

COVID RESPONSE

IMPROVING ACCESS TO IMMUNIZATIONS IN UNDERSERVED RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA COMMUNITIES

Pharmacies remain one main source for immunizations within South Carolina; yet immunization deserts threaten to delay access to preventative care to underserved rural communities. This program identifies these deserts and works to improve access and delivery of immunizations by training pharmacy students through expanding the role of clinical pharmacists for rural communities. In addition to reducing immunization deserts in our state, this also facilitates immunization and pandemic preparedness as part of the fight against COVID-19.

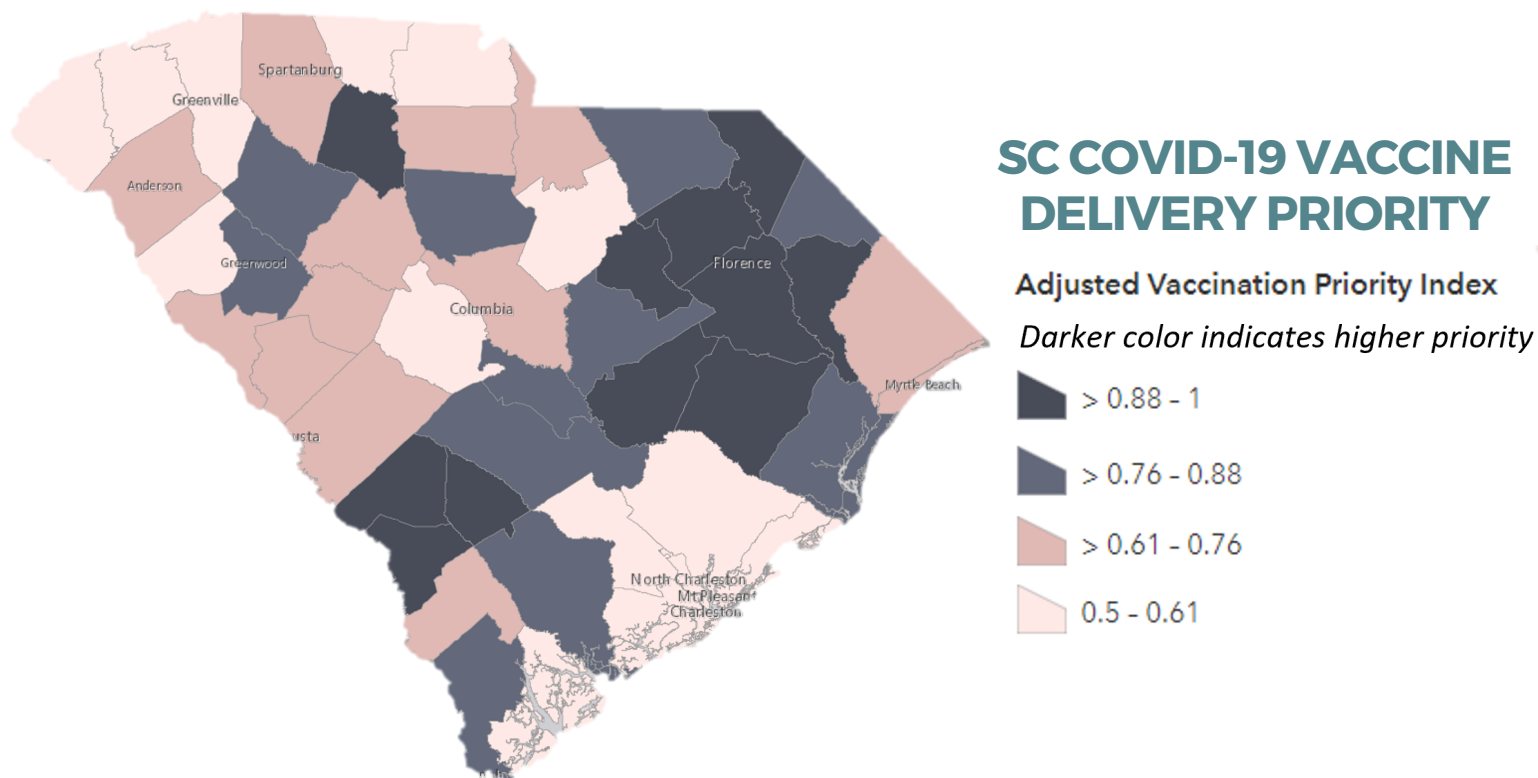
VACCINE HESITANCY - PROVIDER EDUCATION

This program developed and implemented continuing medical education to equip healthcare providers serving in South Carolina's medically underserved rural communities to engage their patients in educational conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine. Information used was grounded in both scientific and cultural rigor and a patient-centered approach based in Motivational Interviewing.

The goal of this program is to prepare healthcare providers to better address vaccine hesitancy in underserved rural communities, particularly as it relates to misinformation about safety and efficacy as well as racial disparities and mistrust in the healthcare delivery system.

VACCINE PRIORITY INDEX & MAPS

To support vaccination efforts across South Carolina, the SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare developed and a map to support providers, including mobile health units, to target underserved populations in order to distribute COVID-19 vaccines.



COLLABORATION WITH MUSC

The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and CRPH met bi-weekly to increase vaccination coordination and delivery across rural South Carolina. In support of this, CRPH generated a list of priority locations for MUSC to send a mobile health unit to offer COVID-19 vaccinations. This data driven list was derived from vaccine priority index, past locations served, and recent COVID-19 case numbers.



TELEHEALTH SURVEY

In partnership with South Carolina Telehealth Alliance, the CRPH conducted a survey to explore the shift to telehealth visits as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of the survey was to gain a better understanding of telehealth utilization patterns in the state and help inform how to continue supporting practices in adopting and optimizing their telehealth programs. In addition, the survey was used to assess the barriers and facilitators of successful telehealth adoption among smaller rural and primary healthcare practices in South Carolina amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

RURAL LIBRARY PROGRAM EFFORTS

As part of the library survey sent to South Carolina public libraries, COVID-19 questions were included in order to assess community access to COVID-19 services (i.e. testing, immunization, health information, etc.) at their local library. Additionally, Lee County Library, a CRPH funded Rural Libraries and Health program participant, hosted vaccinations, through CareSouth mobile health unit, and other one-off events at their location to support health needs within their community.

MOBILE HEALTH UNIT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

South Carolina saw an increase in mobile health units to support the COVID-19 efforts across the state. In response to this influx of mobile units, the Mobile Health Unit Enhancement Program was launched to provide resources and support for mobile health unit expansion to serve rural and underserved residents in South Carolina. These resources and support must be utilized to expand service offerings, increase the service area served, increase the frequency of care, or otherwise increase service delivery by these units.

