

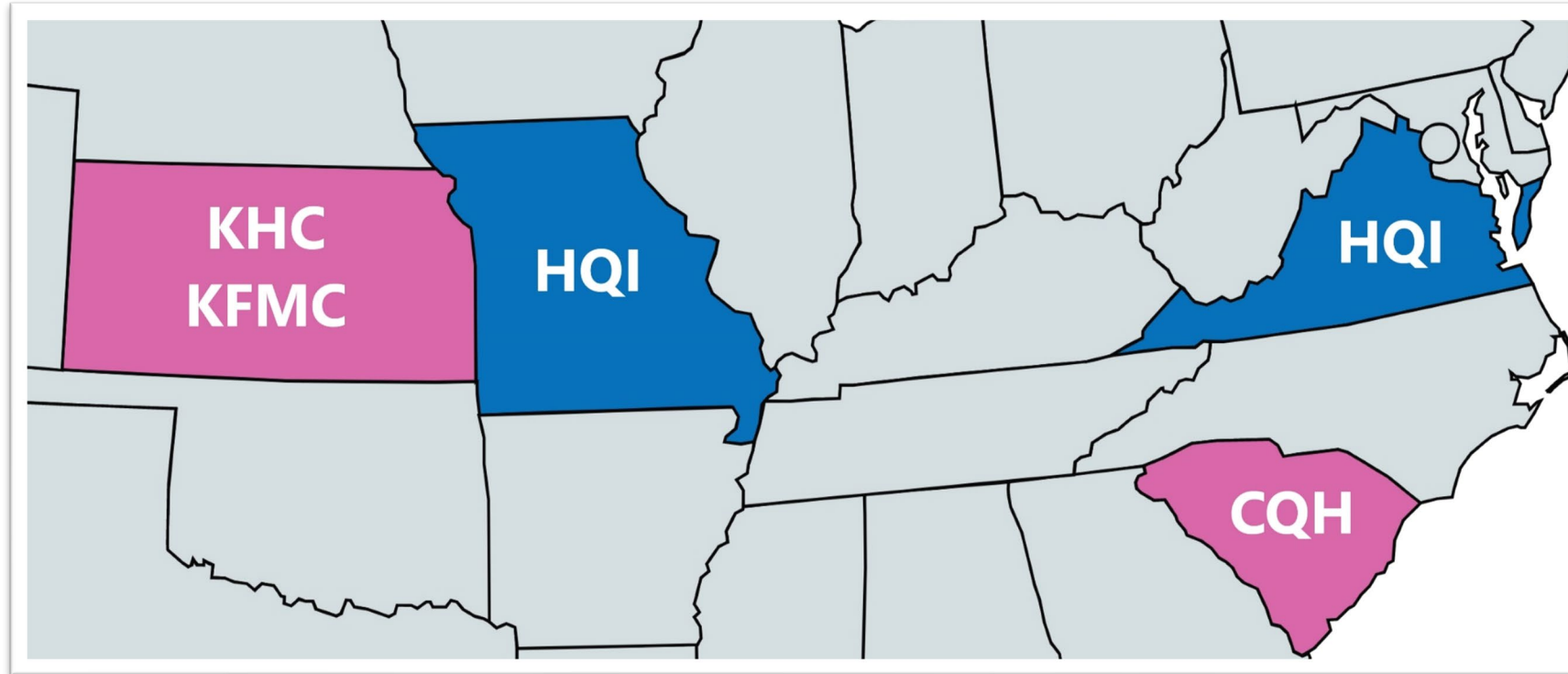


Health Quality Innovation Network

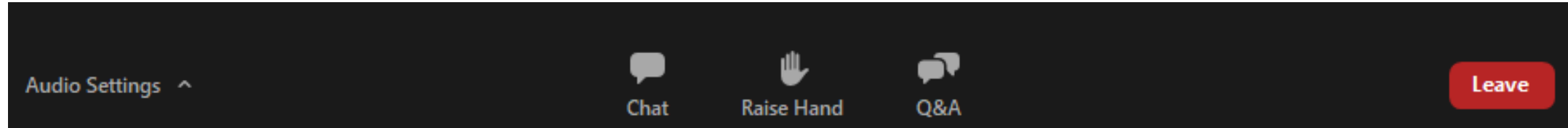
Long COVID: Reduce the Risk with the Right Resources

March 20, 2024

Health Quality Innovation Network



Logistics – Zoom Webinar



To ask a question, click on the **Q&A** icon.

