



Equitable Vaccination Rollout for Older Adults: Barriers and Recommendations

Four logistical barriers for vaccine rollout programs to consider carefully in order to ensure equity and reach for older adults in communities of color and with limited English proficiency

1. **Reliance on online scheduling** will hamper vaccination campaigns for those with limited access to devices and to broadband. Additionally, older adults may struggle to learn a new online system.

“And these are the people who may very well be the most vulnerable because they do not have the technology means. ...It’s either, you don’t even know the technology, or you don’t have anybody to help you at home to access it. Or even you have the technology, you have the device, but you don’t know how to use it.”

--Chinese Community Health Resource Center

2. **English only online platforms and outreach** will exclude those older adults with limited English proficiency from vaccination efforts, further marginalizing these vulnerable community members.

“Information during the pandemic was not readily available in different languages all the time, so it did not get out to the community...We became an extension of public service announcements for the seniors to make sure that they had the information that they needed.”

--Self Help for the Elderly

3. **Limited public transportation options** during the pandemic, particularly in less affluent neighborhoods, combined with mobility issues for many older adults is a barrier to access centralized vaccination sites.

“The hills are so steep that they’re graded...and if you’re talking about seniors and persons living with access and functional needs, it’s not whether we have the services...it’s whether they can access them.”

--IT Bookman Community Center

4. **Living in close quarters** where the virus spreads easily.

“We have seniors that live in senior housing...But we also have seniors that live with a lot of people inside, and they are just paying, for example, the closet, they are paying for the hallway.”

--Mission Neighborhood Centers

Five recommendations to address these barriers and ensure equitable vaccination rollout

1. Ensure outreach is not solely electronic; supply a telephone hotline for real-time scheduling; publish information in ethnic media outlets; conduct active scheduling outreach through trusted sources (e.g., doctors’ offices, community-based organizations).
2. Ensure websites, electronic scheduling interfaces, telephone outreach, consent forms and information sheets are all available in at least the top five non-English languages in a given community or health system; have language concordant staff and/or interpretation services available at vaccination sites.
3. Set up mobile vaccination sites in community centers/at trusted and easily accessed locations in close proximity to where these older adults live.
4. Provide resources for transportation, particularly for those who are living in isolation and/or have mobility challenges.
5. Protect the household unit – when eligible individuals schedule an appointment ask about older adults in the household and schedule them for vaccination at the same time.