

Supporting Testimony – Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Policy Committee
Health Equity: Enhancing Mobile & Community Clinics in PA
Tuesday, September 13, 2022 | 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and opportunities to improve health equity through enhancing mobile and community health programs in Pennsylvania. My name is Dr. Morgan Hutchinson. I am an Assistant Professor and Assistant Medical Director of Emergency Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA, where I also serve in the Jefferson Health Design Lab as the Director of Sidney Kimmel Medical College's Scholarly Inquiry in Design Thinking Program. The Health Design Lab has a long-standing commitment to bringing health outside the walls of the hospital and into our most vulnerable neighborhoods through designing human centered health services. With partnership and support from my colleagues in the Health Design Lab, Department of Emergency Medicine, and Jefferson community, Philadelphia Department of Public Health and numerous community partners, I co-created and continue to serve as Medical Director of Jefferson's COVID-19 Mobile Unit.

The Sars-CoV-2 Pandemic has exacerbated health disparities in historically underserved populations. Neighborhoods with disproportionately low access to health services such as pharmacies, primary care clinics, urgent care clinics and emergency response are also disproportionately communities of color. Disparities in health delivery are particularly challenging in Philadelphia, which is one of the most diverse and racially segregated big cities in the United States. In May 2020, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Black patients were dying from COVID-19 at a rate more than 30% higher than the death rate among white patients. In July 2020, it further reported that Black and Hispanic women in Philadelphia were infected at rates five times higher than white women. During the initial release of the COVID vaccines, it became apparent that, despite poorer outcomes with infection, Black, Latinx, Asian, and American Indian (Persons of color [POC]) were being vaccinated at disproportionately low rates.

Jefferson's COVID-19 Mobile Unit offers free, easy-access COVID-19 [testing](#) and [vaccines](#) in underserved neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, focusing on providing care for our city's most vulnerable communities. My team's vision to create a human-centered mobile health program targeting vulnerable populations, providing the same standard of quality and patient safety as expected in the hospital, but offering an enhanced patient centered experience was made possible by close collaboration between three core groups: healthcare delivery experts, sponsors and community partners.

- Knowledge and effort contributed by experts from various departments in our health system facilitated the creation of a mobile health operation offering the same high standard of patient care and safety that would be found in our hospital. In order to support our team's success and service in our communities, multiple departments contributed human resources, program development consulting and clinical supplies in-kind.

- Our funding support is provided by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health Request for Proposals for COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine Programs. The momentum of our program sparked many additional donations of goods, services and spaces in support of our program.
- Partnership with established community organizations and leaders who contributed an incredible insight into the perspective of community members, as well as a pre-existing network of trust within the neighborhoods they serve.

Jefferson's Mobile testing program has operated September 2020-present, and Jefferson's Mobile Vaccination program operated May 2021-June 2022 when the vaccination RFP concluded. These two programs offered primarily testing and vaccination for COVID-19. Additionally, we were able to offer patients connection with health and social services, important information increasing health literacy, social determinants of health screenings, and access to rapid COVID-19 tests. To summarize our program highlights and practices, Jefferson's COVID-19 Mobile Unit has had success in:

- Providing convenient COVID-19 Vaccine and Testing access points and outreach in Philadelphia's vulnerable community schools, churches, parks and more.
- Applying principles of human centered design to create a collaborative, patient-centered approach to reaching underserved populations for COVID-19 vaccination and testing.
- Focusing on serving black and brown communities, non-English Speaking immigrant and refugee communities. Our vaccine clinic patients are 92% people of color and 47% are non-English speaking. Testing clinics serve over 80% persons of color in predominantly black and brown communities.
- Holding "pop-up" COVID-19 vaccine and regular testing clinics across Philadelphia operating from Ford Mobile Health Unit vans, tents and community spaces, we use secure networking, hardware and EMRs to maintain the highest standard of care in non-traditional locations.
- Administering >12,000 vaccines and >22,000 tests in Philadelphia's vulnerable communities, offering Pfizer and formerly Janseen series, boosters and pediatric vaccination and rapid and PCR tests.
- Operating in 6 school based events in underserved communities within two weeks of pediatric vaccine approval for ages 5+.
- Collaborating closely with trusted community organizations including Puentes de Salud,

SEAMAAC, Philadelphia Parks & Rec, NKCDC, All Faiths Vaccination Campaign, Philadelphia Collaborative for Health Equity, Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Phila School Districts, and more.

- Implementing a robust outreach program addressing barriers to healthcare access including misinformation, hesitancy, spoken language, literacy, transportation, mobility, health insurance, documentation and substance use disorders.
- Providing patients with a Community Health Worker led multilingual phone line, available 40 hours per week. Our phone service provides callbacks after missed appointments, multilingual interpreter service, vaccine counseling, appointment scheduling and free transportation to sites.
- Developing robust committed on informatics, community outreach, patient safety, staff training, clinical operations and program logistics.
- Offering real-time patient interpreter services in hundreds of languages using phone-based language service as well as diverse multilingual staff offering over 10 different languages for in-person interpretation.
- Offering media, outreach, health information and marketing materials in 20 languages.