Resources from today's session will be posted in **Chat**.

You may adjust your audio by clicking **Audio Settings**.

You have been automatically muted with video turned off.

Your Team



Mary Locklin, MSN, RN, CIC
Senior QIA-Infection Prevention



Laura Finch, MS, GNP, RN
HQIN Consultant



Morgan Katz, MD, MHS
HQIN Consulting Physician

Presentation Objectives

Participants will be able to:

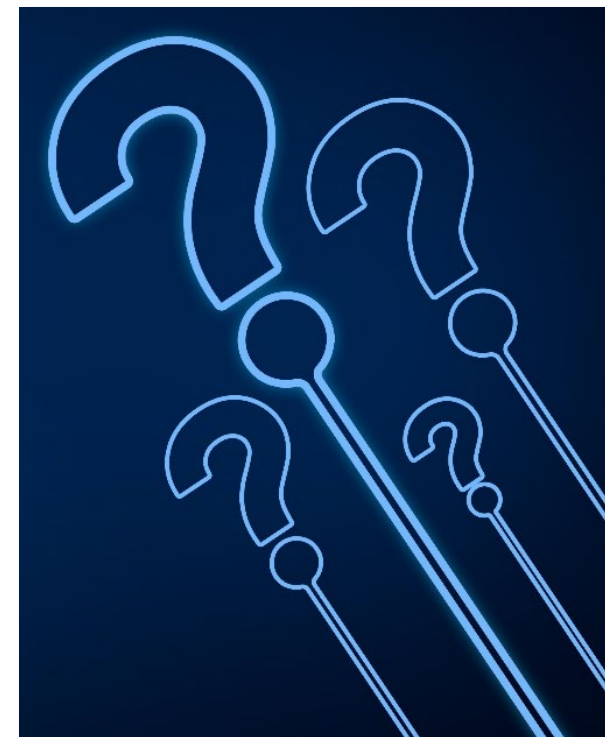
- Explain risk factors and symptoms of long COVID
- Obtain resources and develop skills to dispel misinformation about long COVID
- Learn how implementation of a COVID-19 vaccination action plan can be a primary tool to prevent long COVID



Polling Question

Over the past 4 years, **how many cases of COVID-19** do you think you have seen or have been aware of? (include professionally and personally)

1. Fewer than 20
2. 20-49
3. 50-100
4. Greater than 100



COVID by the Numbers

- Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been over 651 million COVID cases worldwide
- **65 million (10%)** of those now have long COVID



What is Long COVID/Post COVID Syndrome?

- WHO definition: New or persisting symptoms **3 months** after COVID infection that cannot be explained by alternative causes
- CDC definition: **1 month** post infection
- Multi-system condition characterized by persistent:
 - Fatigue
 - Shortness of breath
 - Cognitive dysfunction
 - 100+ other symptoms
- Estimated to occur in 10-20% of cases
- Can affect all ages
- No specific treatment available, therefore must focus on **prevention**



COVID Complications (Not Long COVID)

- Recovery from hospitalization (post-ICU psychosis, debilitation)
- Recovery from complications (organ failure) or illness treatment
- Recovery from a particular injury from COVID-19 (stroke, lung fibrosis)



COVID complications may overlap with long COVID/post-COVID syndrome



The CDC reports that in 2022, 1.6% of children and 6.9% of adults had long COVID

Long COVID Pathogenesis

- There are several proposed mechanisms
- Many are being studied
- Questions still remain

