

# Black Audience

## Messaging Brief for COVID-19 Vaccine Education

LeadingAge's Care Fully campaign is offering helpful resources to nonprofit aging service providers and state partners nationwide, helping to educate their Black direct care workers about COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Review this messaging brief as well as the messaging tips in this toolkit to ensure your vaccine education materials resonate with Black direct care workers.

### AUDIENCE GOALS

- **Build vaccine confidence** by empowering Black direct care workers to get the latest information on the benefits of vaccines and boosters, overcome myths and misinformation, and help them make a more informed decision to protect themselves, those they care for, and their loved ones
- **Drive urgency** of the importance of vaccines and boosters by contextualizing COVID-19 risks and vaccination benefits

### AUDIENCE PROFILE

#### Snapshot of Direct Care Workers (Source: [Direct Care Workers in the US 2021 – PHI](#))

|                     | Home Care Workers<br>(private homes)      | Residential Care Aides<br>(group homes, assisted living) | Direct Care Workers<br>(nursing homes)   |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Size/Impact</b>  | 2.4 million<br>Support 8.6 million people | 675,000<br>Support 1.1 million people                    | 527,000<br>Support 1.3 million people    |
| <b>Demographics</b> | 90% women<br>Median age: 47<br>27% Black  | 81% women<br>Median age: 37<br>30% Black                 | 90% women<br>Median age: 38<br>38% Black |

#### Additional characteristics

- Limited formal education beyond high school
- Low wages and high poverty rates; challenged to support themselves and their families
- High rates of part-time work
- Often stressed, carry a heavy workload, and can be prone to injury and burnout
- Historically underpaid, undervalued, and overworked
- At a greater risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 due to work environments

### GENERAL ROOTS HESITANCY

- Concerns about safety and the unknown long-term potential side effects from COVID-19 vaccination, driven by the speed of the clinical development process and the vaccines' novelty
- Need for digestible information that cuts through the clutter, elevates the benefits of vaccination, and combats misinformation
- Higher rates of distrust in the political and economic motives of the medical community, government, and corporations due to medical and government mistreatment (e.g., Tuskegee study) that has contributed to cultural trauma
- Concerns about infertility and the effects on pregnancies
- A desire to wait and see how others will react to it first
- Systemic barriers to vaccination, such as time away from work, language barriers, and transportation issues
- Faith and religious beliefs that sometimes contribute to vaccine hesitancy

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### BARRIERS TO VACCINATION

- COVID-19 news fatigue has caused many to tune out new information. It's important to communicate without being overly alarmist or using fear tactics.
- Breakthrough cases can raise doubts and increase reluctance
- There is a perception that they don't need the vaccine or they take on the risks when many people in their circle are vaccinated
- Younger adults (<45) don't always see themselves as at high risk for getting seriously ill from COVID-19
- They have an increased reliance on social media for information and the prevalent myths, such as "boosters cause COVID-19" or "you're injected with the flu"

### KEY MESSAGES

| Act Now:<br>New Variants Are Serious   | Get Protected  | The Vaccines Are Safe  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>New variants (e.g., Delta, Omicron) are much more infectious than the original COVID-19 virus.</p> <p>Don't wait. The vaccines also give you protection against these variants.</p> <p>Variants are serious and can have serious effects. You may feel that if you contract COVID-19 you can easily recover and that it only impacts our health. It also can increase your stress and affect your finances and employment status.</p> | <p>Getting vaccinated helps keep you out of the hospital. COVID-19 can put people like you in the hospital—not just the elderly or those with underlying health issues.</p> <p>Vaccines and boosters provide strong protection against serious illness and death from COVID-19.</p> <p>Vaccines protect you personally, especially if you have underlying conditions. You are important and your health is important to us.</p> <p>Vaccines help protect not just you, but also your residents and/or the clients you care for.</p> <p>Vaccination is necessary to protect you and your coworkers collectively as a front-line aging services workforce.</p> | <p>There are now COVID-19 vaccines that have been fully approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).</p> <p>Join millions of Americans (and 96% of doctors, according to the American Medical Association) who've been safely vaccinated.</p> <p>Among aging services staff, 68% are safely vaccinated.</p> <p>COVID-19 vaccines are safe and meet the FDA's rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality.</p> |