In summary, our team developed a mobile health program based on patient quality and safety, agility, human centered design, co-design with community partners and service based in vulnerable communities. Efforts by health system experts facilitated the development of a high quality mobile health service. Program design focused on patient-centered, accessible health delivery in vulnerable communities. Execution was made possible by RFP funding through PDPH, as well as multiple contributions of products, services and spaces. Community partnerships were critical to successful outreach in vulnerable populations and found to be essential to every aspect of mobile health program development and execution.

Further Reading:

Addressing Disparities in COVID-19 Vaccination, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital:

<https://www.himss.org/sites/hde/files/media/file/2022/08/19/addressing-disparities-in-covid-19-vaccination-jefferson.pdf>

Ku B, Lupton E. *Health Design Thinking: Creating Products and Services for Better Health*. Pages 104-105, 130-134 MIT Press; 2020.

<https://www.jeffersonhealth.org/about-us/news/2020/09/covid-19-public-testing-site-jefferson-health>

Selected Media:

A shot and a taco. That was the offer at Jefferson’s mobile vaccine unit at South Philly Barbacoa - Inquirer

‘Let’s have some fun’: Vax Up Philly Parade brings vaccines and free ice cream to people where they are - Inquirer

‘Vax Up Philly’ parade travels up Broad Street - ABC6

Governor Wolf visits Jefferson Community Vaccination Site and Holds Press Conference - ABC6

FDR Park Community Vaccination Fair - NBC10

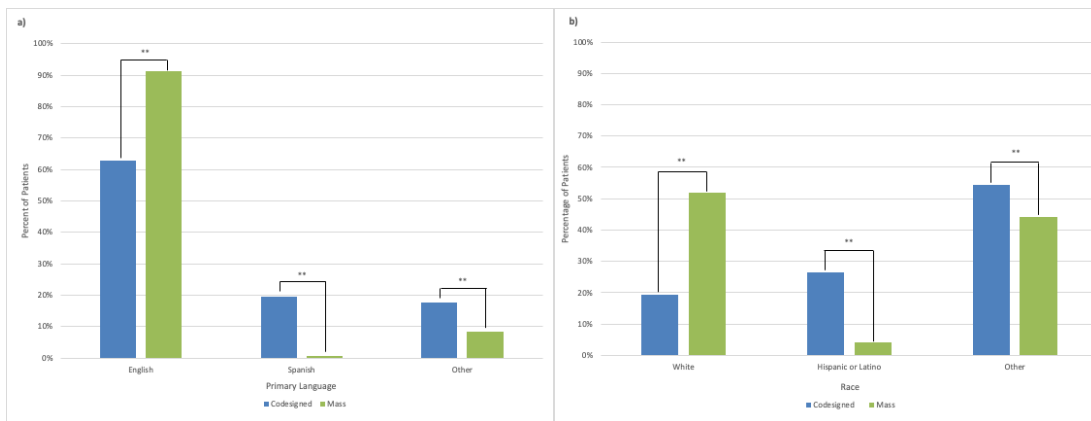
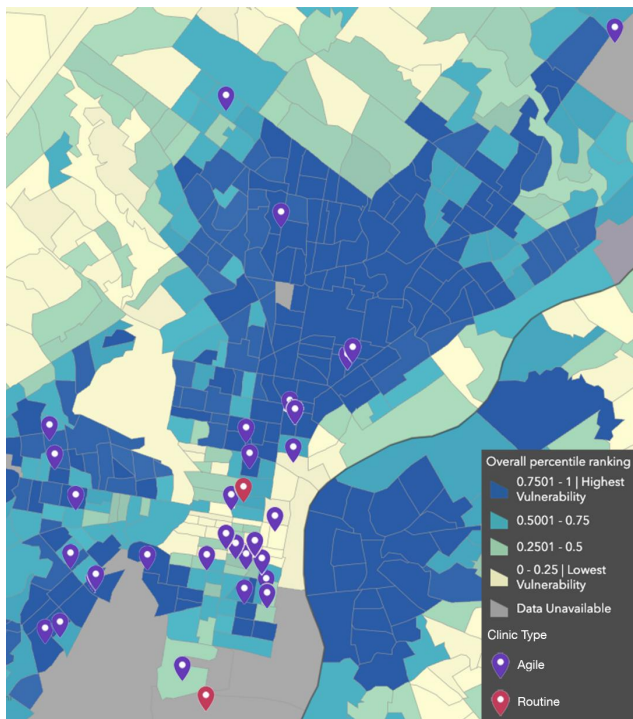


Figure 1. Percentage of patients vaccinated by mobile vs mass vaccination sites by their self-declared a. primary language and b. race (** $p < .0001$)



30,000+ Vaccines & Tests Delivered
90+ Vaccine Clinics Offered
400+ Testing Clinics Offered
3,000+ Jefferson Community Health Worker Outreach