What We Know Now
March 8, 2021


Community Care Member Update

Today’s Spotlight is on the Community Health Center in Cowley County, which is using unique approaches to tackle COVID-19 vaccine acceptance.

CEO David Brazil said even after administering more than 800 doses, he was noticing unwelcome trends. Health center staff saw only about a 50% acceptance rate as they began working through Phase 2 high-risk individuals 65 and older – and about the same rate with healthcare workers.

Clearly, there was room for improvement.

So Brazil went back to the Crushing COVID in Cowley County coalition, which is the public information officer workgroup assembled to create consistent messaging for masks and testing earlier during the public health emergency. The group is comprised of individuals from the health center, local health department, hospital, chamber of commerce and other active community partners. Their mission is to raise community awareness of the need to follow CDC guidelines to help “flatten the curve” and reduce community transmission of COVID-19.

The coalition already had a patriotic theme going, replete with images of Uncle Sam, Rosie the Riveter and plenty of red, white and blue. “Crushing COVID is Up to You!!!” was the simple, straightforward message. The group decided to add vaccination messaging to the existing campaign.
“We just needed to shift attention in the social and traditional media campaigns that began late last fall,” Brazil said.

So they beefed up the Facebook page (here). They made 4x8 banners for every agency in the coalition. One of the banners (pictured above) was affixed to a lighted billboard. Posters were made and hung up throughout the community – even placed atop the health center’s Q Boxes (quarantine boxes that contain $100 worth of food, medical equipment, masks, etc. distributed to patients). Videos are being made and shared.

Chamber Bucks (gift certificates that can be used in local businesses) were purchased to serve as prizes for county residents who participate in masking and a vaccination acceptance campaign that includes entering selfie photos on social media with “I got my COVID-19 vaccine” next to them.

“As a result of our efforts,” Brazil said, “we expect to build awareness of and participation in the campaign and to inspire partners in the campaign to continue it through other paid advertising and earned media.”

Perhaps most importantly, Brazil said this campaign will “increase positive attitudes about practicing healthy behaviors at a time when virus fatigue and desire for social connection are barriers.”

Brazil said they are using a combination of funding sources to support the efforts, plus Kansas Beats the Virus grant support from the Kansas Leadership Center. KLC’s grassroots community mobilization initiative resulted in 850 meetings across the state designed to develop local action plans.

We believe “Crushing COVID is Up to You!” has to be one of the more unique plans in play. And it is likely to help increase vaccine acceptance among the health center’s patient population and beyond.

From KDHE/Governor’s Office/Statehouse

Latest statistics: 296,451 positive cases, 4,816 deaths, 9,411 hospitalizations and 978,416 negative results. Since Friday, there have been 590 new cases, 4 deaths and 24 hospitalizations reported.

According to the Kansas WebIZ vaccination tracker (here), 698,670 doses have been administered in Kansas out of the 1,020,380 doses distributed. 465,622 people (16.0% of the population) have had their first dose and 232,986 received their second dose.

Listen live to Kansas Legislature floor proceedings and committee hearings here. Archived meetings on YouTube here.

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC released its first set of guidelines on how fully vaccinated people can visit safely with others. To see the guidelines, click here.
An early MMWR, Body Mass Index and Risk for COVID-19-Related Hospitalization, Intensive Care Unit Admission, Invasive Mechanical Ventilation, and Death, was released. Findings highlight clinical and public health implications of higher BMIs. Read the MMWR [here](#).

The CDC has issued several updates, including:

- Cases in the U.S. ([here](#)),
- When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated ([here](#)),
- Science Brief: Background Rationale and Evidence for Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People ([here](#)),
- Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines ([here](#)), and
- COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Specific Groups ([here](#)), and
- Things to Know about the COVID-19 Pandemic ([here](#)).

**From U.S. Food & Drug Administration**

FDA issued an emergency use authorization (EAU) for a T-Detect COVID test, a next generation sequencing-based test to aid in identifying individuals with an adaptive T cell immune response to SARS-CoV-2. Read the news release [here](#). FDA also issued an EAU for the Cue COVID-19 Test for Home and Over the Counter use. Read more [here](#).

**From the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**

The HHS Office of Minority Health announced an effort to invest $250 million to encourage COVID-19 safety and vaccination among underserved populations. The initiative, Advancing Health Literacy to Enhance Equitable Community Responses to COVID-19, will fund approximately 30 projects in urban communities and 43 projects in rural communities for two years. Read the news release [here](#).

**From the National Institutes of Health**

Statement on NIH starting enrollment for third trial of blood clotting treatments for COVID-19. Read more [here](#).

**From the Kansas Health Institute**

KHI recently released two COVID-19 studies, Food Insufficiency Before and During the Pandemic which reports one in every 10 Kansas adults experiencing food insufficiency during the pandemic ([here](#)) and COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy that shows self-reported intentions of Kansans about receiving the vaccine ([here](#)).

**From Media Reports**

Senate passes massive COVID-19 relief bill, sending changes back to House. Read more at Roll Call [here](#).

State reports 16% of residents are vaccinated against COVID-19 as new cases again fall. Read more at The Topeka Capital-Journal [here](#).
While vaccination rates speed up, fourth surge may be brewing. Read more at Kaiser Health News here.

COVID-19 lessons for trapping the next pandemic. Read more at Axios here.