



# Vaccine Confidence & Awareness Campaign

BASELINE RESEARCH SUMMARY REPORT  
Missouri Residents



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SENIOR SERVICES**

October 2023



## RESEARCH OVERVIEW

- The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) partnered with Lambert, a national PR/marketing/research firm with an office in St. Louis, on a campaign to increase vaccine awareness and confidence among Missouri residents.
- To inform the campaign, Lambert conducted research examining Missouri residents' perceptions of vaccines and behaviors related to vaccine acceptance.
- This research included:
  - Online survey of Missourians from across the state
  - 11 focus groups of individuals from key demographic groups

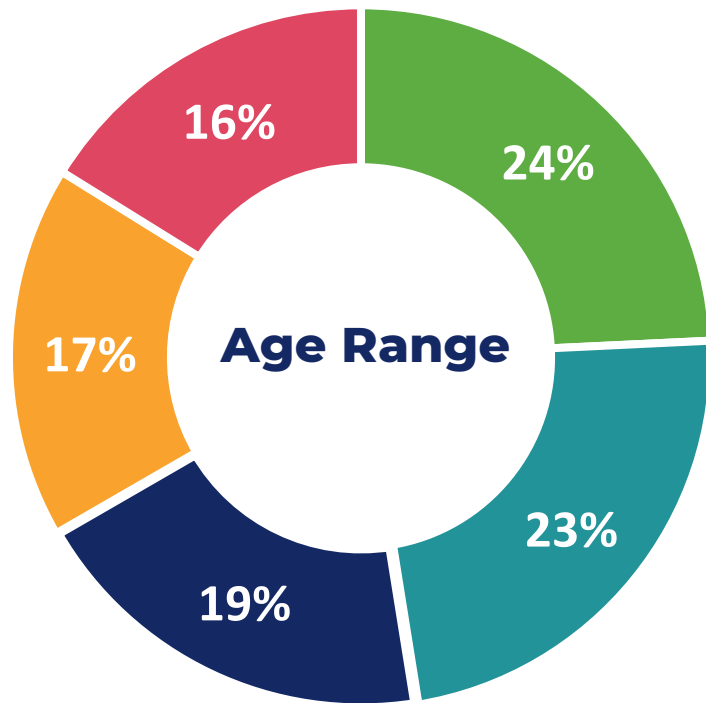
## Missouri Resident Focus Groups

- Conducted 11 Focus Groups via Zoom/Teams
- 60-90 minutes in length
- Residents from all regions of Missouri, with specialized groups for:
  - Parents
  - Social vulnerability index (SVI) regions
  - Uninsured/underinsured
  - Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/Latinx, or Asian
- Metro and rural regions, including high SVI



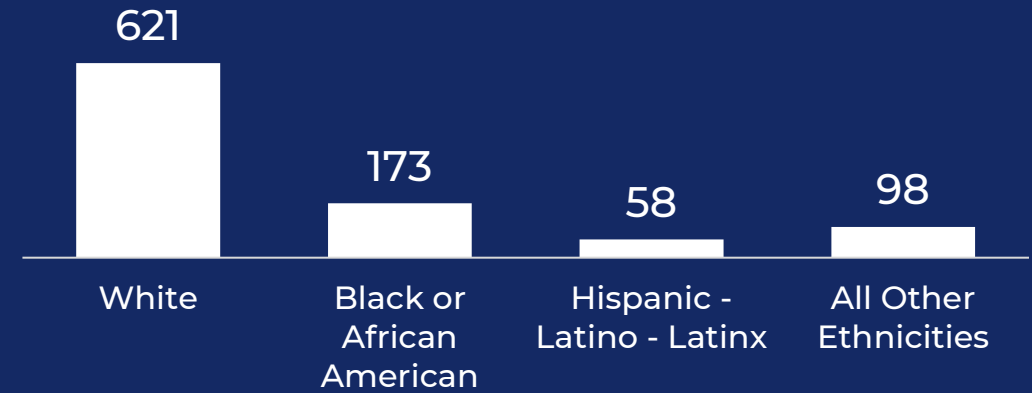
# 950

Missouri Residents



18-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61+

## Race / Ethnicity



## Gender



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# KEY FINDINGS



# OVER HALF OF MISSOURIANS FEEL KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT VACCINES, BUT THIS VARIES BY DEMOGRAPHICS