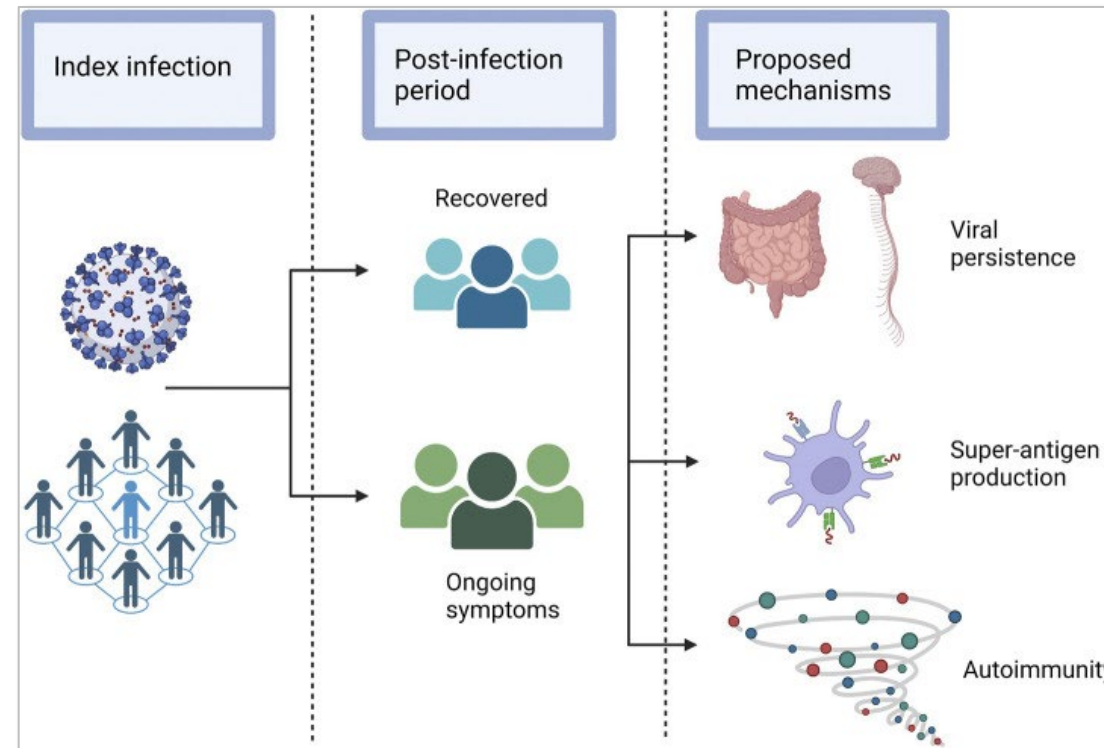


Image source: Kenny G, Townsend L, Savinelli S and Mallon PWG (2023) Long COVID: Clinical characteristics, proposed pathogenesis and potential therapeutic targets. *Front. Mol. Biosci.* 10:1157651. doi: 10.3389/fmolb.2023.1157651

