

# COVID Vaccine Education Efforts and Uptake among People Experiencing Homelessness in Charlottesville

UVA Health Disparities Conference  
2.8.22

Jessica Lin, MD Candidate

# Homelessness in Charlottesville



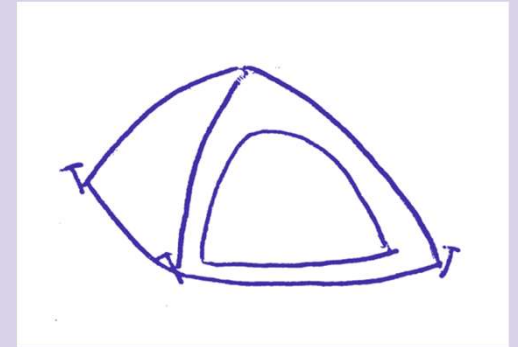
Emergency Shelter

135

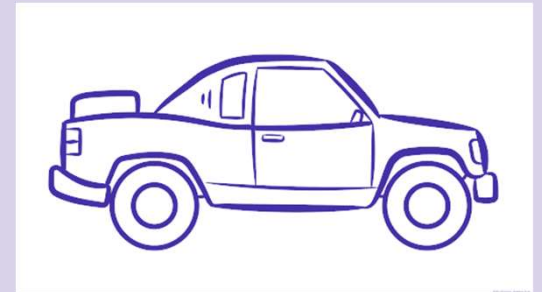
# 163

Individuals homeless  
in Cville in Jan 2021

28



Rough Sleeping



Sleeping in Vehicle



The Haven  
Day shelter

Overnight  
Shelters:



# Insurmountable Barriers To Navigating Healthcare



# Homeless Healthcare in Charlottesville



**UVA Community Outreach Clinic at  
the Haven - est. May 2019**

*Functions as  
somewhere  
between  
primary &  
urgent care*

**Sites:**  
The Haven  
Premier Circle

**Health Navigation Nights  
est. Oct. 2019**

Premier Circle  
PACEM Congregate

*Medicaid apps, med delivery, triage of  
acute concerns, appt scheduling, transport*

**Inpatient Homelessness  
Consult Service - est. June 2021**

UVA

**Street & Shelter Medicine  
Interest Group Outreach**

Downtown & Rt 29

**“Street Sheet” Community  
Resource Guide**

**STD & COVID Testing  
Flu & COVID Vaccines**

Haven  
Premier Circle  
PACEM  
Salvation Army

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# Planning Efforts - January 2021

Goal: Proactive Vaccine Outreach at Charlottesville Homeless Shelters

Method: Volunteers engaged in one-on-one discussions with with guests at three separate sites: The Haven, La Quinta, and PACEM Congregate

Health Navigation + Clinic
Formed longitudinal relationships with the homeless community.

SSMIG
Volunteers from SSMIG held vaccine education and awareness discussions at three sites.

Coordination
Students coordinated and partnered with the Department of Health and local shelters to lead on-site vaccination events.

# Timeline

January 2021:  
Begin planning

February 2021-April 2021:  
COVID vaccination events

May-December 2021:  
Schedule individual vaccines

January-February 2022:  
Schedule boosters


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Health Navigation \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic \_\_\_\_\_

Vaccine Education \_\_\_\_\_

# Educational Materials



EXCITING NEWS!

## THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS COMING TO LA QUINTA


Questions? Concerns? Want more info?

**ASK A CLINIC VOLUNTEER**

We'll be in the lobby over the next few weeks to answer your questions.

You will need an email address to sign up for the vaccine. We can help you get one if you need it!


## Will the vaccine change my DNA?



No. The vaccine cannot change your DNA. It is made of mRNA, which cannot change your genetic code.

Source: Johns Hopkins Medicine


## Can I still get COVID-19 if I get the vaccine?



Yes. The vaccine is very effective, but not 100%. People who are vaccinated are much less likely to get a **severe** case of COVID-19 that could result in hospitalization and death.