Missourians who feel less knowledgeable:

- High SVI county residents
- Residents not parenting minors
- Black/African American residents
- Residents ages 18-40
- Men
- Northwest MO (Region H) residents



# 58%

Feel "very knowledgeable" or "knowledgeable" about vaccines

# 41%

Feel "neutral" or "not knowledgeable" about vaccines

## HCPs ARE MOST COMMON RESOURCE FOR VACCINE INFORMATION

8 in 10 Missourians say:

- HCP is their most trusted resource for vaccines
- Turn to their HCP for questions about vaccines
- PCP is HCP most likely to mention vaccines to them
- Have seen a PCP in last 3 years

74% see/hear information about vaccines at HCP office

The least trusted resources for vaccine information:

- news (e.g., TV, internet, radio)
- social media

# 4.5

Average # of sources  
Missourians hear or see  
vaccine information

# 57%

Use online searches  
for vaccine  
information

# MISSOURIANS PRIORITIZE HCPS, ONLINE SEARCHES & HEALTH DEPARTMENTS FOR VACCINE QUESTIONS

Missourians are most likely to use the following resources for vaccine information for themselves, friends, or family members:



Family Physician / HCPs

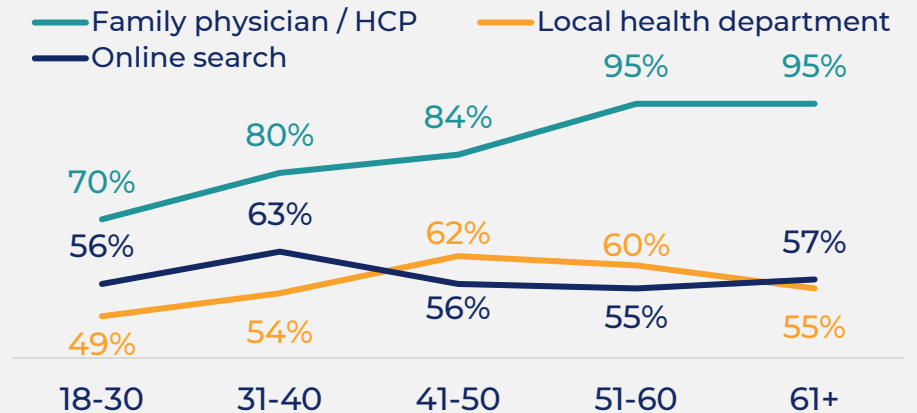
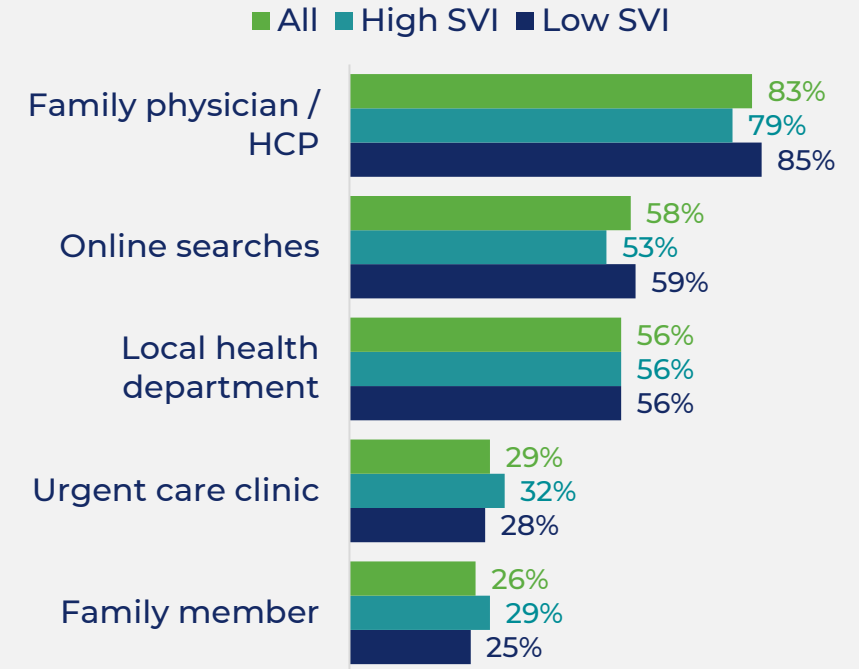


