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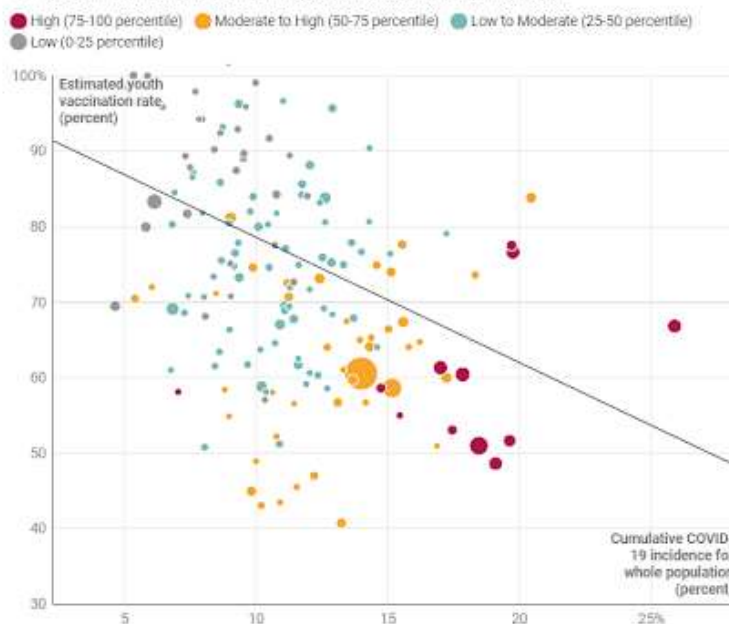
## Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition Releases New Data Visualization Revealing Inequitable COVID Vaccine Rates for 12-19 Year Olds in MA

*Findings underscore need for racial data, should inform equity strategy for vaccination of 5-11 year olds and boosters*

**BOSTON** – Today the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition is releasing a new [data visualization](#) in partnership with Boston Indicators that depicts the inequities in COVID-19 vaccination rates among 12-19 year olds in Massachusetts. Overall, the [scatterplot](#) shows that many communities with higher cumulative incidences of COVID-19 and higher social vulnerability ratings have lower rates of vaccination among 12-19 year olds. Conversely, many communities with lower incidences of COVID and lower social vulnerability ratings have higher rates of vaccination among 12-19 year olds.

### Scatterplot of youth vaccination rates and cumulative COVID-19 incidence.

Cumulative COVID incidence (total municipal population, percent) compared to youth vaccination rates (12- to 19- years-old, percent). The color of the circle shows the level of socioeconomic status vulnerability (CDC Social Vulnerability Index) and the size indicates youth population size. Data as of 11/16/2021. Towns with a population less than 10,000 have been removed.



Cities/towns with calculated youth vaccination rates exceeding 100% are reported as 99%. Youth vaccination rates calculated using MA DPH population estimates. Cumulative COVID incidence is calculated by dividing the total number of cases by the total city/town population (MA DPH estimates).

Chart: Method adapted from Dryden-Peterson, Velásquez, Stopka, et al (2021). • Source: MA DPH • Get the data • Created with Datawrapper

“We are nine months into the state’s vaccination program, yet we are still seeing the same inequities that plagued the program from the start. The data visualization we are releasing today shows in no uncertain terms that many of the Massachusetts communities that are most vulnerable in emergencies and have the highest cumulative COVID incidence also have the lowest vaccination rates for 12-19 year olds,” said **Dr. Atyia Martin, Co-Chair of the Vaccine Equity Now! Coalition**. “We urge the Baker administration to recognize these inequities and use this data to guide their strategy moving forward as eligibility is expanded even further to 5-11 year olds and to the general public for boosters. Furthermore, we continue to urge the Department of Public Health to report vaccination rates by race/ethnicity and age, as well as COVID cases by age at the city/town level, to better understand the racial inequities in vaccinations.”

“The MTA and our local affiliates are working with community partners to encourage all eligible students and their families to get vaccinated,” said **Merrie Najimy, President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)**. “Educators are concerned that vaccines are not easily available to many families in rural communities, those with low income backgrounds and families of color, who for reasons of structural racism, have been hardest hit. We urge the state to do a better job of reporting data that would allow a focused effort.”

Social vulnerability takes into account a number of factors that may impact a community’s ability to respond to emergencies, such as poverty, poor access to transportation and/or crowded housing. Communities with a high CDC Social Vulnerability Index experience more adverse outcomes during and following a public health emergency. These communities are more likely to have increasing COVID-19 incidences, or hotspots. Due to a lack of racial data on COVID-19, social vulnerability is often the best available measure of COVID-19’s inequitable impact.

Some communities of note in the scatterplot are identified below. As of [November 18, 2021](#), 74.6% of 12-19 year olds were vaccinated statewide and the Massachusetts statewide cumulative COVID incidence rate is 11.9%.

- New Bedford: 48.6% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, despite a cumulative COVID incidence of 19.1% and high social vulnerability (75-100 percentile).
- Springfield: 51.0% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, despite a cumulative COVID incidence of 18.4% and high social vulnerability (75-100 percentile).
- Fall River: 51.7% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, despite a cumulative COVID incidence of 19.6% and high social vulnerability (75-100 percentile).
- Lawrence: 66.8% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, despite a cumulative COVID incidence of 25.9% and high social vulnerability (75-100 percentile).
- Swampscott: 96.7% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, with a cumulative COVID incidence of 11.0% and a low social vulnerability index (0-25 percentile).
- Arlington: 98.6% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, with a cumulative COVID incidence of 5.1% and low social vulnerability (0-25 percentile).
- Sudbury: 99.9% of youth aged 12-19 have been vaccinated, with a cumulative COVID incidence of 5.9% and a low social vulnerability index (0-25 percentile).

The city of Chelsea is a notable outlier in this trend. Despite experiencing one of the [highest incidences of COVID-19](#) in the state (25.9%), 99.0% of youth aged 12-19 years old have been vaccinated. This can be attributed in large part to Chelsea’s community-led, person-to-person vaccination efforts championed by community organizations, like La Colaborativa, and should serve as a model for advancing equitable vaccination strategies across the Commonwealth.

The scatterplot was adapted from [Dryden-Peterson, Velásquez, Stopka, et al \(2021\)](#).

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