two weeks and I stopped receiving it and I no longer get sick]*

Others expressed that they didn't get it due to lack of time, work, etc. but not because they do not trust it.

- **Outcome 2:** To know the reasons why they are still undecided about Covid19 vaccine.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** With the Covid vaccine, many people are still undecided. Are you one of them? If you know anyone who is unsure about the COVID 19 vaccine, why are they unsure? What questions do you/they have?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** Most participants looked as if they were indecisive and fearful expressing that they are very suspicious about what it is put in the vaccines, or what vaccines are made of.

*Attendee: [So, I don't want to contaminate my body, I am fine this way. If I feel good and I take care of myself, I don't need to put more things in my body.]*

*Attendee: [I am not afraid. I just don't know what it contains; I don't know what it's made of]*

Most participants stated that they feel hesitant because they think that Covid19 vaccine was created very fast.

*Attendee: [I have a sister in Veracruz who is a nurse and says that people are vaccinated and that they are already dying. So what for? What's the use of getting it if it's not going to help us at all? The other vaccines such as tetanus and other diseases took a long time to be discovered and we have received them and they have helped us a lot.]*

*Attendee: [I was 9 years old when Zika came out. And that vaccine took 4 years for everyone to have it]*

3 participants expressed that they had Covid19. One of them expressed that that she didn't want to be tested.

*Attendee: [I had Covid and I think it is one of the most horrible experiences I have ever had to live. It was horrible, it's horrible. I told my husband to take me to the hospital, because I was going to die anyway, there or at home. I felt like I couldn't breathe. They tested everyone in my family, my baby and I tested positive and the other three were fine.]*

*Attendee: [I felt very bad, I felt that I could not breathe, I was driving, I felt that I was out of breath, I was very hot and that I lacked air and it was cold weather and I turned on the ventilation I had hot air and I turned it cold because I felt like I was out of breath completely.] [I did not go to be tested because I was afraid to go and get the virus because one hears what others say more than anything. There are people who think that when they test you with the cotton swab, maybe they insert you the virus.]*

**Most participants expressed that they attended the focus group meeting because they were looking for more information about Covid19 Vaccine. They were expecting someone to explain to them what it is made of and about side effects.**

- **Outcome 3:** To learn about sources of information that attendees listen to. To know about their position about them.

- **Questions asked during focus group:** Have you seen or heard any information about COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., on the news, on social media) that you could not determine were true or false?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** Most attendees expressed feeling lost and confused about what they hear in the media. They said that they don't know what to believe in.

*Attendee: [Well, what happened in New York that they took people out of hospitals and apartments, they took out 50 or 200 300 a day and that is a lie, because I have a friend living there and he told me that this was not happening. So it is a means sometimes so that people do not go out, so that people, so that we get sick. But I really don't know what the truth is. ]*

Some of them commented that they have not looked for information in the media but they have heard what other people said about the vaccine.

*Attendee: [I did not listen to a specific radio. It's just because of the people I know from work, those I know, those who have had the virus and I already pay attention to them.]*

*Attendee: [I have not really looked for information in a news item, or in social networks. I have only heard the opinion of the people who have received the vaccine, of those who have gotten the virus and this is what I have been guided by]*

However, some of them agreed on the fact that they would trust any expert of the field (doctor, scientist, etc. ) and follow their recommendation.

*Attendee: [I recently spoke with my children's doctor about the vaccine and she explained to me that the one they are offering right now has been studied more deeply, that they have studied the vaccine more, so that gives me confidence.]*

*Attendee: [I would go with my daughter's doctor, or with a private doctor to be informed. So I came here for that reason also, to know more.]*

*Attendee: [... just what circulates on social networks, from social media I don't have a trustworthy radio and it was interesting when Alexis spoke to us.]*

- **Outcome 4:** To know if transportation has been an obstacle to get the vaccine.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** We have heard that lack of transportation makes getting a vaccine difficult. Does that sound right based on your experience?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** All participants came to the conclusion that they haven't heard that transportation could be a problem to get the covid19 vaccine expressing that most people they know have access to a car to move.

