

An Act Effectuating Equity in COVID-19 Vaccination

Sponsors: Sens. Becca Rausch & Sonia Chang-Díaz and Reps. Liz Miranda & Mindy Domb

Black and Latinx residents of Massachusetts have so far received the COVID-19 vaccination at far lower rates than the overall population, even as the virus has taken a disproportionate toll on their communities. An Act Effectuating Equity in COVID-19 Vaccination aims to close those gaps and reach vaccine parity through:

Appointing an Equity & Outreach Director

- Require Governor Baker to immediately appoint a director of COVID-19 vaccination equity and outreach whose sole focus will be addressing disparities in COVID-19 vaccination rates rooted in racism, mistrust of government, and differential access to information, transportation, and other resources. This new position will be a member of the senior leadership team of the COVID-19 Command Center and report directly to Secretary Suoders.

Improving Outreach and Communications to Hard-to-Reach Populations

- Sustain a multilingual mass media public information campaign aimed at reaching the hardest-hit communities until vaccine parity is achieved or the State of Emergency is lifted
- Get vaccination information & support directly to people in the hardest-hit communities through partnerships with local organizations for outreach campaigns via phone calls, text messages, door-to-door canvassing, and other means
- Appoint an expert on vaccine disinformation to the Vaccine Advisory Group

Expanding Vaccine Accessibility

- Create a highly agile mobile vaccination program designated to reach communities with the highest rates of COVID-19 test positivity and generate regional equity
- Maximize federal reimbursements for vaccine implementation, including through potentially mobilizing the National Guard to staff vaccine phone banking efforts

Expanding Testing Availability

- Extend no-cost, no-appointment Stop the Spread testing sites to all Gateway Cities

Increasing Transparency and Accountability

- Require the Executive Branch to publish detailed vaccine implementation and equity plans and protocols, plus any further updates. This includes detail on the Administration's commitment to direct an additional 20% of vaccine doses to most-vulnerable communities
- Mandate weekly updates on the status of the vaccine rollout, including number and redistribution of unused doses, vaccine allotment broken down by location, and vaccination data broken down by key socioeconomic and demographic factors
- Require compliance with the 2020 COVID data equity law, which calls for robust reporting of demographic data on COVID-19 testing, infection, hospitalization, and death rates