Louisiana Launches Grassroots COVID Vaccine Campaign to Ensure No Community Gets Left Behind

March 18, 2021

Today, the Louisiana Department of Health and 20 initial partners kicked off *Bring Back Louisiana #SleevesUp*, a bold grassroots campaign that will bring COVID-19 vaccines to communities of concern through community events and targeted outreach. The campaign will begin with 9 pilots – one in each public health region of the state – with community vaccination events taking place the second and third weekends of April.

“This is a massive undertaking, and we as the state cannot do it alone,” said Gov. John Bel Edwards. “We need strong, diverse, trusted community partners to help us meet people where they are, identify their needs, and remove whatever barriers may exist so that our residents can make informed decisions when it comes to the COVID vaccines.”

“For a job as big and necessary as equitable vaccine distribution in a once-in-a-century pandemic, we have to be creative, collaborative, and even a little unconventional,” said Dr. Courtney N. Phillips, Secretary of LDH. “We have been building this for several weeks now, and we are excited to get going.”

Partners
Joining the state in this statewide effort are the following partners:

- AARP Louisiana
- AFL-CIO Louisiana
- COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force
- Hispanic Health Equity Task Force
- Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI)
- Louisiana Hospital Association (LHA)
- Louisiana Independent Pharmacy Association (LIPA)
- Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus
- Louisiana Legislative Rural Caucus
- Louisiana Primary Care Association (LPCA)
- Louisiana Public Health Institute (LPHI)
- Louisiana Rural Health Association (LRHA)
- LSU Ag Center
- NAACP Louisiana
- Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
- Together Louisiana
- Urban League
- Viet
- Baton Rouge Vaccine Task Force
- Nola Ready

Several of these partners have been doing this type of grassroots work on the COVID-19 vaccines at the local level, and the state will continue to learn from them as it leverages resources to scale and coordinate these efforts.

Partner organizations will play different roles, ranging from phone banking and door-knocking to data evaluation. LPHI will coordinate efforts of community partners and will provide rapid evaluation of this grassroots model for COVID vaccine allocation and outreach.

“Like any true campaign, we are announcing this effort as we continue to build,” said Gov. Edwards. “This is just the start. We welcome other organizations, businesses, faith-based leaders and the public to join us in this exciting mission to ensure no community is left behind as we work to end this pandemic. These vaccines are our best chance at restoring normalcy, getting our economy back on track, and bringing back the Louisiana we know and love.”

“As a public health organization, LPHI is honored to participate in this creative and proactive program which is the embodiment of our health and racial equity work to increase our state’s capacity to ensure all of us (Louisianans) have just and fair opportunities to be healthy and well,” said Shelina Davis, CEO of LPHI.

“The Black Caucus is excited to participate in this campaign. Equity in the vaccination process is critical and we are committed to reaching citizens in Louisiana’s vulnerable communities,” said State Representative Edward “Ted” James, Chairman of the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus. “Get Out The Vote efforts, which this campaign is modeled after, is a proven method to reach those areas and citizens with limited access, transportation and information about the vaccine. We are happy to join the trusted voices in our state.”

“Distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is a critical component for Louisiana as we work to reopen our businesses and rebuild our economy,” said Stephen Waguespack, President and CEO of LABI. “We stand ready to work with our members, the Louisiana Department of Health and other stakeholders to ensure that

“AARP Louisiana is excited to be a part of this new campaign and join the effort to help more Louisianans get vaccinated. Those who are 50+ face higher risks from the coronavirus and should continue to be prioritized to get the vaccine as soon as possible. As the rollout continues, AARP will work with this new campaign as well as community stakeholders across Louisiana to ensure the vaccine stays free and accessible to anyone who wants it,” said Andrew Muhl, Director of Advocacy of AARP Louisiana.

Mission statement
The charge of this campaign is to follow the data and work with local partners to meet people where they are, especially in our underserved, on-the-fence and hard-to-reach communities, to listen to their needs and remove barriers so that every Louisianan has the opportunity to get the COVID vaccine.

Goals
Louisiana’s ground game for the COVID-19 vaccines will meet people where they are, with the following goals:

- Increase awareness & build confidence
- Provide spaces for asking questions & getting answers
- Amplify the support already in communities
- Offer warm handoff to resources
- Allocate COVID-19 vaccines to communities of concern
- Help eligible residents get signed up for the vaccines

Model
Use data to identify where to go. LDH will identify where the campaign will target its efforts, using the CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index, data on vaccination rates by census tract, and COVID-19 data. LPHI will perform ongoing rapid evaluation of progress.

Plan COVID-19 vaccination events. Identify at least one community partner lead per event, work together to determine barriers, and tailor each pilot to community needs.

Targeted outreach leading up to events. In the weeks leading up to these events the state will work with partners who will lead in-community activities that fit communities’ needs, including direct mail, phone banking, door-knocking, and working with faith-based leaders and local businesses to spread the word. Community partners will be able to provide facts and data, help interested residents sign up for the upcoming vaccine event on the spot, and connect them to other resources they may need.

Tools
Logos (/action.cfm?
md=communication&task=addMessageClickThru&msgid=3141&uid=0&encoded=1&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fgov%2Elouisiana%2Egov%2Fassets%2Fimages%2FBı
Sticker (/action.cfm?
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Push cards (/action.cfm?
md=communication&task=addMessageClickThru&msgid=3141&uid=0&encoded=1&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fgov%2Elouisiana%2Egov%2Fassets%2Fimages%2FBı

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