*Attendee: [No, it has not been a problem because here in the United States everyone has a car to go to get vaccinated]*

- **Outcome 5:** To know about what was the worst thing that they have lived during the pandemic.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** Whether we've gotten sick or not, we've all been living in the time of COVID. For you, what is the worst thing about living through this epidemic?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** In general, most participants expressed that they feel insecure when being with other people because they don't know if they are virus carriers. They also expressed that wearing a mask has been uncomfortable.

One participant experienced covid19 and she didn't want to be tested because she thought that they were going to make her stay in hospital and die there. She also said that the worst thing about the pandemic was losing her taste and smell senses.

*Attendee: [So the fear and fear of going to the hospital and being told if you are positive, we have to hospitalize you. So I was afraid, I felt panic and I said with my children I can't. I was afraid that they would tell me that we are going to hospitalize you and that I would die in the hospital ...]*

*[The worst thing was not only having it but that I did not have taste and smell for a long time. That was the hardest thing that could have happened to me in my life that the taste and smell disappeared. They returned to me after 3 months. ]*

One attendee also said that the worst thing about the pandemic was that her brother passed away.

- **Outcome 6:** To get information about certain issues at the Hospital and how they feel when attending to doctor's appointments.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** When you go to the doctor or clinic, is there anything that makes you feel disrespected?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** Most attendees agreed that they have felt comfortable when going to the doctor. They have felt respected.

*Attendee: [Yes, I have always felt good but it also depends on the doctor, his/her way of doing conversation depends a lot too.]*

*Attendee: [It depends on which doctor you go to and it depends on who assists you at the urgent care]*

Moreover, attendees commented that they sometimes do not go to hospital to seek assistance because they are afraid of not being able to pay the services received. They expressed that they never know how much they will have to pay and most times they cannot afford hospital expenses.

In addition, one of the participants, the same who expressed that she had had Covid19 and was afraid of being tested in case she could be hospitalized, expressed that she was offered the vaccine by the doctor of her kids. The doctor said to her that the vaccine was available and optional and she could receive it together with her teenage kids to what the patient

answered that she wasn't going to get it because it was optional. The doctor asked her why not? She expressed that as it was optional, she wouldn't get it. She was told that there were available vaccines for kids, but they did not specify the ages of the kids. As a result, the participant was not well informed about Covid19 vaccine. Moreover, the attendee's kid was offered to be tested for Covid19 and the mother refused it. Once again, there seems to be fear about the test itself and maybe to the result too.

It could be inferred from her speech that the health professional did not spend enough time with the participant to evacuate doubts and fears in relation to the vaccine. This can be an example of the medical professional not making a strong recommendation for vaccination.

*Attendee [Well, as I mentioned before, it happened to me and it is something very hard to live that I think it would be very, very hard for young children, that is, for all children. In fact, the last time I went to the clinic they told me that vaccines were already available, that they were available for the children. But they told me that they were optional, they were not compulsory but optional. They didn't mention the ages but my children are young. They did not specify the topic of ages and I did not ask them either. The only thing they told me is that they were available and that if I wanted to get it. And I said no, and the doctor said why not? Because you are telling me that it is optional. And the doctor asked me again that she wanted to know why not? To what I answered because I don't want to.*

*Well, and they told me that they were going to be offering it on Thursdays. And that day I took my child because he had a cold and he had a cough because he had been the day before in the lake and he caught a cold. She asked me, can we test him for covid? And I answered no. She asked me, why not? Why don't you want to test him? I told her that it was because I thought that it was just a cold and that he didn't have covid...and she said to me what if he does have it? Well, I said because he does not have a temperature. And the doctor said, just in case, you don't want him to be tested? And I answered no, because it is optional. Well, but that is because...well... I lack understanding or I lack knowledge and I am not well informed. I mean, I told my husband and he told me that the truth is that if we want it or not, this will be obligatory sometime in the future.]*