Online Searches



Local Health Department

## Top 5 Sources Overall for Vaccine Question Information





# MISSOURIANS MOSTLY ASK VACCINE QUESTIONS IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS & ONLINE SEARCHES

Missourians seek out information about vaccine questions from an average of 3 sources.



HCPs



Local Health Department



Online Searches

## Group Differences:

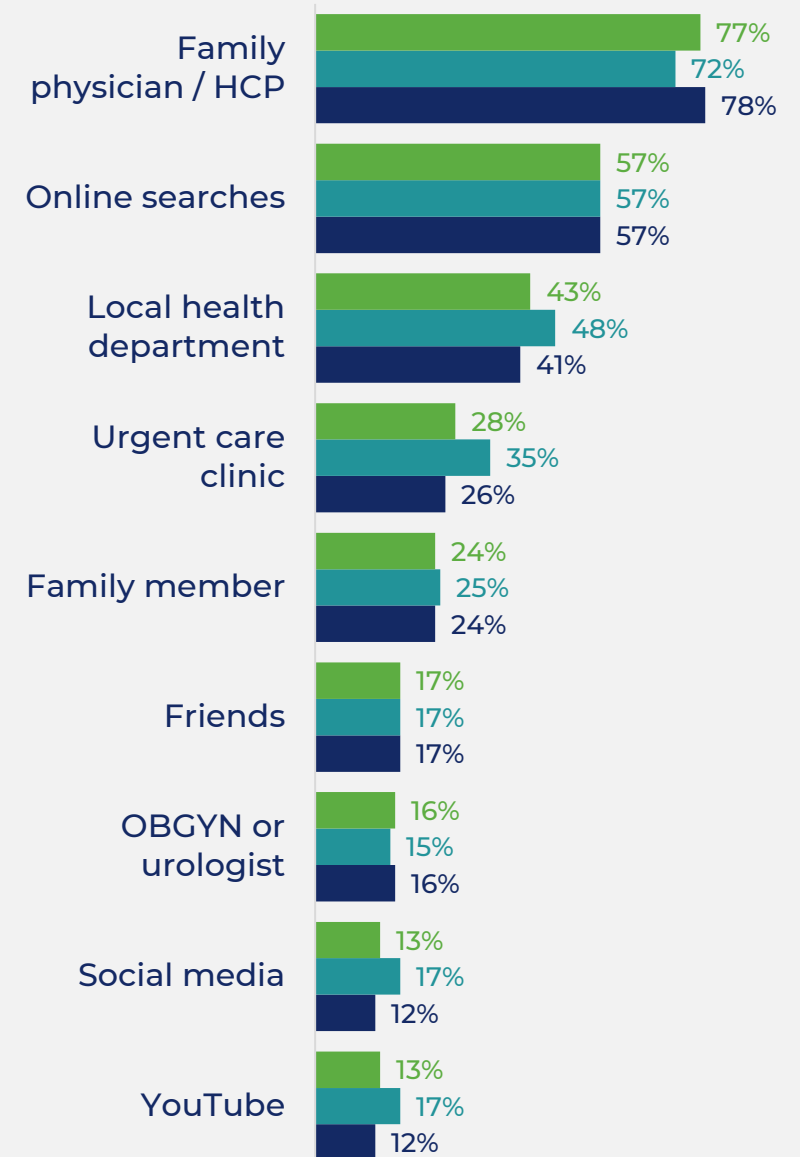
High SVI county residents (compared to low SVI) are:

- less likely to ask for information from HCP
- more likely to request information at local health department and urgent care
- more likely to go to social media or YouTube with vaccine questions.