Source: Johns Hopkins Medicine

## Will the vaccine affect my fertility?



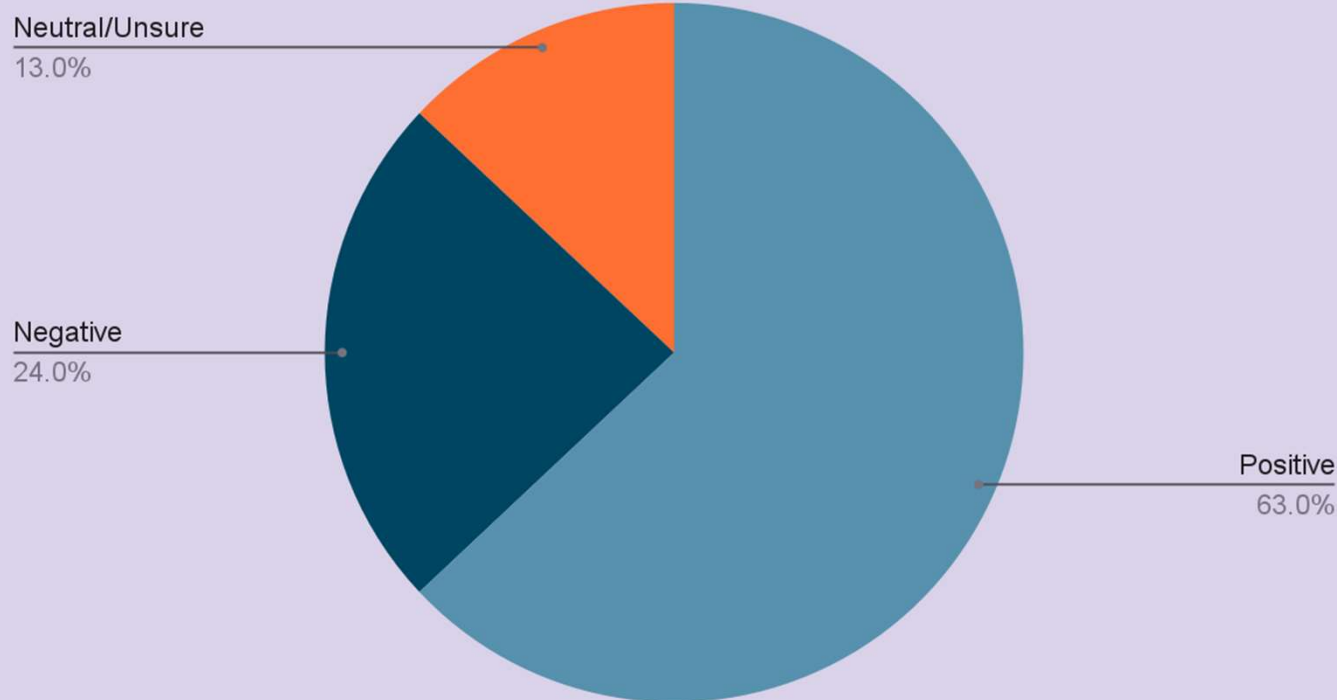
No. There is no known biological way for the vaccine to cause infertility and difficulty getting pregnant. It doesn't cause changes to hormones, kill sperm, or cause infections.

Source: Megan Ranney, MD, MPH (Brown University)



# COVID Vaccine Efforts

Views on COVID Vaccinations, January 2021



## Priorities

- Share basic information
- Dispel myths
- Set expectations
- Help with registration

## Results:

- Spoke with over 100 guests

# Topics of Discussion

## Side effects

“Had questions about an allergic reaction.”

“Moderately concerned about side effects.”

## Accessibility

“Wondering if can walk up.”

“Wants to get it...needs an email made!”

## Misconceptions

“Against it. Feels like virus is a hoax, and the masks are the real issue.”

“Think that the vaccine mRNA has a reverse transcriptase that can implant into DNA.”

“Thinks is immune because has gotten sick.”

“Confused between the difference between the test and the vaccine.”  
“Thought test = vaccine.”

“Concerned about lady on news who died”

“Thinks the vaccine kills people.”

## Questions

“Was wondering if he already had it if she should get it.”

“Wondered why it was worth getting since she is younger and healthy.”

## Other

“Concerned about asymptomatic transmission to his wife.”

“Watches too much news”

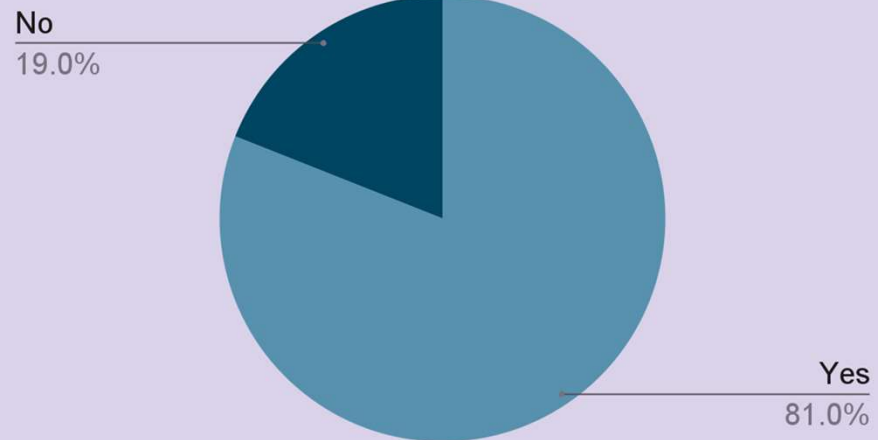
“Thinks he’ll get it. Understands why people don’t want to because he’s gotten the flu from the flu shot, but saw how this virus shut down the world is remarkable and will get it.”

“Very enthusiastic. Already has email.”