## Listening Session Part 2

- **Outcome 7:** To collect information about the sources of information that they trust.
- **Questions asked during focus group** Think for a minute about who you trust for news and information. If you are comfortable with this question, can you share who they are and why you trust them?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** Participants of the focus group expressed that they feel comfortable with media in Spanish. They said that they watch Univision and Telemundo TV channels. In particular, they follow Dr Juan Rivera's program called "Despierta América", and they watch videos about this doctor in Youtube as well. <https://www.univision.com/temas/dr-juan>
- **Outcome 8:** To know about what radio station they listen to.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** What is your favorite radio station?
- **Findings from the focus groups:** They all agreed that their favorite radio station is 90.3. It is a Latino radio and they mentioned that Eddie Morales's program is the one that most Latino people listen to.
- **Outcome 9:** showing some videos, fliers and a personal story to see if they think any of these are helpful in promoting vaccines.
- **Questions asked during focus group:** we are going to show you some information about COVID 19. I want your honest opinion.
- **Findings from the focus groups**

### [Mitos y datos acerca de las vacunas contra el COVID-19 |](#)

As regards the fact sheet "Mitos y datos acerca de las vacunas contra el COVID-19", we went reading each myth making comments about it all together. They were not aware of that source of information. It appeared not to be a source that they are going to look for if they needed data.

Overall, they expressed that they do not believe in those myths. About the microchip, they said that it is impossible that vaccines contain a chip because they only insert a liquid in the body. They did not hear that the magnetic effect of the vaccine either.

Regarding the topic of pregnancy and the effects of the vaccine, one of the participants commented that her daughter had received the vaccine being pregnant and nothing had happened to her.

*Attendee: [My daughter is pregnant and she got the vaccine and thank God nothing happened to her]*

### [fotonovela-es.pdf \(cdc.gov\)](#)

In relation to this personal story, they expressed the importance of the use of masks. They said that when they wear masks they feel safe.

However, a contradictory topic regarding masks came up because one participant mentioned that she did not understand why vaccinated people continue wearing masks [in the *fotonovela* a vaccinated woman appears wearing a mask]

*Attendee: [..those who are vaccinated, they are supposed not to wear the mask because they are already immune with the vaccine, but if they are infected, why not using it too? If they are also infected, then they are going to infect us. If you don't wear a mask and how do we know if you don't have it [the virus]*

From the *fotonovela* also came up the topic of the information that one participant receives at work. He explained that he works for a big company and that the company contacts doctors that go to the offices and inform employees about the updates of Covid 19.

*Attendee: [I am a supervisor and all supervisors of the company attend a meeting where a doctor speaks to us about Covid19 updates]*

[TN Vaccine PSA HISPANIC - YouTube](#)

[THE CONVERSATION / LA CONVERSACIÓN \(greaterthancovid.org\)](#)

In general, all participants seemed to have enjoyed the videos. They appeared to have felt comfortable watching health professionals speaking in their mother tongue. One participant expressed that she was going to get the vaccine in half an hour after the meeting.

*Attendee: [I'm going to get in line [covid19 vaccine line] in half an hour]*

After watching the videos, it was commented the idea of getting the vaccine so as to take care of the other, that if we get the vaccine, we protect the person next to me.

In particular, about [TN Vaccine PSA HISPANIC - YouTube](#) when asking participants about this video, one attendee mentioned that she had watched it on TV in UNIVISION channel and liked the message transmitted that the vaccine is safe. From this video, they reflected upon the fact that getting the vaccine, helps others, it helps the community. And, from the topic of collaborating with the community, they mentioned the importance of wearing masks. They said that in China they used to wear masks even before Covid outbreak.

*Attendee: [...that it (the vaccine) is something safe, it is sure that you are not going to get sick and that if you put it on, you take better care of others and your family.]*

*Attendee: [Another way that is important is the use of the mask. It was worn by Chinese before covid and it is good to protect each other]*

Also, from the conversation about this video also came up the topic about the fact that vaccines have no cost now. One attendee commented that it is important to get the covid19 vaccine now, because they are free and they don't know if in the future they are going to have a high cost.