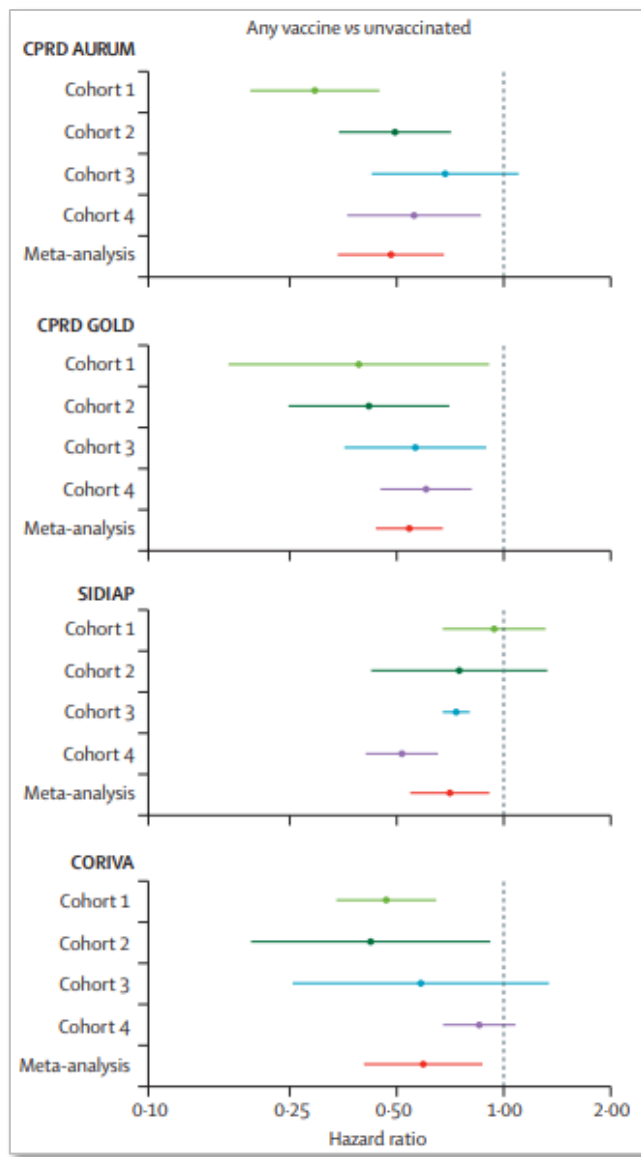
Vaccinations Reduce Severe Illness and Readmissions

Vaccines *highly* recommended for residents of nursing facilities include:

- **COVID-19:** Vaccine updated September 2023; if one dose, considered up to date unless over 65 then a second dose is recommended
- **Influenza:** Fluzone® HD Quad, Flublok® Quad, Fluzone® PF Quad, Fluzone® Quad, yearly in fall
- **Pneumococcal:** PCV20, Pneumovax 23, Prevnar 13, PCV15
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)** new 2023



Vaccination Reduces the Risk of Long COVID



- Four prospective primary care cohorts consisting of > 10 million vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals
- Compared the risk of developing long COVID in each group
- Vaccine efficacy of 29-52%

Català MWY, Delmestri A, Nordeng HME, Uusküla A, Duarte-Salles T, Prieto-Alhambra D, Jödicke AM. The effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines to prevent long COVID symptoms: staggered cohort study of data from the UK, Spain, and Estonia. *Lancet Respir Med.* 2024 Mar;12(3):225-236

Polling Question

Over the past 4 years, how many cases of **long COVID** do you think you have seen or been aware of? (include professionally and personally)

1. Fewer than 5
2. 5-15
3. 16-30
4. Greater than 30



Long COVID: Risks

People who may be at increased risk for developing long COVID:

- Those who initially had a more severe infection
- Underlying health conditions (DM, autoimmune disease, obesity)
- Unvaccinated
- Female sex
- Older age



Long COVID: Prevention

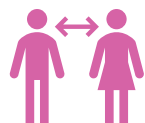
The best prevention is avoiding COVID in the first place – this means:



Getting vaccinated (even if you are infected)



Wearing masks in high-risk situations



Social distancing



Practicing hand hygiene

There are **no current treatments for long COVID** (other than symptom-based), but various clinical trials are ongoing

Misinformation is Shared by People Who May or May Not Intend to Mislead

- Be curious and cautious of what you hear or see related to health information
- Know tools for finding the right information (evidence-based practice)
- Use health literacy tools for staff, residents and caregivers to create a bridge from misinformation to information
- Create psychological safety to enable sharing questions, ideas and mistakes in a safe way
- Keep social determinants of health (SDOH) in mind when educating about health information



Misinformation: False Information

My mother is 85 so I heard it's to be expected she is short of breath.

Where do I find the right information?

My patient definitely got a cold from the vaccine.

My doctor said not to take the vaccines together, he had heard not to.

My PCP said page 20 on the package insert says there can be a problem with the vaccine so don't take it.

The emergency room doctor gave me this medicine, but my friend says it might make me sicker.

I'm so confused, who do I believe?

How do we get to the truth?

