



# INTRODUCTION

The Jackson Free Clinic (JFC) is a student-run and student-owned free clinic operated by students from the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) health professions schools. In 2019, the JFC provided care to uninsured individuals from 89 different towns and rural areas across Mississippi (MS)<sup>1</sup>. As such, in addressing the health needs of our patient population, the JFC must consider them in both an urban and rural context.

With the roll-out of nationwide COVID-19 vaccination program came significant disparities in vaccine uptake. One study indicated that white individuals were three times more likely than Hispanics to have received at least the first dose<sup>2</sup>. In MS, vaccine distribution efforts were robust in the state's capitol while rural areas initially only had access to local or state-sponsored vaccination events on select dates. The Hispanic population of Mississippi predominantly lives in rural and medically underserved areas<sup>3</sup>. Early data showed that only 31% percent of Hispanics were vaccinated as of July 2021<sup>3</sup>. As many of these individuals work in the poultry factories, protection against COVID-19 for these high-risk individuals was imperative<sup>4</sup>.

To address this growing disparity, in May 2021 the JFC partnered with Hispanic community leaders and advocacy groups such a Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance and El Pueblo to develop a sustainable model for vaccine distribution to the rural Hispanic population. A variety of social barriers to care existed that had to be addressed including transportation, immigration status, language barriers, mistrust government administered programs, and general vaccine hesitancy.

Broadly, these barriers were categorized into two main areas of concern: Trust and Access. To address the former, vaccination events were held at local community centers such as hispanic-owned businesses, catholic churches, or hispanic markets. To address access, the JFC's student teams would travel to various rural communities rather than scheduling patients to be vaccinated at a hub location, such as the JFC's clinic in Jackson.

It is essential to better understand how best to provide preventive and public health measures such as vaccinations and screenings to the Hispanic population in MS.

# Addressing Vaccine Inequity in the Rural Hispanic Population of Mississippi

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> The JFC administered the J&J/Janssen vectored and Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA Covid-19 vaccine to individuals beginning in April 2021. From April through December 2021, 23 events were held in conjunction with 5 different Hispanic community groups in 8 different towns and rural areas. In total, 1386 doses of the vaccine were administered to 852 unique individuals at these events. 63% of those individuals were fully vaccinated through these efforts. Compared to statewide data, the JFC administered vaccines to a predominantly younger population.

# **TABLE 1: COVID-19 Vaccine Administration by Age Group.**

Age	At Least 1 Dose**	Fully Vaccinated***	<b>Third or Booster Dose</b>	Vaccinations
12-17	120	87	0	207
18-24	117	71	0	187
25-39	359	213	7	568
40-49	183	125	2	306
50-64	68	40	1	108
65-74	4	4	0	8
75+	1	1	0	2
Total	852	541	10	1386

#### METHODS

A retrospective review of vaccine data in the electronic records of patients contacted at JFC through the Hispanic outreach Covid vaccine events was performed. All data were aggregated and analyzed using standard statistical methods.

# CONCLUSION

The data demonstrate that a community center-based approach is an effective model for the delivery of preventive and public health measures and education to a population facing by multiple barriers to care. This study serves as a proof-of-concept model for future preventive and public health provisions of care to the Hispanic community in Mississippi.

# REFERENCES

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### RESULTS

\*\*One dose of Pfizer or one dose of Johnson and Johnson vaccine \*\*\*Two doses of Pfizer or one dose of Johnson and Johnson vaccine

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# FIGURE 1: COVID-19 vaccine event locations around MS with the number of vaccines administered at each location.



**Doses Administered Statewide**<sup>6</sup> % of Total Administered 15% 6% 7% 13% 17% 41% 22% 14% 27% 8% 18% <1% 12% <1% 100%