*Attendee: [It was interesting what they [doctors in the video] said that vaccines are free. I was talking to my husband about it and he says that we have to get vaccinated because now vaccines are completely free. Then they will sell them to us.]*

## Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, most attendees seemed to have left the focus group session with a positive feeling about the covid19 vaccine. As a general impression, we can say that most participants had diverse doubts and fears about the vaccine, and they were looking for a leader to provide them with more information about it. Attendees mentioned in several moments that they listen to the doctor of their children. They think that she/he is a health professional that they would listen and trust. Also, they mentioned Pastor Alexis as someone they trust.

It is recommended to continue working with community leaders providing information about the positive aspects of the vaccine. Also, it may work having access to already vaccinated people to give their personal opinion about their experiences. Showing simple statistic graphs can be good material for them to see too.

Focus Group Facilitator María Inés Gadea

# Covid19 Vaccine Listening Session

Tennessee Health Care Campaign

Jackson, TN (Zoom meeting)

## Summary

Tennessee Health Care Campaign organized a focus group about Covid19 Vaccine. The aim of the discussion was to talk with people who have not yet been vaccinated for COVID 19 to find out what they are thinking and what barriers they face in getting vaccinated. The first part of the discussion was a non-judgmental conversation to understand people's questions and concerns. The second part consisted of showing some videos, fliers and a personal story to see if they think any of these are helpful in promoting vaccines.

## Introduction

The focus group consisted of 4 people (3 women and 1 man) of African American, Black origin who have not yet been vaccinated for COVID 19 and who attended the discussion session a Zoom meeting link Jackson, TN 38301 on Wednesday August 25, 2021. The focus group session was designed to gather information from the attendees regarding the following outcomes:

- To find out what these unvaccinated people are thinking and what barriers they face in getting vaccinated.
- To understand attendees' questions and concerns.
- To show some videos, fliers and a personal story in order to receive some feedback about them and to ask if they are helpful in promoting the vaccine.

## Listening Session Questions Part 1:

1. Many of us have made decision on the flu vaccine. Do you regularly get a flu vaccine? If yes, why? If no, why not?

Attendee: [Well, I rely more on supplements and nutrition. The body can heal itself].

Attendee: [last I took it... it made me sick. I don't understand the reasoning for intentionally injecting the flu inside]

Attendee: [I have a fear of vaccinations.]

Attendee: [I got it because I was pregnant and I was to get it because of the baby or it would be worse for me and the baby. I haven't gotten it since then.]

2. With the Covid vaccine, many people are still undecided. If you know anyone who is unsure about the COVID 19 vaccine, why are they unsure? What questions do they have?

Attendee: [Because it's new.]

Attendee: [Have enough test been done on it... It seems to me they rushed it.]

Attendee: [People don't want to be a lab rat]

Attendee: [So, I am protective of my body and I value nutrition.]

3. In thinking about people, you know who have clear opinions on Covid and the vaccine, what are some of the things you've heard from them about the COVID 19 vaccine, pro or con?

Attendee: [People I know that got want to feel secure when traveling]

Attendee: [People feel pressured to get to it so they get]

Attendee: [Young people who got it because they didn't want to wear a mask anymore... They thought things will go back to being normal.]

4. Have you seen or heard any information about COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., on the news, on social media) that you could not determine were true or false?

Attendee: [I'm not going to grab it and run with it. I'm going to investigate more before I make a decision.]

Attendee: [I don't rely on social media. I got to a doctor].

Attendee: [I follow the money and pay attention to what Big Pharma is doing. I also track the adverse effects]

5. Some people may want to get the vaccine, but they haven't done so. Do you know anyone who wants to get a COVID vaccine but has a hard time getting it? What is making it hard for them?

Attendee: [I have a friend that want to get it but they are afraid of the side effects. She saw a video of person throwing up after taking the vaccine. Another person passed out after taking the vaccine.]

Attendee: [Most I know want to get it but are hesitant.]

