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Chicago Department of Public Health Partners with City Colleges on Expanded Vaccine Ambassador Training Targeting Parents and Guardians of Youth
Community members can learn how to discuss the importance of vaccines

CHICAGO - The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), City Colleges of Chicago (CCC), and Partners in Health are launching an enhanced vaccine ambassadors module around pediatric vaccine safety and efficacy to help people have conversations about COVID-19 vaccination with their families and friends during the holidays.

“We know that people have a lot of questions about vaccines, and family, friends and neighbors are a reliable source of information, so we want to arm them with factual information,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “This program has been helpful in giving real Chicagoans the tools they need to answer questions and reassure people in their networks that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and they save lives.”

The vaccine ambassador course is offered through Malcolm X College, and graduates are provided ongoing support by Partners In Health’s learning community. The vaccine ambassador course has been an important tool in CDPH’s ongoing vaccine education and outreach. To date, more than 2,400 individuals have completed the course and gone into their communities throughout Chicago to discuss the vaccine with their neighbors, friends, and families. Vaccine ambassadors have also been able to learn up-to-date information on the delta variant and boosters through regular community informational meetings.

On Tuesday, December 21, CDPH and Malcolm X College began offering a course module specifically focused on the discussions ambassadors can have with parents and guardians of children age 5 to 11 who are newly eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine as of November 3. CDPH’s Immunization Program team, who have extensive experience helping parents make decisions about all childhood vaccines, have put together this new training module that helps ambassadors talk to parents of younger children about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines for kids, and answer common questions.

“Malcolm X College is proud to partner with CDPH to be of service in the fight to keep our community and families safe during the pandemic,” said David Sanders, President of Malcolm X College. “By empowering others through the vaccine ambassador course, we are reaching hesitant individuals who may be most vulnerable to this virus. Together, we are changing minds and saving lives.”

Since its launch in spring 2021, the neighborhoods that have seen the highest number of trained vaccine ambassadors include Brighton Park, Hegewisch, Humboldt Park, McKinley Park, North Lawndale, South Lawndale, and South Shore. While the vaccine ambassador course initially targeted Chicagoans who wanted factual information they could share within their communities, the free online program has grown to include enrollees from 40 states.

The Chicago Department of Public Health brought together Malcolm X College and Partners in Health to develop the Vaccine Ambassador Program and further bolster its vaccine education and distribution efforts.

Malcolm X College is one of seven City Colleges of Chicago that works closely with officials to train Contact Tracers and has now developed vaccine ambassador course modules to empower communities. For more information on all of CCC's offerings, visit www.ccc.edu.

Partners In Health coordinates the Chicagoland Vaccine Partnership, a collaboration of more than 160 organizations dedicated to building a healthier, more resilient Chicago. This coalition works to ensure equitable access to critical information about COVID-19 vaccines and mobilizes community members to lead transformative public health efforts.

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