



**COMMUNITY CARE  
NETWORK OF KANSAS**  
Health. Equity. Justice.

## **All Kansas Health Centers Invited to Join Federal Vaccine Program**

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*For Immediate Release*

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TOPEKA – The federal government is serious about its commitment to vaccine equity – and is delivering even more doses to community health centers to prove it.

On Wednesday, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a significant expansion of the Health Center COVID-19 Vaccine Program by inviting all 1,470 community health centers across the country to participate. That number includes 19 health centers in Kansas, four of which already are receiving vaccine doses directly from the federal government to inoculate medically underserved communities and disproportionately affected populations. The program supplements existing state and federal distribution channels.

“Increasing access to vaccines among those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic is critical,” Secretary Becerra said in a press release. “By adding to the number of community health centers participating in this program, we will help make sure shots are getting to those who need them most. The medical professionals at these local health centers already have trusted relationships in these communities, and this expansion will ensure every community health center in the country can be a part of our vaccination effort.”

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)-funded health centers and Health Center Program look-alike in the Sunflower State all are part of the Community Care Network of Kansas. Community Care CEO Denise Cyzman said the health centers serve disproportionately higher numbers of both racial and ethnic minority patients as well as those with low incomes, underinsured or have no insurance coverage at all.

“COVID-19 has had an outsized effect on Kansans who receive their medical, dental and mental healthcare at community health centers,” Cyzman said. “For HRSA and the CDC (Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention) to accelerate the delivery of vaccines to these deserving individuals speaks volumes about their attention to health equity and social justice.”

Forty-one percent of Kansas health center patients are members of a racial or ethnic minority group, despite being only 25 percent of the overall population. Similar trends exist for people living in poverty. Ninety percent of Kansas health center patients are at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL), while 28 percent of the general population is in that category.

The state of Kansas has similar interest and commitment to vaccine equity. Next week, the state will launch the COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Taskforce that will help to identify and address stakeholder priorities and challenges as it pertains to vaccine distribution for Kansas communities of color. The taskforce also will look to amplify key vaccine equity messages, according to the latest weekly vaccine newsletter from the governor’s office.

As of Wednesday, more than 1.4 million Kansans had received at least one vaccine dose and more than 500,000 had completed the regimen. Community health centers had vaccinated approximately 50,000 Kansans as of the most recent HRSA reporting period (March 26). The number, which represents a subset of 14 health centers, showed 24.1 percent of prime dose vaccinations were received by racial and ethnic minority patients. For second dose recipients, the percentage was 19.4 percent.

“The increased doses will help reduce the gaps in vaccination rates for persons of color and other underserved communities,” Cyzman said. “Inviting all health centers to participate will help ensure all Kansans benefit from herd immunity when we reach that point.”

A complete list of participating and invited Kansas health centers can be seen on the HRSA website [here](#).

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*About Community Care Clinic of Kansas: Community Care exists to achieve equitable access to high-quality, whole-person care for all Kansans, regardless of ability to pay. As the Primary Care Association (PCA) for Kansas, Community Care supports and strengthens its members through advocacy, education and communication. Community Care’s diverse membership includes Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), and Look-Alikes (LALs), as well as public and private nonprofit Community-Based Primary Care Clinics (CBPCCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs).*