- a. We have heard that lack of transportation makes getting a vaccine difficult. Does that sound right based on your experience?

Attendee: [Transportation is not a problem but fear.]

Attendee [Those that I know got it because they wanted to get. I don't know of any issues]

6. Whether we've gotten sick or not, we've all been living in the time of COVID. For you, what is the worst thing about living through this epidemic?

Attendee: [The time off from work has affected me most.]

Attendee: [I haven't had any problems really...I just rolled with it.]

Attendee: [I have lost love ones and financially I have lost jobs. I recently graduated from college and trying to find a professional job has been challenging.]

7. When you go to the doctor or clinic, is there anything that makes you feel disrespected? Are there things that you wish vaccine providers and other medical staff knew about your community?

Attendee: [A lot of medical staff don't know the history, such as the Tuskegee experiments. If they understood that than they would understand the hesitancy of our people taking the shot.]

Attendee: [I want to see a push for building up the immune system naturally verses just getting a shot]

Summary:

Attendees are hesitant regarding the vaccine due to fear, mistrust, and the disinformation that is currently circulating.

## Listening Session Part 2:

1. Think for a minute about who you trust for news and information. If you are comfortable with this question, can you share who they are and why you trust them?

Attendee: [I trust healthcare providers a little bit]

Attendee: [I would trust the news if more black doctors presented the information. News organizations have agendas and don't share all sides. Black doctors need to have more clinics in our communities. Many more of our people would get vaccinated if black doctors took more time to explain it to us and to answer all our questions]

Attendee: [I don't trust the media or the news. I have to check it out for myself. I don't look at just the medical information... I look into more of the nutritional value and they are trained to look at more pharmacy.]

Attendee: [I follow black doctors on social media.]

**2. What is your favorite radio station?**

Attendee: [I listen to 93.1 or old school radio stations]

Attendee: [I'm listening to podcasts or Club House].

Attendee: [I listen to Roland Martin Unfiltered on YouTube and Joe Madison. I disengaged from watching MSNBC and CNN a few years ago.]

Attendee: [I listen to the Black Authority. Dr. Claude Anderson is who I listen to].

Review of COVID 19 Information

BLK presents "Vax That Thang Up" ft. Juvenile, Mannie Fresh, and Mia X <YouTube>

Attendee: [That was horrible... Who thought of that! This is an explicit show of capitalism and funny... This is not at all what we have to offer as a Black community is "Back That Thang Up"! It's a horrible caricature of the Black community.]

**All attendees expressed disbelief and how insulted they were that this video is available on YouTube.**

Attendee: [I really want us to disconnect from that kind of stereotype that we have been boxed into... I find it disheartening that in 2021 we're still confide and are defined by these type of videos]

Attendee: [It is disrespectful to the Black community... We are not a monolithic community describing to one set of thinking or jargon. Really stereotypical and disrespectful.]

Attendee: [I though the video was stupid and horrible! It's pathetic even in this day we still think like that!]

Attendee: [I am totally disgusted because this is very much in poor taste... It's laughable, but I'm angered by this display.]

THE CONVERSATION: Between Us, About Us. – Greater Than COVID <YouTube>

Attendee: [This is more convincing than the first video (Vax That Thang Up), but I still don't trust it. I don't consider this video fake and the medical professional seemed trusting. I would have liked to

see them talk about the nutrition. However, I'm still not getting the vaccine. I'm not changing my mind.]

Attendee: [I like the video, but I don't know if I will change my mind about getting the shot. I'm thinking about though.]

Attendee: [I paid more attention to this video and I'm considering maybe getting the vaccine. I want to do more research and see other videos. Speaking on a young person level, it's not enough information and now I want to see and read more information from black medical professionals.]

Attendee: [I feel like it was good information, but it could have been better information. I understand they only had so much time to present the information. Maybe they should have more videos targeted to the black community, but specific to different age groups.]

Attendee: [No one has given ME a reason to get the vaccine. No information has presented a homeopathic way tied to the government's request for all to be vaccinated.]