More rural / micropolitan area residents cite their local health department than metro area residents.

## Where Missourians Ask Vaccine Questions: Top 9

■ All ■ High SVI ■ Low SVI



# DEMOGRAPHICS IMPACT WHERE MISSOURIANS SEE/HEAR VACCINE INFORMATION

## YOUNGER RESIDENTS: (compared to older)

More likely to see/hear via:

- Healthcare clinics
- Family members
- Social media
- YouTube
- Online searches
- Podcasts
- Billboards /outdoor ads

Less likely to see/hear via:

- TV/radio commercials
- News (print/online)
- Doctor's offices

## High SVI REGIONS: (compared to low):

More likely to see/hear via:

- Wellness centers
- YouTube

Less likely to see/hear via:

- Doctor's office
- Social media
- News (print / online)
- From friends / peers

## HISTORICALLY-EXCLUDED RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS: (compared to White)

More likely to see/hear via:

- YouTube

Less likely to see/hear via:

- Doctor's office

## METRO/RURAL:

(compared to micro)

More likely to hear/see via:

- TV / radio commercials
- News (print/online)

However, regardless of demographic group, HCPs were the most common place for Missourians to see/hear information about vaccines.

## MISSOURIANS ARE COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING VACCINES WITH HCP BUT DO SO INFREQUENTLY



**8 in 10**

are comfortable discussing vaccines with HCP



**6 out of 10**

only discuss vaccines with HCP when:  
they have a question / concern



**1 in 5**

report talking frequently with HCPs about vaccines.

*or*

HCP brings up vaccines

# 94%

Have had an HCP mention vaccines

“Some doctors are better equipped at explaining really complex phenomena so the general public [can] understand it...”

Doctors [might] struggle to make complex topics make sense for everyone that they're treating...

It's an issue trying to come up with a delivery that allows everyone to make informed decisions. Not every person is the best at delivering [messages].”

# MISSOURIANS SAY HCPs TYPICALLY BRING UP FLU AND COVID-19 VACCINES

- 7 in 10 Missourians say HCPs typically bring up flu and COVID-19.

## Differences:

- Low SVI county residents are more likely to say HCPs mention the flu or COVID-19 vaccines.
- Region H residents are least likely to say HCPs mention any, compared to 9 in 10 or more of other regions.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is mentioned least in Regions H (51%) and B (55%), compared to 64%-76% of other regions.
- Women are more likely to say HCPs typically mention the flu vaccine (75% vs. 64%).
- Parents of minors / those who are 18-40 years old are more likely to say HCPs mentioned a variety of vaccines associated with childhood to them than those who do not parent minors / those over 50.
- Black / African American and Hispanic / Latinx residents are 2x less likely to say they've had an HCP mention DTaP to them (10% vs. 19%).
- Black / African American residents are the least likely to say an HCP has mentioned the flu vaccine to them (58%) compared to 7 in 10 of all other racial / ethnic groups.

92%

Say HCPs typically mention at least one type of vaccine

7:10

Say the COVID-19 or flu vaccines are brought up by HCPs

3

Average number of vaccines HCPs typically mention

## NEARLY ALL MISSOURIANS GET THEMSELVES & THEIR CHILDREN VACCINATED, FEWER KEEP THEM UP TO DATE

- 2 out of 3 say they are "up to date" or "mostly up to date"
- 8 out of 10 say their children are "up to date" or "mostly up to date."
- 1 in 6 parents of minors say they are only getting vaccines at HCP recommendation or on a case-by-case basis.
- Parents in high SVI-counties are 2x as likely to say their children are "mostly up to date."

