



Department
of Health

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Stephanie McCloud, Director

March 17, 2021

To Our Valued Vaccine Provider Partners:

Thank you for all that you are doing to support Ohio's mission to ensure equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine. As you likely know, there are segments of Ohio's population that are at increased risk for exposure to and serious complications from COVID-19, including severe illness and death. A year into this pandemic, we have learned some important lessons about consistent data collection, particularly related to race and ethnicity data that we believe are important to address.

The Ohio Department of Health's commitment to equity is illustrated by the way our teams use data to lead our work and hold us accountable. This is particularly true in our use of data to distribute vaccine to communities who need it the most. Collection of race and ethnicity data is critical for understanding the scope and impact of COVID-19. This data also helps us evaluate equity within our response efforts and monitor provider performance. Data also provides a clear picture of how vaccination impacts high-risk groups such as Black, Hispanic, and Latino Ohioans.

We hope that you are keenly aware of the critical nature and importance of your role in asking for and reporting race and ethnicity data for every Ohioan whom you vaccinate. The Ohio Department of Health is monitoring provider performance on data quality.

We are asking all vaccine providers to improve the quality of race and ethnicity data collection by reviewing this field with every patient when they check-in for their vaccine appointment. If they have left the field blank, please ask them for the information. Alternatively, consider collecting the missing information during the observation period immediately following administration of the shot.

We realize you may experience barriers collecting this data and understand that we are asking you to report information that some patients may feel uncomfortable or fearful providing. While some staff may be reluctant to ask these questions, staff training can increase confidence and consistency in collection and reporting. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) developed a [Race and Ethnicity Data Improvement Toolkit](#) with resources and training materials that you can use today to start collecting data to support equitable vaccine distribution in Ohio.

We encourage you to reach out to the Office of Health Equity if you have questions or would like support or further guidance at minorityhealth@odh.ohio.gov. Team members are available as a resource and stand ready to assist.

Respectfully,

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