

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2021

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Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Applauds Reinstatement of COVID-19 Hospitalization Data, Calls for Vaccine Equity Benchmarks

Baker administration has failed to comply with budget line item mandating establishment of benchmarks by July 30, 2021

BOSTON – The Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition is today applauding the Baker administration for reinstating their reporting of demographic data on COVID-19 hospitalizations. The move comes after the coalition sent a [letter](#) to the Department of Public Health urging immediate action to address the lapse in reporting and comply with Line Item 4000-0009 from the FY22 budget requiring the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to establish COVID-19 goals and benchmarks by July 30, 2021 in order to achieve equitable vaccine distribution in disproportionately impacted communities.

Although the Baker administration has resumed reporting demographic data on COVID-19 hospitalizations, it has still not set the benchmarks that the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition has been calling for since February and that the FY22 budget mandated. The Line Item language specifically required the administration to consider demographic data on COVID-19 hospitalizations when establishing these benchmarks.

“The Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition is pleased that the Baker administration has finally listened to the calls of Black, Latinx, AAPI and immigrant leaders by resuming reporting of demographic data on COVID-19 hospitalizations,” said **Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Co-Chairs Dr. Atyia Martin of the Resilient 21 Coalition and Next Leadership Development, Myran Parker-Brass of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, and Carlene Pavlos of the Massachusetts Public Health Association.** “This data is essential for measuring COVID-19’s disparate impact on BIPOC communities and devising an equitable public health response, especially as the Delta variant continues to increase cases, and there never should have been a lapse in the first place.

“Unfortunately, the Baker administration is still not complying with the budget mandate to establish vaccine equity benchmarks, the deadline for which was more than three weeks ago. The Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition and our partners fought hard to win this budget mandate after the Baker administration ignored our calls for benchmarks for months, and it is unacceptable that the administration is brazenly flouting state law in the midst of a worsening public health crisis. Governor Baker and the Department of Public Health must take immediate action to establish these benchmarks, comply with all state laws regarding COVID-19 data reporting and advance an equitable vaccine strategy.”

This is not the only instance of the Baker administration refusing to comply with state law regarding COVID-19 data. Under Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2020, An Act Addressing COVID-19 Data Collection and Disparities in Treatment, the State is required to collect and report data by multiple demographics, including race, ethnicity, primary language, and disability status. However, the State has never collected nor reported data on disability status.

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