Evidence-Based Practice: Based on Objective Evidence

Actions:

- Educating residents, participants, families, caregivers
- Checking the actual source
- Asking clarifying questions
- Reading and verifying a headline that notes a promising new treatment
- Being the expert that healthcare workers are perceived as in health care

Ask your facility pharmacist for evidence-based guidelines and resources.

[Search: Clinical Practice Guidelines | CDC](#)

[UpToDate](#)

[Clinical Guidelines and Recommendations | ACP](#)

[Practice Guidelines | IDSA](#)

[Clinical Guidelines and Recommendations | AHRQ](#)

[Approvals of FDA-Regulated Products | FDA](#)

[Search: Clinical Practice Guidelines | PubMed](#)

[A & B Recommendations | U.S. Preventive Services](#)

[COVID-19 Drug Interactions](#)

Health Literacy: Able to Use the Information to Make Decisions

- **Personal health literacy** is the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others
- **Organizational health literacy** is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others


Using health literacy tools to meet people where they are with education, experience, language, reading ability and culture helps them have a full understanding of their health condition, health risks or prevention and treatment measures.

Psychological Safety Means You Feel Safe Asking Questions, Sharing Ideas & Learning from Mistakes

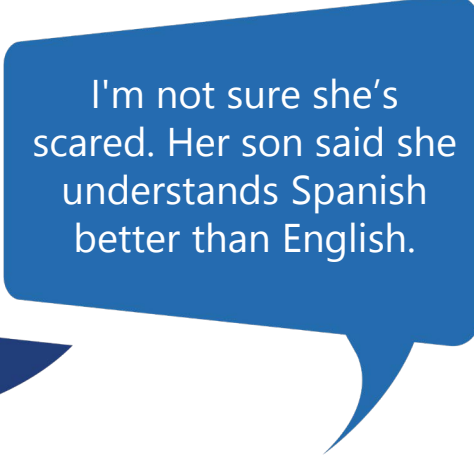
It is okay to:

- Voice unfinished thoughts
- Acknowledge a learning environment
- Brainstorm out loud
- Ask naïve questions
- Disagree


If you have ever shared a problem that could become a disaster and found a supportive team around you, that is the experience of psychological safety.




The new patient is scared of the COVID vaccine.



I'm not sure she's scared. Her son said she understands Spanish better than English.



We can get a translator and we have resources in Spanish for her.

