



May 5, 2021

RE: Equitable Vaccine Distribution

Dear Governor Brown,

The undersigned [Oregon COVID-19 Farmworker Study](https://www.covid19farmworkerstudy.org) consortium is concerned about Latinx COVID-19 vaccine access. Our final results from a survey of 300 Latinx farmworkers in the state of Oregon document existing inequities and disparities experienced continue to be exacerbated by the pandemic. One recurring barrier identified by our respondents in qualitative interviews is the fear providing identification cards to secure a vaccine.

More specifically, our concerns originate from an experience volunteering at a vaccination event on Saturday, April 24th, at the [M&M Market](#) (a Latinx-serving swap meet and indoor Futsal Field) in Hillsboro/Washington County. Many Latinx families frequent the location. Upon arrival, the first issue was a Hillsboro police car was stationed in the parking lot where the vaccination event was taking place. We know police vehicles are an immediate deterrent to the 250 residents who signed up to be vaccinated. Another primary concern at this event is the requirement of a photo I.D., health insurance card, and completion of a two-page survey to be vaccinated. That day, about a third of those who signed up never showed up for their appointment.

The Latinx community, particularly those in mixed-status or undocumented families, have been traumatized during the Trump administration. Frequent fear and scapegoating tactics, including the threat of being deemed a public charge, have caused distrust as well. The presence of official law enforcement at a community vaccination event can trigger trauma and fear. We are left to speculate about how many more people would have signed up had it not been for the photo I.D. requirement or the presence of law enforcement.

Following the vaccination event discussed, we asked Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to confirm if the state requires I.D.s to receive a vaccine. We received an initial response that OHA has no authority over local health departments but can only provide guidance. We want to bring this barrier to the attention of those in charge of farmworker outreach efforts, including clinics that follow protocol for distributing vaccines. For undocumented peoples, mixed families, and/or people who could not obtain state I.D.s and Driver's Licenses, or for other reasons are afraid to present identificatio, this is a tall barrier to getting vaccinated.

Oregon Latinx communities have faced disproportionate infection rates, consistently trending between 25-30% of all COVID-19 cases in the state. There is no question that the abysmal rate of Latinx vaccinations in Oregon (last reported by OHA at 7% when they constitute 13.4% of the population) results from barriers to access such as these.

Additionally, a question came up about the COVID-19 OHA website and how farmworker families often negotiate health care systems through Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and county health departments. Would it be possible to create a list of county health departments with phone numbers and their contact information on the website, including options for Spanish and other languages farmworkers speak? We don't know if CBOs are interested in being identified in these interfaces, but we would gladly check with our community partners to determine if this would be helpful.

Despite our concerns, we know that CBOs are providing models for equitable vaccine distribution. One successful vaccine experience we have documented as a model to follow includes a local Catholic Church that serves a farmworker parishioner population requiring ONLY a phone number and name to secure an appointment. In addition, allowing people to schedule appointments over the phone in Spanish at trusted locations would significantly increase access. Finally, we also have 26 different Indigenous languages from Mexico and Guatemala spoken among Oregon's worker population who need educational and scheduling access in these languages. Not all are bilingual or Spanish speakers.

We are looking for OHA and Governor Brown to take a leadership position on removing barriers to vaccine access for Oregon's Latinx and farmworker population. Establishing minimal requirements for securing a vaccine appointment (simply name and contact information) and minimizing the amount of information collected at the vaccination site would go a long way in removing said barriers.

Sincerely,

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