92%

Get vaccines  
themselves

94%

Get their children  
standard / routine  
vaccines

## MISSOURIANS SAY VACCINES ARE IMPORTANT BUT HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT SAFETY, EFFICACY & SIDE EFFECTS

### Group Differences:

Rural residents, compared to more populated areas, are:

- 2x as likely to believe vaccines are unsafe
- Slightly less likely to agree vaccines prevent disease

High SVI county residents:

- Over half have concerns about vaccine side effects.
- Are slightly less likely to agree vaccines prevent disease.

Residents who identify as Black / African American and “other racial / ethnic group” are much more likely to have concerns.

**62%**

Agree vaccines are important

**73%**

Agree vaccines prevent disease

**1:2**

Have concerns about side effects / safety

## PUBLIC SENTIMENT TOWARDS VACCINES HAS REDUCED

Missourians think:

- long-standing, routine vaccines are important
- public trust has declined due to COVID-19 vaccine rollouts

### Group Differences:

High SVI county residents:

- more likely to report no change in tone of vaccine conversations.

Younger Missourians:

- most likely to say people have become more negative.

White or “other racial / ethnic group” residents:

- most likely to say people have become more negative

Women

- more likely to say sentiment has become more negative.

# 50%

Say vaccine conversations have become more negative



*“I'm very particular about [if the vaccine] has it been extensively tested. I ask [that question] a lot about vaccines, but never get a very strong answer...”*

*“I understand [COVID-19] was a pandemic no one planned for... I want to have [safety] backed up with facts, not just what was handed over to the doctor/physician to mention to patients.”*

# MISSOURIANS ARE INCREASINGLY NEGATIVE ABOUT VACCINES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Missourians are generally more negative about vaccines, especially COVID-19, due to the pandemic.
- Reasons cited for those who gave vaccines a “less positive” rating:
  - Concerns about safety, effectiveness, and short/long-term side effects, and cost
  - Rumors, conspiracy theories, and misinformation
  - Politicization of vaccines
  - Mistrust of government
- As a result:
  - Residents have mixed feelings on whether to vaccinate
  - Trust healthcare institutions has declined
  - People are more vocal in expressing their views



- Of those who gave a “much less positive” rating, factors cited include:
  - Concerns about safety, effectiveness, adverse reactions, and short/long-term side effects
  - Mistrust of healthcare systems
  - Misinformation
  - Pharmaceutical companies
  - Political divides
  - Perceived lack of scientific research and the rapid development/release of the vaccine
  - Government control
  - Fear of the unknown
  - Conspiracy theories
  - Personal pressure



## INSIGHTS: Parents of Minors

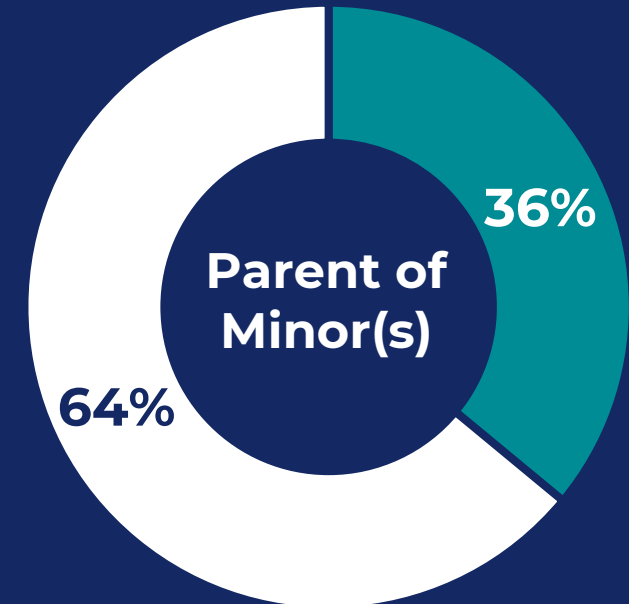
Parents of minors have concerns about vaccines and HCPs.

