

BMS COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO FIGHTING COVID-19

IMPACT REPORT

March 2020-December 2022



Family Health &
Wellness Centers

IT'S NOT JUST PROFESSIONAL, IT'S PERSONAL



Uninsured patients were able to access free COVID-19 testing at BMS, plus **masks and hand sanitizers**. From March 2020 to November 2022, BMS has provided **28,113 COVID-19 tests** including PCR, ID Now, and BinaxNow tests.

“Yes, it was exhausting and stressful, but we had to be there for our people.”

–Jesi Ramone, BMS’ lead infectious disease clinician and one of many employees volunteering at the COVID-19 testing tent in we built in 2020.



BMS delivered 1.2 million pounds of emergency food to approximately 2000 homes. In an effort coordinated with donors and community stakeholders, individuals received food via schools, soup kitchens, home delivery and meal service.

“Seeing the gratitude and relief on faces made it worth it to volunteer, despite the concern. I gave out bags of food and toiletries to 1,000 people a week. Looking back, I am so proud of all of us who showed up or our community.”

–Sheneice Paul, BMS Outreach Specialist



BMS has **administered 38,246 vaccinations** at various pop-ups across the neighborhood, where most needed. Education and dialogue about vaccines helped raise rates.

“I shared concerns about the vaccine and how it might affect our people, but our congregation met with BMS healthcare professionals in conversation, about the myths and realities of the vaccine, and did a great job setting up an easy, respectful vaccination process.”

–Rev. David K. Brawley, lead pastor St. Paul Community Baptist Church in East New York, and Covid-19 vaccination ambassador. Testimony captured by Doctors Without Borders.

THE INEQUITIES

COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on low-income people across New York City and nationwide. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Black and Latino New Yorkers make up 46% percent of the virus deaths in New York State, though they make up 33% percent of the population. After adjusting for ethnicity, Black or African American people were most likely to have been hospitalized with COVID-19 and most likely to have died of complications due to COVID-19.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the NYC Health Department data registered a death rate of 781.43 per 100,000 in Brownsville, and 1543.51 per 100,000 in East New York, numbers higher than the Citywide rate. This evidence shows how communities born under systemic disadvantages are the most vulnerable population during a public health crisis and the socioeconomic consequences.

District 16 Demographics at a Glance: Brownsville & Ocean Hill

Population
123,956



61% Black
21% Hispanic



District 5 Demographics at a Glance: East New York & Starrett City

Population
178,925



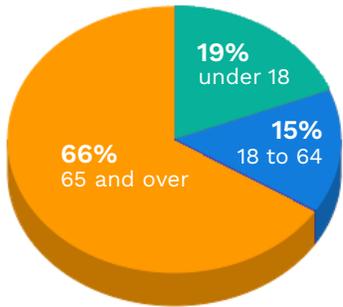
46%¹ Black
34%¹ Hispanic

Median household income **\$38.3K**
(about half the amount in New York)²

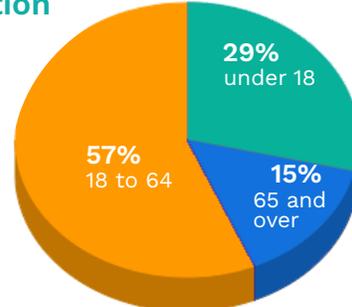


Median household income **\$52.6K** (about two-thirds the amount in New York)³

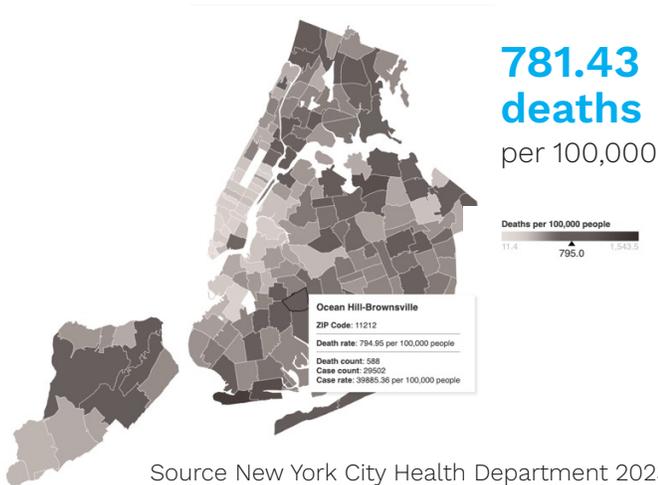
Population ages:



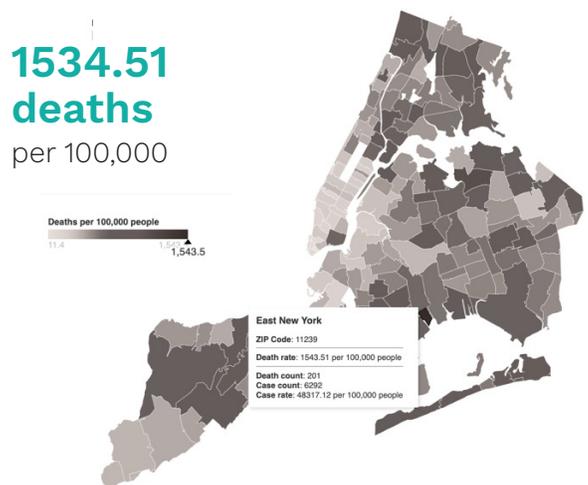
Population ages:



Brownsville COVID-19 death rate



East New York COVID-19 death rate



1 COVID Tracking Project and the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. COVID Racial Data Tracker. <https://covidtracking.com/race> consulted on January 2023.

2 Census Reporter, Census Reporter Profile page for NYC-Brooklyn Community District 16, NY: <http://censusreporter.org/profiles/79500US3604007-nyc-brooklyn-community-district-16-brownsville-ocean-hill-puma-ny/>

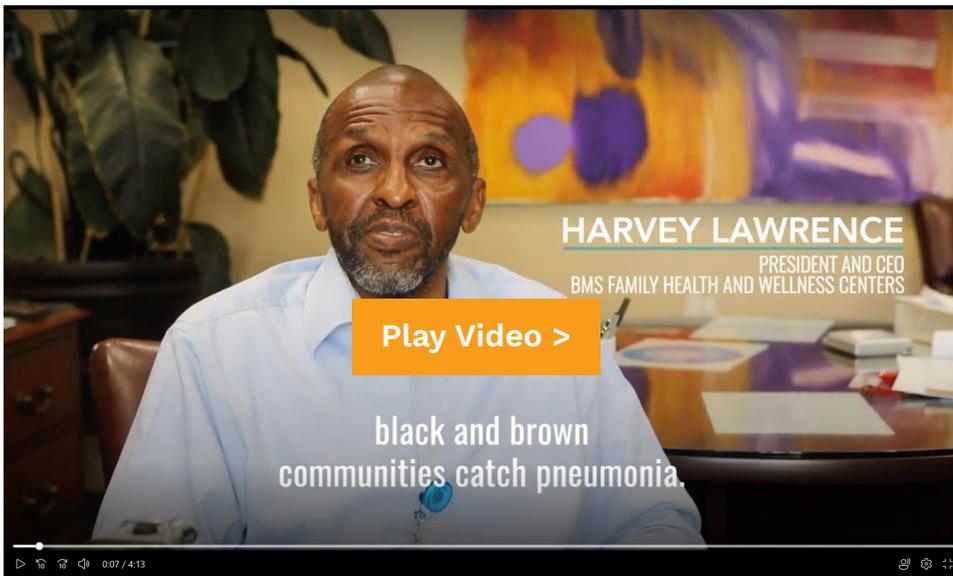
3 Census Reporter, with data retrieved in 2021 from Census Reporter Profile page for NYC-Brooklyn Community District 5 NY <https://censusreporter.org/profiles/79500US3604008-nyc-brooklyn-community-district-5-east-new-york-starrett-city-puma-ny/>

BMS' COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO FIGHTING COVID-19

National and local healthcare systems were already struggling to deliver equitable healthcare when the pandemic began in March 2020. BMS's frontline workers quickly pivoted to community outreach and partnered with multiple government agencies and community stakeholders to address the most pressing needs in the community.

Making testing and food available to vulnerable communities was a titanic task in 2020.

BMS is grateful to our staff who volunteered through 2020 at the peak and toughest moments of the pandemic, as well as the community members who showed up to every emergency food event. BMS also thanks the volunteers from Doctors Without Borders for their support with testing and administration.



