



TO: National Rural Health Association
FR: Morning Consult
DT: October 13th, 2022
RE: Vaccination Considerations in Rural America



This memo refers to research conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the National Rural Health Association (NRHA). This research seeks to measure attitudes among rural adults, rural parents, and rural teenagers regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, trusted sources of vaccine information, and barriers to COVID-19 vaccine uptake.¹

TOPLINE TAKEAWAYS

- Vaccination rates remain stable since February, with most rural adults reporting at least partial vaccination for COVID-19 (63%).
- A 15-percentage point increase from February, most rural adults have had some type of personal experience with COVID-19 (76%). Yet a majority say their experience did not have an effect on their intent to get vaccinated (59%).
- Most rural adults, rural parents, and rural teens believe COVID-19 is here to stay in the U.S. much like the common cold or flu (54%+). Although perceptions do differ by vaccination status, 78% of vaccinated rural adults believe COVID-19 is here to stay compared to 58% of unvaccinated rural adults who say the same, a 21-percentage point gap.
- Compared to February, unvaccinated rural parents are less open to more information, less trusting of various information sources, and less confident in the COVID-19 vaccine and health agencies.
- Consistent with February, health care providers are still the most trusted source of COVID-19 vaccine information across all three groups: rural adults, rural parents, and rural teens.
 - Persuadable² unvaccinated adults are much more trusting of all information sources compared to unvaccinated adults as a whole.

COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE REMAINS STEADY

The proportion of rural respondents who report being at least partially vaccinated remains steady from February (63% rural adults, 44% rural parents, and 43% rural teens). Encouragingly, there is a six-percentage point increase in vaccinated rural adults who have received a booster vaccination (68%).

- **Similar to February, a child's reported vaccination status typically aligns with a parent's reported vaccination status:** Three-quarters of **vaccinated** rural parents say they have vaccinated their eligible child(ren) at least partially (51%), compared to 7% of **unvaccinated** rural parents who say the same. Sixty percent of unvaccinated parents say they have no plans to have their child(ren) vaccinated in the future.

COVID-19: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND MOVING FORWARD

Most rural adults have had some type of personal experience with COVID-19. Three out of four rural adults know someone who has had COVID-19 (76%), and two out of five have had COVID-19 themselves (38%) – the latter being a 15-percentage point increase from February.

- Most reported they experienced only mild symptoms (71% of those that had COVID-19), only tested positive one time (65%), and did not seek medical care (59%).
- In spite of most rural adults having some close experience with COVID-19, **a majority say their experience did not have an effect on their intent to get vaccinated either more or less favorably (59%)** – with an even larger proportion of unvaccinated rural adults reporting no effect as well (70%).

Most rural adults (70%), rural parents (66%), and rural teens (54%) think COVID-19 is here to stay in the United States much like the common cold or flu.

- **Perceptions differ by vaccination status:** Between adults who are vaccinated versus unvaccinated, there is a 21-percentage point gap in those who think that COVID is here to stay (78% vaccinated vs. 57% unvaccinated) – and a quarter of unvaccinated adults say they are unsure either way.

PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS OF COVID-19 VACCINE

When asked about their level of agreement with statements regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, **a third or more of rural parents (42%) and rural teens (32%) say they do not find the information they receive about vaccinations to be reliable or trustworthy** – a 7-percentage point increase among rural parents since February.

COVID-19 Vaccine Statements – Rural Adults			
% Disagree = Strongly + Somewhat	(Change since Feb 2022)		
	Rural Adults	Rural Parents	Rural Teens
The information I receive about vaccines is reliable and trustworthy.	28% (-2)	42% (+7 ^{**})	32% (-)
Vaccines are important for my health	22% (+2)	30% (+6 ^{**})	21% (-1)
Vaccines are effective	21% (+3)	28% (+6 ^{**})	18% (+4)
Generally, I do what my doctor or health care provider recommends about vaccines for myself	22% (+2)	29% (+5 ^{**})	21% (+6)

PERCEPTIONS AND BELIEFS OF COVID-19 VACCINATION CONT.

