

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

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HUD AND HHS/HRSA RECOGNIZE FEDERAL COVID-19 PARTNERS AT MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

The event memorialized the joint agency and health center focus on ensuring equitable access to COVID-19 resources for HUD-assisted households living in the metro.

KANSAS CITY, KS - On Monday, March 28th, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and its Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) recognized the leadership of the Kansas City, Kansas Housing Authority; the Housing Authority of the City of Kansas City, Missouri; Health Partnership Health Center; KC CARE Health Center; Samuel U. Rodgers Health Center; Swope Health; and Vibrant Health Center for their combined efforts in educating, testing and vaccinating low-income households against COVID-19. The Kansas City cohort of health centers and housing authorities from both sides of the state line, led to an estimated 977 people receiving the COVID-19 vaccination between May and December 2021. Those recognized received opening remarks from Captain Scott Conner, Acting Regional Director, HHS Region 7 – before getting their citations that were signed by HUD Regional Administrator Ulysses Clayborn and HHS/HRSA Regional Administrator Nancy Rios. The Mid-America Regional Council hosted the event.

On Wednesday, May 5th, 2021, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia Fudge and U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a joint-agency effort to increase access to COVID-19 prevention and treatment services, including testing and vaccines, to disproportionately affected communities. This specifically focused on connecting HUD-assisted households and people experiencing homelessness with the care

and resources of federally-qualified health centers (FQHCs) that are part of the HHS/HRSA network like those recognized at Monday's event.

The federal partnership and local engagement focused on helping parts of the Kansas City area that traditionally have suffered from low economic opportunity and declining health outcomes to avoid letting their zip code determine their fate. The partnership overcame these barriers and improved the COVID resilience of federally-assisted households and those experiencing homelessness across the metro, through the use of several different collaborative engagement strategies such as:

- Reviewing Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of HUD multifamily, public housing units and homelessness epicenters to create an overlay with HHS/HRSA-supported health centers that were in close proximity, to isolate where transportation barriers could impact vaccination efforts and provide transportation resources to vaccination or education events;
- Leveraging Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) vaccine equity survey data to identify zip-code level vaccine hesitancy rates in order to deploy education teams to enhance receptiveness to vaccination efforts;
- Integrating multi-jurisdictional coordination calls to help determine if federally-assisted households were better served by existing mass vaccination events or required on-site event development, including the use of FQHC mobile clinics at or near HUD-assisted units.

While HUD and HHS/HRSA have often worked together over the years on various events, this lasting engagement is a much more unified approach recognizing that quality and safe housing and health access is part of the same method of improving the lives of persons living at or near poverty and facing social and financial challenges. Direct treatment of COVID was the specific focus of the May 5th pact between HUD and HHS but building equitable access to combat inequity in future health crises is the larger and more long-term play.

In addition to the work exemplified by the Kansas City-area health centers, HUD and HHS/HRSA's joint venture to serve HUD-assisted populations continues across the Great Plains region covering Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska as well as the whole of the nation. Additional resources and information about the scope and reach of the partnership can be found at [*HUD COVID-19 Resources and Fact Sheets*](#).



COVID-19 Event Attendees (From left to right: Patrick Salle, CEO Vibrant Health; Will Franklin, CEO, KC CARE; Dr. Naomi Jamal, Chief Quality Officer; Swope Health; Robin Wheeler-Sanders (rear), Chief People Officer, Swope Health; Adria Edwards, Director of Special Projects, KC CARE; Catherine Wiley, Director of Marketing and Communications, Samuel Rodgers; Bob Theis, CEO, Samuel Rodgers; Amy Falk, CEO, Health Partnership, Nancy Rios, Regional Administrator, HRSA Region 7; Catherine Satterwhite (rear), Regional Health Administrator, HHS Region 7; Andrea Perdomo-Morales, Chief Health Equity Officer, Vibrant Health; Ed Lowndes, Executive Director, Housing Authority Kansas City, Missouri; Steven Tucker, Assistant Director of Resident Services, Housing Authority Kansas City, Missouri; Capt. Scott Conner, Acting Regional Director, HHS Region 7; Jose Davis, Field Office Director (Kansas/Western Missouri), HUD Region 7; (Not Pictured - Elaine Stroud, Housing Authority Kansas City, KS)

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