They are:

- **less likely** to agree vaccines are safe.
- **less likely** to agree vaccines are easiest way to protect from illness.
- **more likely** to agree they have concerns about vaccine side effects.
- **2x as likely to say they have little to no trust** in their family physician/HCP, MDHSS, and pharmacists.

# 345

Parents of Minor(s)



Yes No

## INSIGHTS: Parents of Minors

In focus groups, parents of minors were more likely to mention the following topics:

- specific websites (*vaccines.org, examine.com, fda.gov, drugs.com*)
- hygiene (*e.g., wash, wipe, sanitize*)
- suitability (*e.g., necessary, right*)
- body parts (*e.g., body, hands, ear infection*)
- word of mouth
- chemical
- COVID vaccine

### Group Differences:

When deciding to vaccinate their children, parents of minors identifying as **Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and “other racial groups”** (compared to White) are **2-3x as likely** to:

- wait for HCP recommendation
- decide on a case-by-case basis

Parents of minors in **high SVI counties** (compared to low SVI) are **2x as likely** to say their children are “mostly up to date” on vaccines.



*“[The pediatrician] never really asked me [if I wanted the vaccines]. He just said, ‘these are the vaccinations your kid’s getting today.’ I am really comfortable with vaccinations, but even saying, ‘these are the vaccinations that are coming up, are you okay?’ [would be better]...How you phrase something can make someone instantly more comfortable, [like] you have a choice instead of feeling like it’s forced upon you.”*

*“Transparency is a big thing. Don’t sugarcoat [the facts]. With a lot of things, [doctors] don’t like to tell you the actual facts. The more transparent a doctor can be about the healthcare they’re providing or the vaccines they’re trying to give you, the better.”*

## INSIGHTS: Ethnic/Racial Differences

Overall, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx residents felt more negatively about vaccines compared to White residents.

Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx residents:

- Least likely to agree vaccines prevent disease
- Least likely to agree vaccines save lives
- Have lower trust in their HCPs
- Feel less comfortable discussing vaccines with HCPs



# 2x

as likely to seek information about vaccines on YouTube

“ ”

*“I am somebody who enjoys watching Facebook and Instagram lives. If there was a doctor or someone from the CDC [on a live] where we can ask questions and they can answer them, it would make me feel like it was a safe place.*

*Of course, I'm still going to do my research, but it would feel like more direct contact.”*

## INSIGHTS: Ethnic/Racial Differences

Black/African American residents:

- Most likely to feel uncertain about vaccines
- Most likely to have concerns about side effects
- Least likely to feel knowledgeable
- Lowest levels of strong trust in online information

Hispanic/Latinx residents:

- Most likely to say vaccines are unsafe



*“For me, it's a lack of trust because of things that happened in history to different demographic groups, like the Tuskegee experiment. That can happen again. That's why I'm very [careful] about what I put into my body.”*

*“[There] really isn't enough research that's expansive enough to cover all [races and ethnicities]. I'm always the last person to be up to date with their vaccines, and I'm really okay with that.”*



# INSIGHTS: Ethnic/Racial Differences

In focus groups, different ethnic/racial groups discussed vaccines in unique ways, using the following terms:



## BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN:

- Trust
- Discussion-related words  
*(e.g., talk, told, conversation)*
- Kids/children
- Healthcare providers  
*(e.g., doctor/pediatrician, nurse, pharmacist)*
- Decision
- TikTok



## HISPANIC/LATINX:

- Government  
*(e.g., government, state, bipartisan)*
- Easy/ease
- Company
- Data
- Trust
- Confidence



## WHITE:

- Risk
- Money
- School
- Studies, science, research
- Education
- Specific infections  
*(flu, covid, chicken pox, polio)*
- Schedule  
*(related to appointments and vaccine)*

