

Media Contact: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Phone number:

Email:

**Research provides insight into COVID-19 vaccine accessibility and perceptions by individuals with disabilities**

ANCHORAGE, AK — The University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development (CHD) has released the results of a survey that focused on individuals with disabilities in Alaska and their access to the COVID-19 vaccine, including barriers, motivators, and trusted sources of information.

Previously, there was little information about the intersection of disabilities and COVID-19 in Alaska. Several national studies have found that individuals with disabilities have positive attitudes toward the COVID-19 vaccine, yet also have high COVID-19 diagnosis and mortality rates. This new report from CHD provides insight into barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from obtaining the vaccine and can be used to inform vaccine distribution and education efforts across Alaska.

The survey took place Aug. 16-Sept. 6, 2021 and included participants 18 years of age or older who identified either as an individual with a disability; a disability service provider; or a caregiver, guardian, or family member of an individual with a disability.

Results of the COVID-19 vaccine accessibility survey indicate:

* Vaccinated individuals with disabilities reported they were concerned that the vaccine would worsen their medical conditions, it could contain side effects, and that they couldn’t obtain the vaccine on their own.
* They said their top motivators to getting vaccinated were protecting the health of themselves, their family/friends, and their community.
* Individuals with disabilities indicated that their primary healthcare providers, the CDC, and the tribal health system are their most trusted sources for information
* Care providers/family of individuals with disabilities cited guardian bias or hesitation, lack of transportation, and inability to go on one’s own as top COVID-19 vaccine barriers that people with disabilities experience
* Care providers/family perceived that family and friends, primary healthcare providers, and elders to be the most trusted sources of information.

“Individuals with disabilities have experienced many negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Sondra LeClair, Health Projects Coordinator for the UAA Center for Human Development. “It is important that the COVID-19 vaccine is easily accessible to them, as it has given people hope of living healthy and connected lives again. We hope that vaccine providers can use this information to help them break down potential barriers to COVID-19 vaccine access, and create messaging that addresses the concerns and needs of Alaskans with disabilities.”

The survey was created in partnership with the Disability Law Center of Alaska, Statewide Independent Living Council of Alaska, State of Alaska/Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and State of Alaska/Department of Health and Social Services. The full report, *COVID-19 Vaccines: Barriers, Motivators, and Trusted Sources of Information for Individuals with Disabilities in the State of Alaska*, is [available online](https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/handle/11122/12424). Requests for presentations about survey findings can be sent to Tasha Boyer at tjboyer@alaska.edu

###

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE

*The University of Alaska Anchorage is Alaska’s largest university, educating nearly 12,000 students annually. UAA transforms lives through teaching, research, community engagement and creative expression in a diverse and inclusive environment. Learn more at uaa.alaska.edu.*