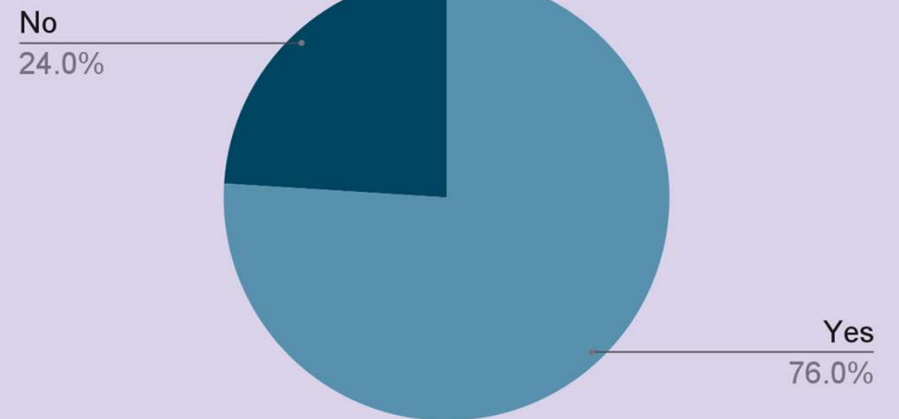
# Results

As of April 2021:

First Dose



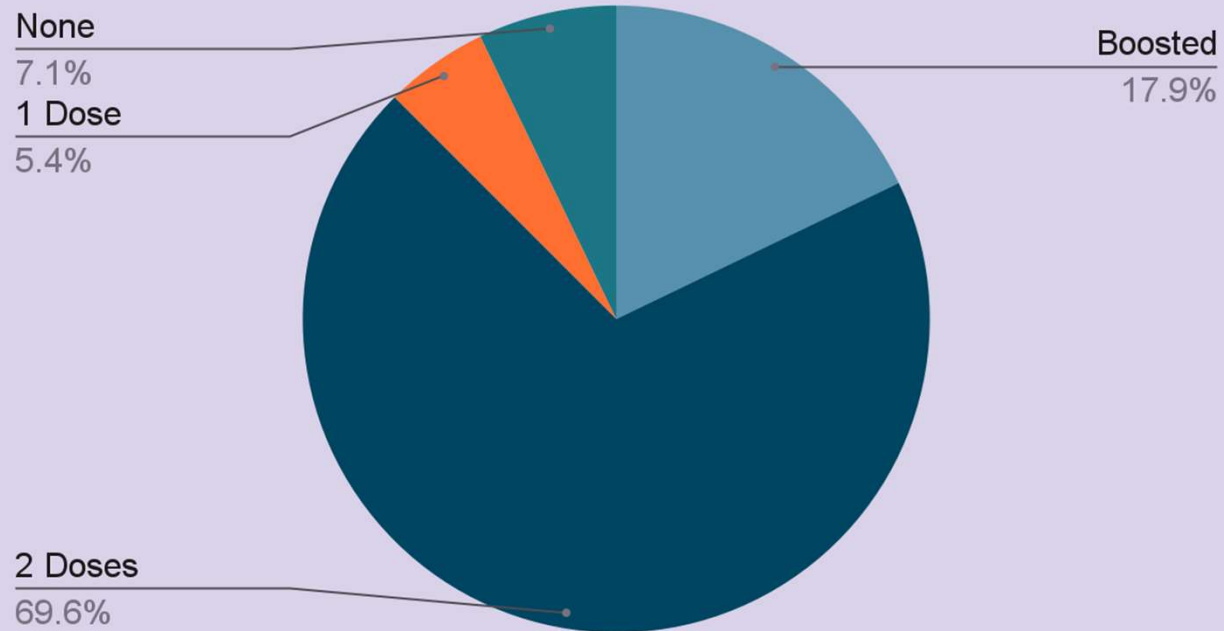
Second Dose



# Results

January 2022:

## Vaccination Status



## Vaccination Rates

US: 76.2%

Virginia: 83.5%

Albemarle: 86.1%

Homeless in Charlottesville: 93%

# Challenges

Building Trust

Accessibility

Prioritizing vaccinations

# Current Efforts

- Boosters
  - Coordinating with the Health Department to schedule Boosters - Vaccination day 2/16
  - Continuous Health Navigation conversations
  - 12 boosted, 15 scheduled
- Testing
  - Weekly testing at the Haven (Monday mornings)
  - As needed testing at Premier Circle
- Vaccinations
  - Every Monday at the Haven
- Continued coordination with case managers and partners

# Takeaways

- UVA students can take on a proactive role within the community to combat vaccine hesitancy.
- Our efforts relied on consistent messaging and repeated conversations which addressed questions, misconceptions, and accessibility.
- This effort leveraged developed trust from previous efforts (clinic, health navigation) and partnerships with important stakeholders (PACEM/Premier Circle, The Haven, TJACH, Department of Health).

## **Acknowledgements:**

### **Student Leadership Team**

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### **Blue Ridge Health Department**

### **The Haven Staff**

### **PACEM/Premier Circle Staff**

### **Dr. Ross Buerlein**

# THANK YOU!

## **Info Sheet:**



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