Our neighborhood was impacted hard, and our entire team went above and beyond to deliver care for individuals who needed it most, in a selfless act that put them and their families at risk. We want to express gratitude to all BMS staff who showed up in solidarity with our community.

*Dr. Camille Taylor
BMS Chief Medical Officer*



As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 BMS experienced a **50% decline in in-person appointments for medical services and an 82% decline in in-person appointments for dental services**, which required BMS to design new strategies to reach the community.

To facilitate and enable safe access to vital healthcare services, we swiftly **implemented Telehealth services** across all our departments and distributed cell phones to patients to enable them to access telehealth services.

In addition to the healthcare delivery challenges faced by shortages of staff and resources, **disinformation and myths around Covid-19** posed yet another obstacle to delivering testing, vaccinations, and health education to hard-to-reach populations, including low-income families. The following data showcases the positive outcomes of BMS' COVID-19 response plan.

"This is an opportunity for healthcare providers to focus on the underlying conditions that contributed to this outbreak and its disproportional social consequences. We are going to have a repeat of this [pandemic], in whatever iteration, if the social inequalities aren't balanced".

-Renee Muir, Director Development BMS

BMS COVID-19 DONORS AND PARTNERS

BMS thanks its donors and community partners for the support provided to BMS and its most pressing moments of the pandemic. As a comprehensive Federally Qualified Health Center serving the communities of Brownsville, Ocean Hill, and East New York, BMS performed extensive work to address the health and social needs and consequences caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. This report presents the outcomes of the BMS team's work and dedication to date.

Donors



Partners



Community Food Distribution Partners:



Howard Houses
Van Dyke Centers & Housing
Seth Low Housing
Vernon Housing
Hope Garden

Bushwick Houses
Ocean Hill Houses
Atlantic Towers
Glenmore Housing
BMA

TESTING

From March 2020 to December 2022, BMS has provided **28,480 COVID-19 tests** to members of the Brooklyn community, including PCR, ID Now, and BinaxNow tests.

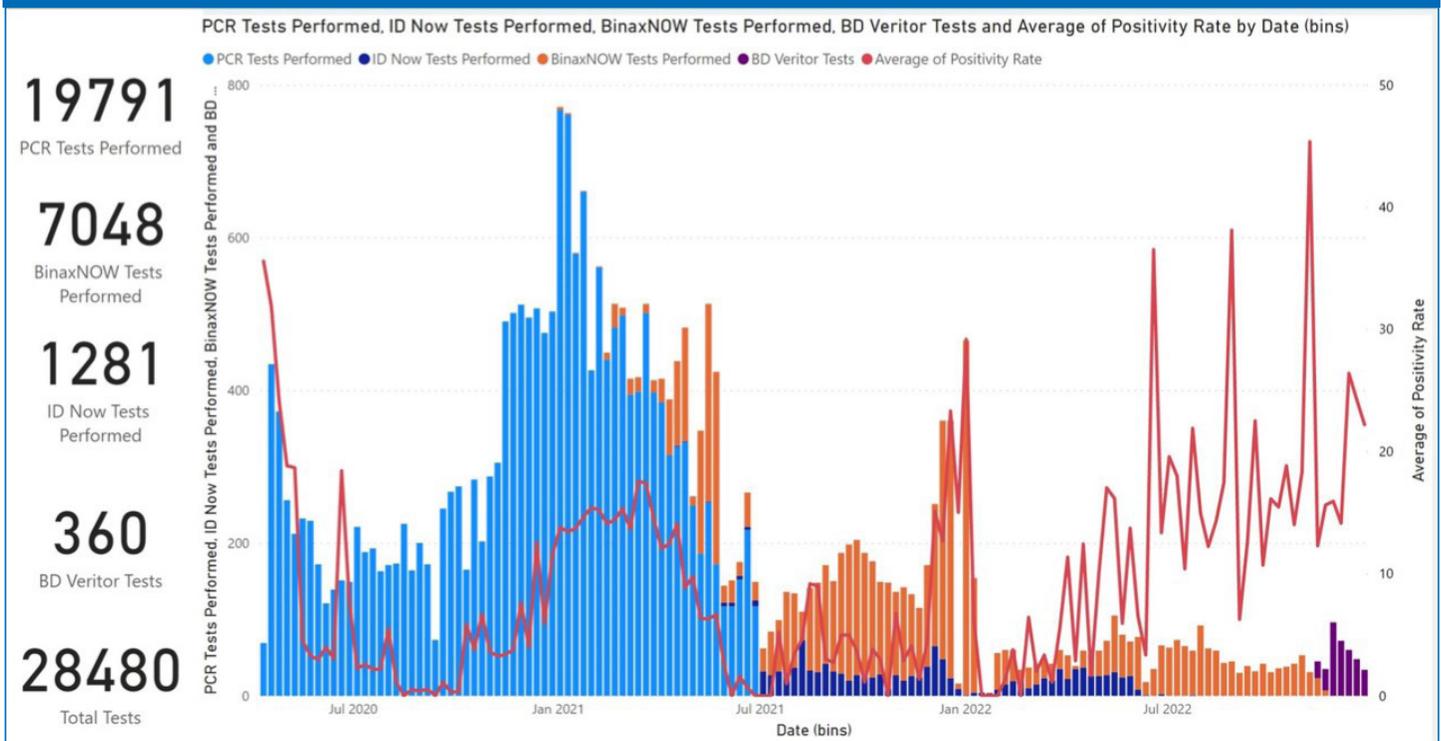
To do this, BMS opened a state-funded testing facility with supplies and infrastructure, operated a testing tent at BMS' Main location until July 2021, provided permanent rapid swab testing (free and no insurance needed), and has opened pop-ups in key points across the district thanks to New York State and Federal grant support.