TN COVID-19 Our Voices Campaign PSA <YouTube>

Attendee: [I liked this video because it speaks to Tennessee but it does not change my mind.]

Attendee: [Losing love ones is horrible, but it would have been more impactful if it only displayed more Black families. This would have driven home the goal for the impact of the black community.]

CDC Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines <Website>

Attendee: [I've been to this website quite a few times. There's nothing about nutritional or homogenic information on the website.]

Attendee: [I used to work for a university not too long ago. The CDC website was our 'Bible' when it came to vaccinations. I feel the CDC has given mixed signals and inconsistency. There's need to be consistency from the top which will lead to consistency on the state and local levels. This is where you are getting a lot of apprehension from the Black community. There's no cohesion at the top.]

Vaccine-Myths.pdf (tn.gov) <Website>

Attendee: [This website does not 'sugarcoat' the myths... CDC is so broad, but this site is so much streamlined.]

Attendee: [This is pretty on paper, but who in my community is going to look up this information? However, this is more impactful if you give this information out at the local fish fry.]

Attendee: [They should list the ingredients in these vaccines so people will know what's in it.]

Fotonovela.pdf (cdc.gov) <Website>

Attendee: [I would read this... It's artistic, but I would also factcheck it.]

Trusted Community Leaders

Attendee: [In my councilman, I don't trust him. I don't any of them.]

Attendee: [I have more trust in the pastors. Others are clot chasing, or have an agenda.]

Attendee: [I agree. I trust pastors more than I do politicians or community leaders.]

Attendee: [I really don't trust any of them. I've been around long enough to know they are willing to do more to what's beneficial to their pockets over their community.]

## Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, the attendees seemed to have left the focus group session with unchanged opinions about the covid19 vaccine. As a general impression, we can say that most participants had deep seated apprehension and fears about the vaccine, and they were looking for cohesiveness from leadership. Attendees mentioned in several moments that they wanted to hear from local black medical professionals that they can relate to as utmost importance. They also want more information about nutritional and homeopathic alternatives in conjunction with the vaccines.

It is recommended to continue working with community leaders, particularly African American medical professionals and church pastors, providing information about the positive aspects of the vaccine. Also, marketing to specific age groups in the Black, African American with testimonials from the age group that have already taken the vaccine. A recommendation: follow up with these attendees within in six months to see if their opinions and circumstances have changed towards being vaccinated.

Focus Group Facilitator Dr. Patrick D. U. Davis, Sr.

## Lessons Learned

The two listening groups yielded widely different results and responses. The first listening group, which was composed of those with Hispanic/Latino backgrounds, revealed a much lower level of mistrust regarding the vaccine. They were hesitant due to lack of reliable information. They responded positively to all of the information presented to them. The participants had confidence in medical professionals. However, they were not hearing a strong recommendation for vaccination or complete information from the medical professionals they saw. They had a frequent use of the traditional media like television and radio and they trusted community leaders. The participants left the listening session with a positive feeling about the vaccine and seemed motivated to getting vaccinated.

The second listening group, which was composed of all African-Americans, displayed a much more persistent feeling of distrust. They had deep suspicion about the information being shared with them, much of that sentiment was rooted in historical trauma and oppression. They particularly mistrusted political leaders. They preferred to rely on diet and home remedies to stay healthy. They felt the COVID information nationally available was inconsistent. None of the information presented to them seemed to be effective in influencing their decision to get vaccinated. The attendees left the focus group session with unchanged opinions about the vaccine and demonstrated no intention of getting vaccinated. None of the participants consistently relied on traditional forms of media for news and information. The participants responded most positively to the idea of being presented with information regarding the vaccine by local faith leaders, African American medical professionals, and people within their age group.

Both of the listening session groups only account for a small sample of the communities that they represent. Our findings cannot be considered exhaustive, but do provide some key insights and guidance as we work to develop messaging to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations. The listening sessions point to the importance of trusted local messengers, such as medical and faith leaders, in overcoming vaccine hesitancy.