Utilizing Community Networks in Barbershops and Salons to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy in Baltimore, Maryland

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### Background

- Cut Hypertension is a national community service project that started within the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) at the University of Pennsylvania chapter
- Johns Hopkins SNMA chapter planned to implement the Cut Hypertension initiative in East Baltimore in 2020, but had to pivot due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- In light of higher vaccine hesitancy in communities of color, the Cut Hypertension project was redirected to become the Cut COVID-19 project
- Cut COVID-19 provided the Cut Hypertension team an opportunity to engage the community in critical public health discourse while establishing longitudinal relationships with local barbershops and salons

### Community Partner

- 1009 East Lombard Street is a barbershop in East Baltimore with strong community roots
- Local barbers expressed interest in addressing the misinformation regarding vaccine that was especially prevalent in Black neighborhoods

www.facebook.com/1009eastlombard/

### Project Description

The team distributed flyers with QR codes to local barbershops.

The QR codes linked to a Qualtrics questionnaire that provided links to social media materials, FAQ, and expert testimonials.

How would you like to receive information about the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Social Media (Instagram, TikTok, Youtube)
- Written Information (Website with Frequently Asked Questions)
- Question and Answer Panels with Experts
- Other

### Outcomes

- QR code flyers distributed to 1009 East Lombard Street Barbershop, with plans to distribute to additional barbershops and salons in the near future
- Barbershop clients engaged in public health discourse by viewing the educational videos on social media and accessing written information on websites

### Lessons Learned

- Utilizing pre-existing community networks can allow for distribution of health information and resources related to the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in communities with poor outreach
- Social media resources can be used to spread easily accessible and factually correct information on the COVID-19 vaccinations
- Public Health Professionals have a role in ensuring appropriate health education resources are available to the most vulnerable communities

### Implications

- COVID-19 has reinforced the health education and literacy disparities currently present in our communities
- In order to tackle these discrepancies public health professionals have a role in providing accessible health education tools to the most vulnerable populations
- Community networks can be utilized to share important health care information and are not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic

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