Unvaccinated rural parents and teens have less confidence in health agencies compared to February. When asked about their confidence in various statements that focus on broader beliefs on the COVID-19 vaccine, unvaccinated rural parents and teens have significantly less confidence in the efficacy and safety of the COVID-19 vaccine, and less confidence in health agencies, compared to February.

- **Unvaccinated rural adults who are planning to get vaccinated or are unsure if they plan to get vaccinated, referred to as persuadable², have higher confidence levels** compared to unvaccinated rural adults as a whole (see below). Notably, confidence in health agencies' strict standards (40%) and the safety of the vaccine (43%).

COVID-19 Vaccine Statements – Unvaccinated Rural Adults				
	% Confident = Strongly + Somewhat			(Change since Feb 2022)
	Rural Adults	Rural Parents	Rural Teens	Persadable ²
Agencies approving the vaccines are following strict rules.	20% (-2)	13% (-5 ^{**})	26% (-10 ^{**})	40%
My risk of getting sick with COVID-19 is bigger than the risk of side effects from the vaccine.	25% (+2)	17% (-6 ^{**})	25% (-8)	38%
The vaccine works in protecting me from COVID-19.	18% (+1)	8% (-10 ^{**})	25% (-8)	36%
The vaccine works in stopping the transmission of COVID-19 from one person to another.	19% (+5 ^{**})	8% (-5 ^{**})	26% (--)	37%
Health agencies and WHO recommend the vaccine and agree it is safe.	22% (-2)	13% (-14 ^{**})	34% (-12 ^{**})	43%

- **Most perceive that those closest to them have made the same choice about vaccinations as they did.** When asked how many of their ten closest friends they believe are vaccinated against COVID-19, adults who are vaccinated are more likely to believe most of their close friends are vaccinated, and those who are unvaccinated are more likely to believe none of their friends or a small proportion of their close friends are vaccinated.

TRUSTED COVID-19 VACCINE INFORMATION SOURCES

Health care providers remain the most trusted source of COVID-19 vaccine information across all three groups: rural adults, parents, and teens. This is especially true of *personal* health care providers (77% of rural adults, 64% of rural parents, 68% of rural teens).

- **Persuadable² unvaccinated adults are much more trusting of all information sources compared to unvaccinated rural adults as a whole:** Unvaccinated adults are most likely to trust their own healthcare provider (53%), but when separating out those considered persuadable² the likelihood to trust various information sources is higher across the board compared to unvaccinated adults as a whole.

Trust for COVID-19 Vaccine Advice and Information – Rural Adults		
Information Sources	% Trust (A lot + Some)	
	Unvaccinated Rural Adults	Unvaccinated Persuadable ²
Your health care provider	53%	76%
Other health care providers	36%	60%
Universities and academic institutions	29%	53%
Fox News	25%	37%
CNN	16%	32%
NBC	20%	38%
ABC	19%	38%
OAN	12%	15%
Facebook or Instagram	14%	20%
Twitter	10%	19%
YouTube	24%	35%
State or local public health departments	36%	60%
Researchers or scientists	41%	72%
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	34%	64%
Dr. Anthony Fauci	16%	31%
President Joe Biden	35%	28%

¹**Rural Adults:** living in a “non-urban” zip code as defined by the Census and are currently at least 18 years old.

Rural Parents: living in a “non-urban” zip code as defined by the Census and have at least one child under the age 18 living in their home.

Rural Teens: living in a “non-urban” zip code as defined by the Census and are currently between the ages of 13 to 17 years old.

²**Unvaccinated Persuadable:** Unvaccinated rural adults who answered they are either planning to or not sure if they were planning to receive the vaccine in the future.

Methodology: This poll was conducted between July 29-August 6, 2022 among a sample of 1,000 Rural Adults, 750 Rural Parents, and 200 Rural Teens. The interviews were conducted online. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Results from the teen sample have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points.

The February poll was conducted between February 1-February 22, 2022 among a sample of 1806 Rural Adults, 475 Rural Parents, and 220 Rural Teens. The interviews were conducted online. Weighting targets were constructed from the 2021 Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Census’ Current Population Survey. The sample was weighted to approximate a target sample of US Rural Adults, Rural Parents and Rural Teens based on age, race, ethnicity, gender, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points. Results from the teen sample have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points.