

Conversation



The Gunnison Valley Health Approach to Employees who Initially Delayed Vaccination:

While rural healthcare organizations have unique challenges for mobilizing a pandemic response, they also have some unique advantages. Chief among these is serving a small community that enables relatively easy and individualized engagement with employees who are hesitant about vaccination.

The Infection Prevention (IP) and Human Resources (HR) departments identified all non-vaccinated employees, allowing the departments to reach out individually to all non-vaccinated employees by telephone. These conversations were framed in a supportive manner to ensure each employee had the opportunity to receive individualized attention within a safe space where they could have their questions answered and/or concerns heard.

Surpassing 80% immunization is a testament to GVH's strategies of enhancing convenience and engaging in tailored outreach to hesitant employees. The peer-reviewed literature suggests that workers at a lower educational level and at long-term care facilities might be more of a challenge to vaccinate. Regarding those hesitant to vaccinate, it is notable that, based on their pre-vaccination surveys, GVH was able to convince one in four employees who were "probably not" or "definitely not" going to receive the vaccine to ultimately receive the vaccine.

In contrast, at least one institution showed vaccine acceptance by summer of 2021 that was below initial surveys; for example, Yale's initial surveys, released December 2020, show that 84% of employees affirmed vaccination intent ((Figure 5), however, by summer of 2021, the combined organization achieved only 81% vaccination. GVH's ability to surpass its initial survey results on vaccination rates should be recognized as an achievement.



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Regarding place of work, although it took an additional 6-8 weeks to accomplish, long-term care employee vaccination eventually reached the 70% mark at GVH. Success, however, is tempered by the realization that the long-term care health workforce vaccination continues to lag behind the organization as a whole.

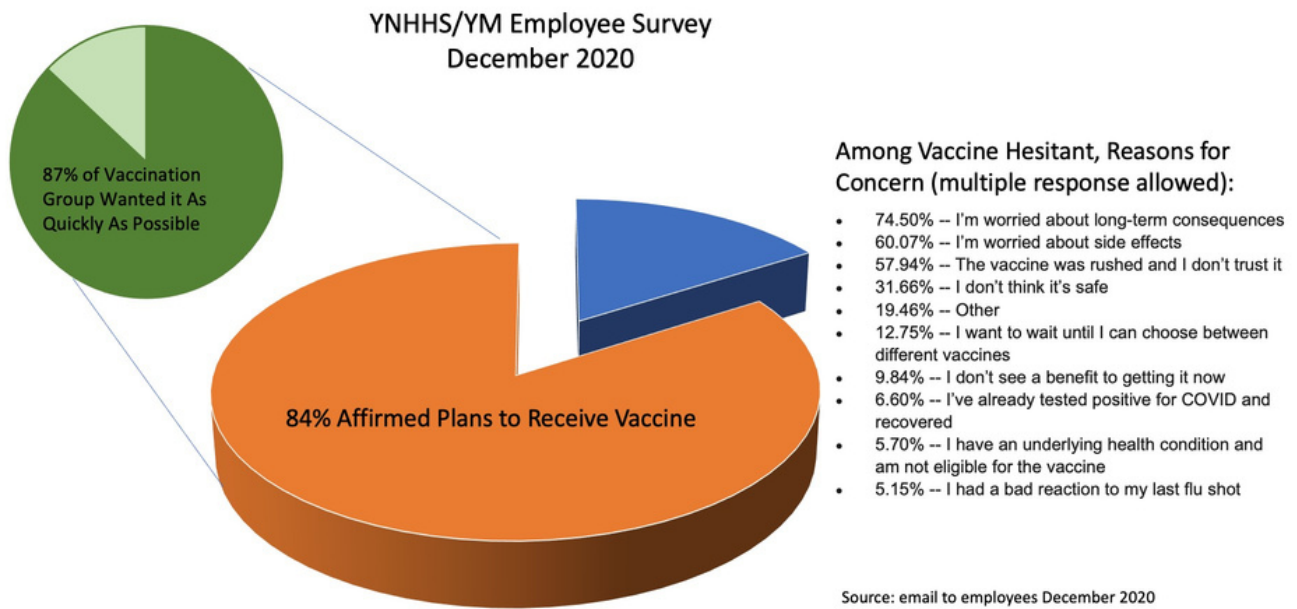


Figure 5: Yale Medicine / Yale-New Haven Hospital Employee Survey

