



# COVID-19 PATIENT PRIMARY CARE SURVEY

SERIES 8 FIELDLED JULY 15-27, 2021



**Primary care clinicians were paramount providers of COVID-19 vaccine education during the pandemic.** Eight-six percent of respondents rated their primary care clinician's opinion as important when considering vaccination, and this finding persisted regardless of vaccination status or rurality. Individuals tend to trust primary care clinicians more than other sources of vaccine information such as elected officials, federal agencies, and local health departments. However, early into the vaccine roll-out, people were primarily forced to be vaccinated at mass vaccination sites and health departments rather than in primary care offices. While many people took COVID-19 vaccines despite concerns about their safety and side effects, hesitancy remains higher in parents who are considering vaccinating their children. It would be beneficial for future vaccination campaigns to target efforts in trusted primary care offices.

## **Primary care clinicians are the most trusted source for patients when considering COVID-19 vaccination.**

- 64% of vaccinated and 40% of unvaccinated respondents find their clinician's opinion extremely important
- 61% in suburban, 57% in rural, and 54% in urban areas find their clinician's opinion extremely important
- In each of these groups, participants were influenced more by the opinion of their primary care clinicians than any other source, followed by federal agencies and local health departments
- Other options with less than 35% each included elected officials, Dr. Fauci, news programs, social media sources, friends/family, coworkers, and religious leaders

## **Many worried about side effects when deciding whether to take the vaccine, but they were not a deterrent for all.**

- 42% of survey respondents stated they worried about side effects when considering vaccination
- Of those with concerns about side effects:
  - Two-thirds ultimately decided to be vaccinated anyway
  - Respondents in blue states in the 2020 election were more likely to get vaccinated (68%) than those in red states (60%)

## **Parents' attitudes toward the COVID-19 vaccine are distinct from attitudes towards other childhood vaccines.**

- Of those who DO NOT usually vaccinate their kids, 25% already vaccinated their children against COVID-19 or plan to once approved for their age group. 28% would wait to see how the vaccine works but would consider it.
- Of those who DO usually vaccinate their kids, 15% would decide against vaccinating their child against COVID-19.
- Of parents who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 themselves, 10% have already vaccinated their children or plan to as soon as it's approved for their age group.

**Methods** – Fielded by The Larry A. Green Center, in partnership with the Primary Care Collaborative and 3rd Conversation, this survey was offered through public posting on a survey website and open to people 18 years or older. This is a convenience sample, voluntary and anonymous, with enrollment becoming limited as it filled to ensure diversity in respondent demographics. Fielded July 15-27, 2021.

**Sample** – 1,799 respondents who are connected with a primary care clinician completed this survey. Vaccine trends of parents and their children are based on 530 respondents, sharing population diversity consistent with the most current US census. 1014 respondents were based on general census demographics and 785 were an oversample of low income and rural patients. Low income was defined by total household income of less than 50k. Rural was determined by self-reported area in which respondents live. Out of total sample, 533 were rural, 834 were low-income. Demographics of general population sample: 32% high school degree, 62% college or higher; 25% household income (HHI) < \$25k, 24% with HHI > \$100k. 26% urban, 30% rural. 29% 18-34 years old, 40% were 55 or over. 36% male, 62% female. 47% unemployed. Out of all 1,799 respondents, 30%, were parents of children < 18 years old.

***"I think primary care has done their best to accommodate their patients...  
They're the health heroes that are taking care of us during this ongoing pandemic." California***

## What role do primary care clinicians/offices play in COVID-19 vaccination?

### **Patients trust primary care physicians for COVID-19 vaccination counseling**

- I waited until more got it to get my 1st shot. My PCP assured me the vaccine was safe. *North Carolina*
- My doctor has been very informative about vaccines. My doctor doesn't try to force a vaccine on me though. *Michigan*
- I love my doctor. She and I can talk about anything. I trust her 100%. *California*
- I believe in doctors and science... years of dedicated study make them the "experts to date". Thus, Facebook, Twitter, and dysfunctional politicians don't factor in my action choices. *Illinois*

### **Patients wished their primary care offices offered COVID-19 vaccination**

- I also talked with my primary care doctor because I'd prefer getting the vaccine from him, but he is not giving them out nor are other doctors in my state. *North Carolina*
- I called to schedule an appointment to get my child and I vaccinated... however they told me they don't provide the vaccine. I do believe they should have the vaccine there available if and when needed. *Washington*

## What else influenced your decision whether or not to take the COVID-19 vaccine?

### **Other sources of vaccine opinions**

- As far as the decision to vaccinate - you did not list researching the opinions of a variety of medical experts/scientists as a factor in my decision - and that was the most important factor to me. *Arizona*
- I was worried about getting the vaccine while breastfeeding. I also plan to become pregnant soon, so I am conflicted as to when I should get the vaccine. There are too few studies for me to be comfortable getting it while pregnant. *Illinois*
- The vaccine has been overly politicized. *Alabama*

### **Accessibility of the vaccine**

- It is very easy to get the vaccine (free, plenty of locations). *Illinois*
- I had a great experience with my primary care provider, who quickly answered my request for her referral to get the vaccine. She immediately drew up the referral and had it ready for me to use the very next day! *Florida*
- I was completely happy with my city health department where I received my vax. *Ohio*
- [My healthcare system] did a wonderful job organizing the Covid shots. *Washington*
- My doctor's office was proactive and available and it was relatively easy to get my vaccines. *Florida*

## What was your overall experience with primary care during the pandemic?

### **Some people had trouble making appointments with their PCPs**

- It was really difficult to see a physician in person. *New York, Georgia*
- It's so hard to get an appointment now. *Kentucky*
- My primary care physician does not have an online presence. *Ohio*
- Not having in-person access to all of my medical team had delayed an orthopedic surgery for over a year. *California*
- In the very early months of the pandemic I was unavailable to see my health care providers because the offices were closed. *New York*
- Hard to get appointments. Doc says come back in two weeks. Staff says no appointments available for 2 months. Health care sucks in this area. *Arizona*

### **Many people were pleased with their primary care**

- Medical care providers adapted to the crisis quite well. *California*
- My doctors are great. They have made it possible for me to either talk via video or in person. *Iowa*
- My PCP was instrumental in reaching out to me to check on me during the pandemic, which I thought was great. *Virginia*
- I had excellent care from my family doctors. *Florida, Nevada*
- I appreciate all they have done to keep us healthy. *West Virginia*
- I enjoyed the telehealth services. *Georgia*
- I felt comfortable visiting my doctors' offices during the pandemic and received all my normal annual care and tests. *Washington*
- Easy and efficient throughout. No lapse in care or access to prescriptions. *California*