### CREATIVE PLATFORM

- Call to action (CTA):
  - Get the latest information so you can make a more informed decision
  - Avoid using language like "get the shot" unless it's coming from an expert; however, find ways to express urgency to act
  - Act urgently: "Now is the time to make an informed decision"
  - Connect to information: "Get the latest information at [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://www.getvaccineanswers.org)"
  - Connect to locations: "Find a vaccine location near you at [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://www.getvaccineanswers.org)"
- URL: [GetVaccineAnswers.org](https://www.getvaccineanswers.org)

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### GUIDING MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

- Don't be an alarmist. Lead with the “new” news (such as new variants or local hospitalization rates) to break through, but don't play into fear tactics.
- Use a tone that is empathetic, authentic, and respectful if people have questions or concerns
- In your materials, make sure to acknowledge direct care worker burnout along with COVID-19 fatigue and provide resources when possible. The way direct care workers cope with their emotions can affect their well-being, their decisions, their jobs, and those whom they care for. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has the following resources available:
  - [Support for Public Health Workers and Health Professionals](#)
  - [Healthcare Workers: Work Stress & Mental Health](#)
  - [Managing Fatigue During Times of Crisis: Guidance for Nurses, Managers, and Other Healthcare Workers](#)
- In addition to encouraging vaccination, also encourage people to follow all CDC-recommended prevention methods
- Respect people's independence and urge them to make an informed decision
- Position vaccines and boosters as not only being important for their own protection, but also for those whom they are caring for each day, those closest to them, their loved ones, and their most vulnerable family and friends (e.g., older family members, children at home, and those with pre-existing conditions)
- Acknowledge that variants have led to more breakthrough cases, but that the vaccines still provide ample protection against serious illness
- Acknowledge that there is a lot of information on COVID-19 and the vaccines, then point them to clear, up-to-date information, such as on [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)
- Build trust by being honest and transparent where appropriate
- When sharing a key message, provide statistics and facts
- Convey messages through personal and relatable stories, including visuals to make it easier to understand and contextualize some of the key facts
- Use storytelling to frame messages around loss or negatives (e.g., fear, regret, guilt)
- Consider the following Black audience creative insights:
  - Community is critical, with an emphasis on local organizations, neighborhoods, churches, and schools
  - Be careful of singling out Black communities or depicting responsibility for vaccination to be resting on their shoulders
  - Creative should include a diverse representation of Black audiences

### MESSAGES TO AVOID

- Positioning getting vaccinated as “the right thing to do”
- Playing into fear tactics or trying to make it seem like things are the worst they've ever been

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### CONSUMER (DIRECT CARE WORKER) FACING LANGUAGE

| DO SAY  | DON'T SAY                              |
|---|--|
| People who have questions   | Anti-vaxxers                           |
| Get or seek the latest information                                      | There are things we still don't know   |
| Protect yourself, those you care for, and those who are most vulnerable | Get vaccinated to protect your country |
| Public health   | Government                             |
| Medical experts and doctors   | Scientists                             |

### TRUSTED MESSENGERS

- Influencer Objectives**

- Educate others about vaccines and boosters, demystifying the science
- Demonstrate vaccination safety and efficacy
- Satisfy the “wait and see” unmet need with knowledge and personal experiences
- Deliver messages from people our audiences trust and those whom they can relate to
- Combat misinformation and disinformation directly

- Recommended Categories**

*(Note: It's important that Black Americans see themselves reflected in the trusted messengers selected.)*

- Medical experts and community health workers are generally the most trusted sources. A call to action to “go get vaccinated” is best coming only from these sources.
- Word of mouth is important to build a cultural consensus, especially from peers and other care workers. Family and friends are also trusted sources when it comes to gathering information or seeking advice.
- Celebrities aren't always the best messengers, but they can help by amplifying support, sharing why they got vaccinated, or giving a platform to medical experts to help share educational information
- Public health institutions like CDC still carry credibility, but it can be more effective to focus on trusted medical experts within specific communities

- Recommended Social Media Posting Cadence**

- Phase 1: Getting the facts: Share important key stats about COVID-19 vaccines
- Phase 2: Amplifying the facts (Reference: [AdCouncilFactLibrary.org](https://adlibrary.org))
- Phase 3: Sharing personal vaccination experiences: real-time reaction videos that highlight personal vaccination stories, leveraging geo-tags to inform followers on where they can get vaccinated