# INSIGHTS: SVI Counties

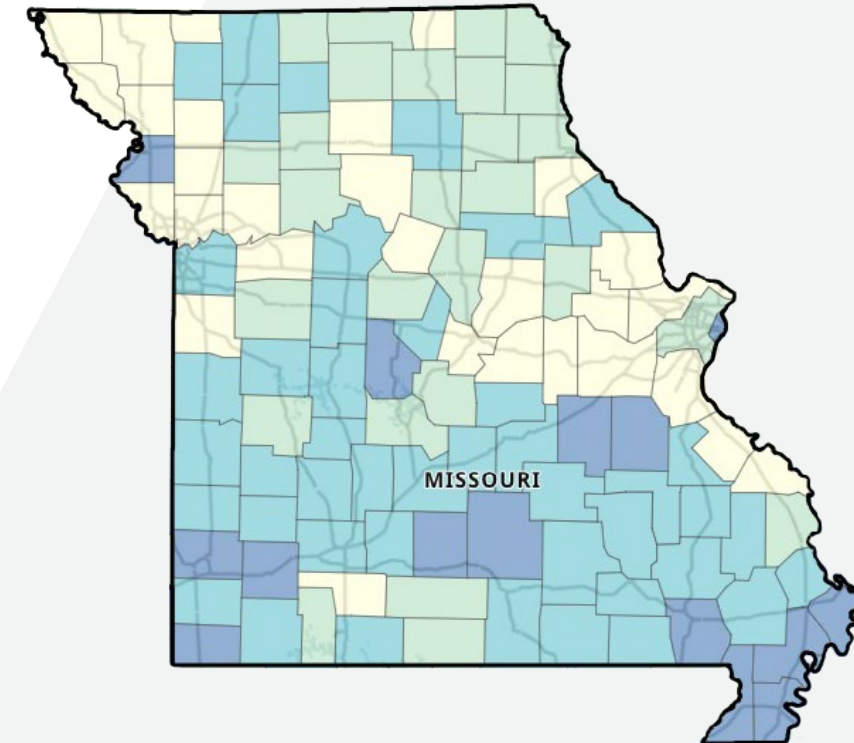
Overall, residents of high SVI counties felt more negatively about vaccines and relied on their HCPs less than those from low SVI counties.

**High SVI county residents** (compared to low) are **less likely to:**

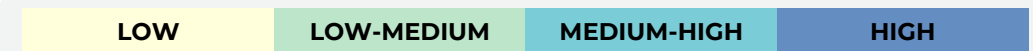
- Agree vaccines are safe or prevent disease.
- See/hear vaccine information via HCP.
- Feel comfortable discussing vaccines with HCPs.
- Say they have recently seen an HCP, PCP, OBGYN, dentist.

**High SVI county residents** (compared to low) are **more likely to:**

- Say they are "not knowledgeable" about vaccines.
- Have seen NP, Pharmacist, ER physician, or urgent care.
- See/hear vaccine information at LPHD, urgent care, wellness centers, YouTube.
- Go to social media or YouTube to answer vaccine questions.



**Level of Vulnerability**



## INSIGHTS: SVI Counties

In focus groups, different ethnic/racial groups discussed vaccines in unique ways, using the following terms:

### HIGH SVI COUNTIES

- Common sense
- Support
- Side effects
- COVID vaccination

### LOW SVI COUNTIES

- Difference
- Read/documents
- Science



*“[I] didn't feel safe taking the vaccine because I had no idea what it could do to me currently or down the line if it could affect some other condition I have or medicine. And I could never find that, you know, a hundred percent that you know, it's okay, you can take it. So it was just, there was a lot of information but not the information that I needed.”*

*“[I got] extremely sick both times that I got [the COVID-19] vaccine. And I also noticed some lingering side effects for a year or more. And it wasn't great. And in the end, looking back, I feel like there was a lot of fear that went into my decision, maybe more than fact looking back.”*

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# KEY TAKEAWAYS for Healthcare Providers (HCPs)





## MISSOURIANS TRUST HCPs

- 8 in 10 Missouri residents said HCPs are their most trusted resource for vaccine information.
- HCPs were also the most cited source for answers to vaccine questions, followed by online searches and local public health departments.
- However, trust levels vary by demographics:
  - Parents of minors were twice as likely to have little/no trust in their HCP than others.
  - Residents identifying as Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx and other racial/ethnic groups also reported lower trust in HCPs than those identifying as White.