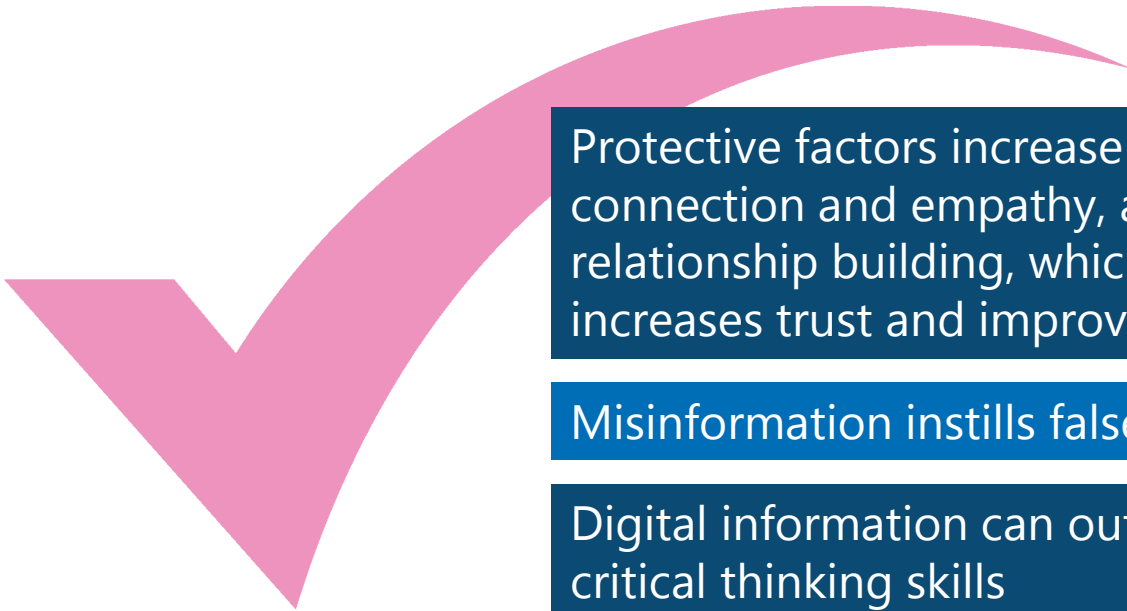


I am so glad you brought this up so we can help her with better information!

Understanding the Impact of Social Determinants of Health on Misinformation

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the economic and social factors that influence health:

- Safe housing
- Health care services available
- Public safety
- High quality education
- Access to healthy food
- Stable employment
- Supportive workplace



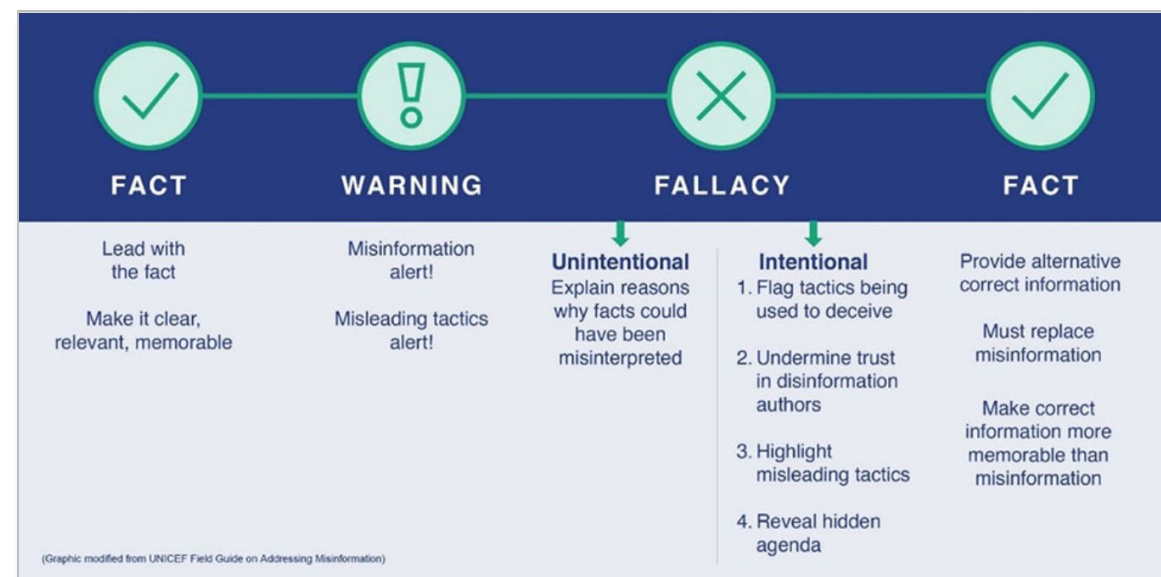
Protective factors increase connection and empathy, and relationship building, which increases trust and improves health

Misinformation instills false fears

Digital information can outpace critical thinking skills

Addressing Misinformation

- Listen to and analyze circulating misinformation
- Engage in and listen to your community
- Use trusted messengers
- Share accurate, easy-to-find information from reliable sources:
 - Local health department
 - QIOs
 - CDC
 - APIC
 - SHEA





Mark Your Calendars!

