



Ensuring equitable COVID-19 vaccine coverage is a Colorado and national priority

These are not routine times, and the past year has further exposed health disparities and social injustice faced by our most vulnerable citizens. COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is highest among the very populations most disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This includes communities of color as well as groups who are economically and socially disadvantaged. Providers’ perceptions and concerns regarding patients’ responses to getting vaccinated may discourage engagement in conversations essential to increasing vaccination rates. Outside of patients’ values, fears, and social norms, patients have valid concerns and real barriers to getting vaccinated.

Healthcare providers remain the most trusted source for information about vaccinations and there are low-burden strategies to effectively talk with patients about any uncertainty or concerns they may have. In this brief, we suggest specific strategies and language that clinicians can use to address mistrust of and concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccines.

There is a 3-step, evidence-based process to maximize vaccine acceptance:

**ASSESS
DISPOSITION**

**USE MI TO
TALK IT OUT**

**MAKE A
PLAN**

These steps, built upon Motivational Interviewing skills and strategies, will assist healthcare providers to increase patients’ motivation for change. Past research has found that even vaccine-hesitant participants remain open to learning about vaccines. When treated in a respectful and affirming manner, the majority of patients express a genuine desire to have an open and honest conversation with medical experts. Many vaccine hesitant patients will eventually decide to be vaccinated, but this is often based on a decision-making process rather than a one-time conversation. Through effective conversations, healthcare providers can start patients on their personal path to health.

COVID-19 PROTECT | ME YOU US COMMUNITY INITIATIVE



Welcome to the COVID-19 Protect | Me You Us Community Initiative emphasizing personal responsibility to protect yourself, your family, and your community. This is a partnership between Colorado Access, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Behavioral Health & Wellness Program at the University of Colorado —Anschutz Medical Campus, Department of Psychiatry.

