

Texas response to health equity: Texas partners for inclusive access (TPIA)

Sandy Magaña (TCDS), Vanessa Richards (CDD), Sean Jackson (DRTx), Weiwen Zeng (TCDS), Beth Stalvey (TCDD), & Anita Swanson (TTAP)

Background



Disasters and emergencies disrupt the function and capacity of the communities in which they occur and exacerbate day-to-day inequities that already exist. The COVID-19, a global health pandemic, was no exception. Specific data unique to the disability community was not, and remains largely unavailable, because health surveillance systems, preparedness, and planning processes lack inclusivity to evaluate whether outcomes are equitable for people with disabilities. Disability advocates came together to facilitate a statewide partnership, Texas Partners for Inclusive Access (TPIA), to promote meaningful access to COVID-19 testing, vaccinations, and information. The partnership consists of 20 partners spanning public, private and non-profit sectors. Some of the efforts are outlined here.

Disability Rights Texas (DRTx)



- DRTx spearheaded the formation of TPIA engaging statewide partners; employed health navigators to provide supports and services to access vaccines; worked with statewide partners to disseminate education about vaccines; and presented important information at virtual and in-person events.
- A summary of our work over the last year:



11,000

Vaccines administered/facilitated for people with disabilities.



13,000

Received vaccine outreach.



900,000

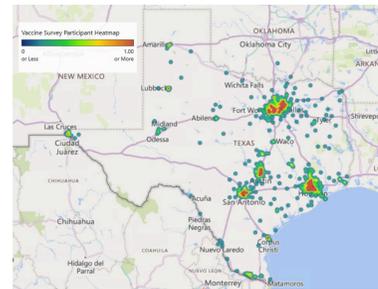
Received vaccine education online or in-person.

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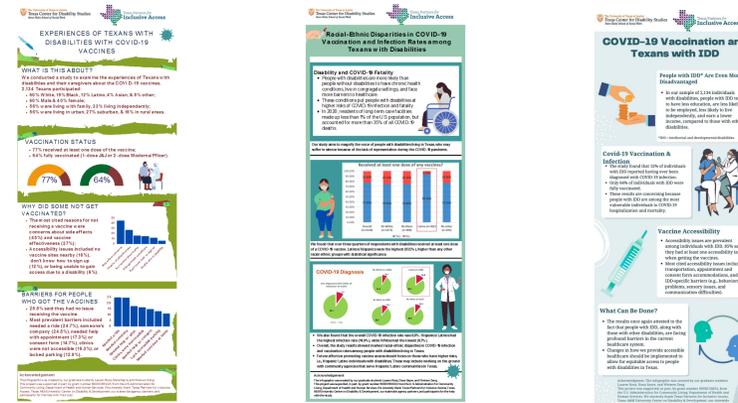


Experiences of Texans with Disabilities with COVID-19 Vaccines — A statewide survey

- To learn about the perceptions and experiences of Texans with disabilities related to COVID-19 vaccination, we conducted a vaccination study, where we collected voluntary data from 2,134 adult Texans with disabilities and their caregivers across Texas.
- Participants were asked to provide general and disability-specific demographic information, information regarding their COVID-19 vaccination status, and respond to questions regarding barriers and ease of access to the vaccine.
- Geographic heatmap:



- Infographics we disseminated on social media:



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Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP)

- Shared accessible covid-19 information;
- Shared Vaccine flyers at in-person outreach events;
- Disseminated TPIA information, announcements, and resources to consumer and professional networks.

TCDD



- TCDD developed the *Best Shot Street Team*, a grass roots peer-to-peer network comprised of self-motivated individuals who are passionate about inclusive access and helping their neighbors with disabilities.
- The team was comprised of 15 self-advocates and family members of individuals with disabilities, spread across eight Texas cities. Peers focused on social media outreach, vaccine clinics, PPE distribution, general education campaigns, and partnerships with local health departments and immunization groups on accessibility.
- The team aided in the administration of over 200 vaccinations, facilitated through over 1,600+ conversations about COVID-19 with those considered most hesitant in this high-risk group.

Texas A&M CDD



- Hired a student from the CDD postsecondary program (PATHS) who presented on vaccine hesitancy to his peers;
- Participated in 9 clinics with Brazos Valley health department's mobile vaccine unit administering 367 vaccines/boosters to adults and children;
- Disseminated information at 5 health fairs, a conference, 2 churches, social media platforms, a television community calendar, a rural school district, and rural communities in Robertson County;
- Served as a guest on a Sunday morning gospel radio show.

Next Steps

TPIA's next initiative focuses on the impact of public health workforce shortage on the disability community, in both community integration and overall access to healthcare. TPIA will work towards this goal by collaborating with community-based organizations, and other public and private entities to address barriers and to provide remedies as a collective response.