### FROM MISSOURI RESIDENTS

"I trust my doctor 100% and I know nowadays that's extremely difficult to find a doctor that you trust. But I do, I trust my doctor 100%."

"My provider [seems] judgmental when I do not get a vaccine."

# KNOWLEDGE OF VACCINES VARIES BY DEMOGRAPHICS & VACCINE TYPES

Overall, Missourians feel knowledgeable about vaccines, but knowledge levels vary across demographics and vaccine types. Demographic groups that feel least knowledgeable are:

- Residents in rural regions
- High SVI county residents
- Residents in Northwest MO
- Black / African American
- Hispanic / Latinx

Missourians and HCPs alike feel less knowledgeable about newer vaccines than vaccines generally accepted as routine.

Education to increase knowledge and awareness is key to helping Missourians make informed choices about vaccines.



## FROM MISSOURI RESIDENTS

"I wish I knew more so that I could convince non-vaccinators how they are endangering their health, the health of their children and all the folks who come into contact with them."

"The average joe doesn't know everything when it comes to vaccines. Sometimes I wish they would kind of dumb it down or explain more in-depth."

# MISSOURIANS THINK VACCINES ARE IMPORTANT BUT STILL HAVE CONCERNS

Most Missourians see vaccines as important, but many have concerns about safety, side effects, and efficacy.

They also feel public perception of vaccines has eroded, a belief that only feeds these hesitations. Previously trusted voices (e.g., CDC, government) also see erosions of trust due to the COVID pandemic.

Education about vaccine safety, efficacy, and side effects should combat misinformation to drive acceptance and increase public confidence.



## FROM MISSOURI RESIDENTS

"I'm conflicted about getting all four I'm considering... very worried about side effects."

"I don't really trust [vaccines] unless they've gone through long term studies."

"After COVID people were questioning vaccines more regularly. There's also a growing anti-vax group that spreads misinformation about vaccines and their contents."

# MISSOURIANS ENCOUNTER BARRIERS TO VACCINATION

Most Missourians say talking to an HCP is the next step if interested in getting a specific vaccine. However, 46% say they encounter barriers to these conversations.

Factors residents say prevent them from talking with HCPs include:

- Not feeling knowledgeable
- Fear of adverse reactions/side effects, shots/needles
- Skepticism of HCPs/vaccines and lack of trust
- No interest in getting vaccines



## FROM MISSOURI RESIDENTS

"I'm too scared of the side effects."

"I feel like [HCPs] don't know much about it. They're being paid off."

# MISSOURIANS VALUE PERSONAL CHOICE

Personal choice emerged as a consistent theme among Missouri residents.

They don't want to feel pressured or forced. They fear being judged, criticized, or belittled. They want their HCPs to listen and acknowledge their right to make informed decisions.

Providers described the effectiveness of an empathetic, patient-centered approach. This included listening to concerns and providing information while also emphasizing and respecting patient choice.



## FROM MISSOURI RESIDENTS

"Acknowledge that, yes, it is my choice as the patient whether or not I will receive any vaccine."

"Explain risks vs. benefits. Offer all the available information to me, which then allows me to make the decision to receive a particular vaccine on my own. I don't want to feel pressured to get a vaccine."

"Matter-of-fact information only. Not treating vaccines as miracle cure-alls. Acknowledging the risks and that ultimately healthcare must be consented."

# Thank You!

## Contact Information

Missouri Department Of Health & Senior Services (DHSS)

Lisa Cox

Director, Communications

[Lisa.Cox@health.mo.gov](mailto:Lisa.Cox@health.mo.gov)



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