



Massachusetts Immigration & Refugee Advocacy Coalition

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Ahead of COVID-19 Oversight Hearing, Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Calls for Answers from Governor Baker

BOSTON – One day before Governor Charlie Baker and members of his administration will appear before a joint oversight hearing on COVID-19 vaccination distribution, the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition is calling for answers to key questions about equity. The coalition of Black, Latinx and immigrant leaders has been encouraged by new investments in the state’s Vaccine Equity Initiative, but emphasizes that more information is needed about how the administration will work with community organizations to close persistent racial gaps in the state’s vaccine rollout.

“Governor Baker recently demonstrated that he is listening to the concerns of our coalition of Black, Latinx and immigrant leaders when he announced an additional \$27.4 million in federal funding for his administration’s Vaccine Equity Initiative,” said **Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Co-Chairs Dr. Atyia Martin of the Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition, Eva Millona of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, and Carlene Pavlos of the Massachusetts Public Health Association.** “While this is great progress, there are still questions that need to be answered to ensure

that the necessary doses and resources are making their way to the communities that have been most impacted by COVID-19 and the trusted organizations that serve those communities. We look forward to hearing more from Governor Baker and members of his administration at tomorrow's oversight hearing about the progress they have made and the plans they have in place to meet the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition's five demands."

In February, the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition issued five demands to Governor Baker to ensure equity in Massachusetts' COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Since then, the Baker administration announced an additional \$27.4 million investment in their Vaccine Equity Initiative, including \$4 million for community and faith-based organizations to conduct outreach and education in Massachusetts' hardest hit communities. The coalition is seeking answers on how quickly these funds will become available and whether there will be additional investments in community organizations to meet their demand of \$10 million to fully address the need. The Governor also has not addressed when and how the promised additional 20% vaccine doses for the hardest hit communities will be distributed. Furthermore, the coalition recommended that the state tie its vaccine goals to the disproportionate rate of hospitalizations among Black and Latinx residents, but the Governor has not addressed whether he supports this as a goal and, if not, what specific goals he proposes to measure progress instead.

The most recent [state data](#) shows that white residents have received more than 15 times the number of vaccine doses as Latinx residents and more than 14 times Black residents. This is in spite of the fact that Latinx and Black residents have suffered and died at rates far higher than white residents.

Members of the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition include: the ACLU of Massachusetts, Black Boston COVID-19 Coalition, Black Economic Council of Massachusetts, Central West Justice Center, Immigrants Assistance Center, Jetpac Resource Center, King Boston, La Colaborativa, Lawyers for Civil Rights, the Massachusetts Immigrant Collaborative (Agencia ALPHA, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Boston International Newcomers Academy/Boston Center for Collaborative Education, Brazilian Worker Center, Caribbean Youth Club, Centro Comunitario de Trabajadores, Centro Presente, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, ICNA Relief, Immigrant Family Services Institute, MetroWest Workers Center: CASA Framingham, New North Citizen Council, Pioneer Valley Workers Center, Rian Immigrant Center, Sociedad Latina), the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, the Massachusetts Public Health Association, NAACP New Bedford, NAACP New England Area Conference, the Somerville Mayor's Office, the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central MA, Union of Minority Neighborhoods, and the Welcoming Project.

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