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Most people can sympathize with the frustration of keeping up with the ever changing guidance around COVID-19. It seems that there are new permutations of what our institutions and public officials deem “safe” guidelines every week, which can be exhausting and confusing to follow – especially if English is not your first language. While many are itching to return to some semblance of normalcy distant from the pandemic and its subsequent restrictions, the reality for Latinos is vastly different. For many in Chicago’s Latino community, the prospect of less COVID-19 restrictions [sows more anxiety than optimism](#). Although surges of the virus have severely affected other communities, including African Americans, state data indicates that Latinos have a higher infection rate than any other racial or ethnic group in Illinois.

In fact, coronavirus tests taken by Latinos also have come up positive nearly 46% of the time, according to an analysis of data from the Illinois Department of Public Health carried out by the Latino Policy Forum. Citing data from the Illinois Department of Public Health, the group notes that nearly 1.8% of the state’s Latino residents have tested positive for the coronavirus, a relatively high rate compared to about 1.1% of African Americans, less than 1% for the state as a whole, and 0.3% among the white, non-Hispanic population. [59% of Chicagoans are Black or Latinx](#), yet in the first week of COVID-19 vaccinations in Chicago, when the vaccine was only available to healthcare workers and vaccine eligibility was linked to employment status, only 18% of COVID-19 vaccines went to Black or Latinx Chicagoans. More recently, as COVID-19 vaccinations have become widely available in Chicago and community partners build vaccine confidence and access, the make-up of those who have received a first dose is more representative of Chicago’s overall demographics.

It is true that we have made great strides in decreasing the rate of transmission, hospitalizations, and deaths from COVID-19. [As of February 22, 2022](#), the city’s test positivity rate of 1.5%, was in the “low transmission” category, while its rate of occupied hospital and ICU beds was in “lower transmission.” The seven-day rolling average of new daily cases was still at “substantial transmission” at 283 cases, but all those categories were decreasing. There are currently three vaccines that are available to Chicago residents – Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. Additionally, more than half of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students 12 and older are fully vaccinated. However, for students ages 5 to 11, less than one-third have received at least one vaccine dose. This is especially concerning considering a [new study by the CDC](#) found that Hispanic children were eight times more likely than white children to be hospitalized because of COVID-19. Furthermore, the Latinx community continues to have [more positive cases](#) of COVID-19 compared to the rest of the city.

One of the objectives of the Rockefeller proposal includes establishing an Advisory Committee of healthcare and public health experts and community leaders from targeted areas who will develop messages and toolkits to empower the Hispanic community, create awareness, and address COVID-19 vaccine confidence and mistrust. We also plan to build capacity among Hispanic physicians and health experts through media activities and distribution of COVID-19 materials to schools. Additionally, disseminating public information and resources translated to Spanish is essential as

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Spanish speakers are at an [elevated risk for COVID-19](#). Language barriers can leave vulnerable populations unaware of critical health information regarding case rates, vaccination for children, booster shots, etc.

It is still critical for us to collaborate with trusted healthcare professionals, institutions and leaders in the Latino community to ensure that the vaccine is perceived positively so we can expand its reception. In order to mobilize our community, NHHF is proud to partner with The Rockefeller Foundation to support chapters affiliated with the Hispanic Dental Association, National Association of Hispanic Nurses, or community-based organizations focused on Hispanic health to participate in a community action grant. Grants will be distributed for groups to organize events or programs in three target communities — Houston, Oakland, and Chicago — to increase vaccination uptake of the seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccines. To learn more about the project and apply for a micro grant, visit the [website here](#).

NHHF is dedicated to working with community leaders, organizations, and the vibrant Latino community at large in Chicago to ensure that life saving information is properly disseminated. Including the following:

Testing:

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/covid-testing.html>

Finding a testing site:

English –

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/covid-19-vaccine/Documents/comms_to_ols_flyers/TestingSite_Flyer_8.5x11_Jan2022_ENG.pdf

Spanish –

https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/sites/covid-19-vaccine/Documents/comms_to_ols_flyers/TestingSite_Flyer_8.5x11_Jan2022_SPA.pdf

Pediatric COVID-19 Testing Sites:

<https://schoolinfo.cps.edu/pediatricCovidTestingSites/>

-Link to find a testing site near them (map)

COVID-19 Vaccine Finders:

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid19-vaccine/home/vaccine-finder.html>

COVID-19 vaccines are widely available throughout the city, including at doctors' offices, hospitals, pharmacies, community health centers, City-operated clinics, pop-up locations, and other special events. All COVID-19 vaccines are offered at no cost, regardless of ability to pay or immigration status. No government ID or insurance is required. Search [vaccines.gov](#), text your ZIP code to 438829, or call 1-800-232-0233 to find locations near you. You can also contact the City's COVID-19 helpline at 312.746.4835.

Join NHMA's Vaccinate For All Campaign today!

vaccinateforall.org/