

# COVID-19 VACCINATION IN MINNESOTA PRISONS

## Overview

Our team at the University of Minnesota's Prevention Research Center is studying why incarcerated people choose whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccine. We're guided by an Advisory Board of 14 individuals who have been directly affected by incarceration. What we learn will help us improve strategies across the state.

This is what we learned from the 1,392 incarcerated people in Shakopee, St. Cloud, and Rush City prisons who took the survey in November 2021. We chose these facilities in order to hear perspectives from both women and men, and because Rush City (at the time) had the lowest rates of incarcerated people getting vaccinated.

## What we learned

**85%**

of survey participants received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

**13%**

of survey participants have not received the COVID-19 vaccine.

**79%**

of survey participants received their COVID-19 vaccine while in prison or jail.

## Most common reasons for getting vaccinated

- "To get back to normal activities in prison."
- "To protect my health."
- "To protect my friends and family."

## Common concerns and questions

- "What are the side effects and long-term effects of COVID-19 vaccines?"
- "Is the vaccine effective? For how long? Against variants?"
- "How does the vaccine work and how was it developed?"
- "Why and how often are booster shots recommended?"
- "Why don't we have regular privileges even though we got the shot?"

## What we heard people want

- More information from non-prison sources
- Incentives to get vaccinated
- More time to observe the effects of the vaccine on others

## Our team's next steps

- Create informative materials that speak to your unique concerns about vaccination.
- Identify trusted messengers (outside of the DOC) to share evidence-based information about vaccines and answer your questions.
- Recommend to the DOC that facilities offer incentives to get the shot (money, commissary credits, and/or increase in activities/programming).
- Recommend to the DOC that facilities increase peoples' access to health information in print, audio, and video so they can make a decision for themselves.
- Recommend to the DOC that facilities offer people more opportunities to get the shot and boosters (in the brand of their choice, when possible).

## Who took the survey

Participant demographics: 1,392 people took this survey. The majority identified as men (73%) and the average age of participants was 37. Of the three prisons that participated, St. Cloud had the highest response rate (42%). Participants identified as non-Hispanic white (41%), non-Hispanic Black (19%), multiracial (15%), American Indian or Alaska Native (10%), Hispanic (6%), another race/ethnicity (5%), Asian or Asian American (3%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (<1%), and Middle Eastern or North African (<1%).

## For more information

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