Connect With Your Pharmacist to Support Your Vaccine Initiative and QAPI Efforts

April 25 | 11:00-11:45 a.m. EST

*Featuring Cindy Warriner, BS, RPh, CDCES
and Chad Worz, PharmD, BCGP*


Register

Resources

- [Vaccine Hesitancy/Misinformation Resources | HQIN](#)
- [Vaccines are Safe and They Work | HQIN](#)
- [Social Media Drivers for Vaccination | HQIN](#)
- [Vaccination/Immunization Resources | HQIN](#)
- [PDSA Worksheet | HQIN](#)
- [HQIN Nursing Home COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Support Request Form \(office.com\)](#)


Talking to Patients About the COVID-19 Vaccine

Start the Conversation
 By simply listening and talking to your patients, you may be able to build trust and help them move from COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy to vaccination acceptance. This resource includes talking points to support your conversations with patients about COVID-19 vaccinations, including information to help patients make their decision. Practice empathy and use motivational interviewing skills to help guide these conversations.



Addressing Hesitancy

- **Ask why the patient is hesitant.** "It is okay for everyone—including you—to have questions about the vaccine. May I ask why you are hesitant? What have you heard in your community?"
- **Counter misinformation.** "Understandably, a lot of misinformation exists; however, your care provider can discuss with you how vaccines are extraordinarily effective at protecting you from the virus. What questions do you have?" (Address patient's questions). "Your provider can speak to you about any questions you have as well OR I would be happy to send you some trusted sources of information that may help address your concerns. Will that be okay? For example, I have information on [share selected information]."
- **Explore patients' fears about possible side effects.** "How did you feel after your last vaccine (e.g., flu, shingles)? Have you ever had any side effects or other reactions after a vaccine? The COVID-19 vaccine is not much different. Possible side effects that you may experience include [share side effects]."
- **If you're comfortable, be transparent about your vaccination story.** "I was hesitant early on, but vaccines are important to me and my family because [share personal vaccination story]."



Quality Improvement Organizations HQIN

Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

Approach the subject of vaccines with **RESPECT**.

R Remember to address the individual by name and introduce yourself (if you are not already familiar). Ask for permission to share information about vaccinations, listen and observe.

E Explain the vaccine you are promoting using resources that are easy to understand or, if possible, share a story that the individual can relate to. This can help build trust. The [Let's Talk Shots](#) website offers personalized answers to vaccine questions.

S State facts about the vaccine, without including your personal opinions, unless you are specifically asked. Use positive examples from other vaccine recipients to normalize the vaccine.


P Pause to allow for the individual to express their beliefs, ask additional questions and share concerns.

E Emphasize the benefits of the vaccine while acknowledging their position. It doesn't mean you have to agree, but it is important to acknowledge what they say.

C Consider the "readiness" of the individual and, if they aren't ready, ask if they would like to take information with them to review.

T Time your interaction so there are minimal distractions and be prepared to have a second and third conversation with the individual if needed.

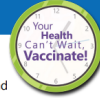
Don't give up, but be respectful.




QR codes for Vaccine Hesitancy/Misinformation Resources | HQIN and Vaccination Readiness Gauge | HQIN

Quality Improvement Organizations HQIN


Do your part! Keep you and your community healthy.



- ✓ Get vaccinated if you are due for the COVID-19, flu, pneumonia and RSV vaccines.
- ✓ Encourage your loved ones, neighbors and friends that live in nursing homes, assisted living facilities and adult homes to get vaccinated and protected. Everyone's participation is important.
- ✓ Know that people living in group settings are at a higher risk for getting sick. They may need encouragement or help to get vaccinated.



Scan to learn about how vaccines keep us safe.



This material was prepared by Health Quality Innovations (HQI), a Quality Improvement Network Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS. 1250W/HQI/QIN-QIO-0982-12/11/23

Quality Improvement Organizations HQIN

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call 877.731.4746 or visit www.hqin.org
LTC@hqi.solutions

Infection Preventionist

Mary Locklin

Senior Quality Improvement Advisor

mlocklin@hqi.solutions

804.287.6210

Virginia and Missouri

Allison Spangler

Quality Improvement Advisor

aspangler@hqi.solutions

804.289.5342

Kansas

Brenda Groves

Quality Improvement Advisor

bgroves@kfmc.org

785.271.4150

South Carolina

Kristine Williamson

Quality Specialist

kwilliamson@constellationqh.org

919.461.5525