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Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Applauds Shift to Regional and Mobile Vaccine Sites, Calls for More Transparency on Benchmarks

BOSTON, MA – Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Co-Chairs Dr. Atyia Martin of the Resilient 21 Coalition, Eva Millona of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition and Carlene Pavlos of the Massachusetts Public Health Association issued the following statement in response to Governor Baker’s announcement that Massachusetts will close four mass vaccination sites, shift vaccine allocation to regional collaboratives in the 20 hardest-hit communities and expand mobile vaccination clinics:

“The Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition is deeply appreciative that after months of advocacy from Black and Latinx community leaders, the Baker administration has decided to wind down operations at several mass vaccination sites and bolster community based and mobile vaccination sites, with an emphasis on the 20 hardest hit communities. This is a critical step towards expanding vaccine access by shifting focus away from mass sites that were challenging for some to get to and instead bringing doses directly to where people already are.

“While we recognize the improvements the Baker administration has made in recent weeks and their hard work, we still need to hear more about how they will measure the impact of this shift, particularly when it comes to measuring Massachusetts’ progress on closing the racial gaps in vaccine distribution that have persisted since the beginning of the vaccine program. As of April 29, white residents in Massachusetts have received 14.7 times more doses than Black residents, 10 times more doses than Latinx residents, and 10.8 times more doses than Asian residents. Put another way, 52% of white residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine compared to 34% of Black residents, 48% of Asian residents and 30% of Latinx residents. These statistics mirror the inequities we have seen for months.

“Since February, our coalition has asked the Baker administration to set clear benchmarks to ensure that vaccine distribution is mirroring the proportion of hospitalizations experienced by each racial group, but we still have not received an answer. We urge Governor Baker to accept our request for a meeting to discuss these benchmarks and how to remove the barriers that community organizations continue to face on the ground as they try to distribute vaccines.”

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