The following figure illustrates the scope and trends of the BMS COVID-19 testing program from its inception in March 2020 through December 30th, 2022.



In November 2022, BMS rolled out the system BD Veritor, enabling patients to get their results directly on their cell phones via messaging.

BMS COVID-19 TESTS ADMINISTERED



Source: BMS's own records from Athena

Beginning 2022 testing rates declined significantly due to some factors:

- Mass distribution of at-home testing may have resulted in symptomatic patients requesting PCR tests at BMS to confirm COVID-19 contagion.
- Positive rates per test rose at BMS since fewer tests were being administered.
- Testing requirements for travel and in-person events were eased.
- Mass vaccination campaigns impacted the positive rates of COVID-19, mitigating COVID-19 outbreaks.⁴

⁴ Moghadas SM, Vilches TN, Zhang K, Wells CR, Shoukat A, Singer BH, Meyers LA, Neuzil KM, Langley JM, Fitzpatrick MC, Galvani AP. The impact of vaccination on COVID-19 outbreaks in the United States. 2021 Jan 2:2020.11.27.20240051.

EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant increase in food insecurity among the families we serve. As an organization committed to addressing the social determinants of health, which include food security, BMS worked in partnership with other community-based organizations to address basic needs in the community.

During the early months of the pandemic, **BMS distributed over 50,000 bags of food** as part of the Community District 16 Stakeholders Food Access Efforts, in partnership with City Harvest, Universe City, Collective Fare, and the many unpaid community residents who assisted with distribution.



BMS realized that it wasn't only the patients who needed us, but the whole community. Our partnership allowed us to deliver emergency food at six different sites. Quickly, BMS realized that the older adults could not leave their homes, so our team went to them to deliver food and assistance.

The following list summarizes BMS's efforts in partnership with donors and community stakeholders from March 2020 to December 2020. Individuals received food via schools/districts, soup kitchens, home delivery, and meal service, among others.



- **Coronavirus Food Assistance Program:** BMS delivered 1.2 million pounds of food (in 2500 bags distributed weekly) to approximately 2000 homes from March to December 2020.
- **Brownsville Fresh Food Box Vouchers:** BMS delivered 897 bags of fresh produce
- **Isabahlia Ladies of Excellence:** BMS delivered 50 family bags of fresh produce
- **United Way:** supported the distribution on Thanksgiving including 400 turkeys, 400 bags of fresh produce, 400 bags of canned goods, 200 bags of toiletries, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distributed to 800 BMS patients, staff, and community residents.
- **October Fall Fest Fresh:** delivered 350 fruits bags
- **United Way** Funding supported 750 Hot meals distribution to Shelter Homeless Families.
- **Brownsville Food Box:** a partnership with Collective Fare, Teens for Food Justice and Brooklyn Packers provided affordable fresh produce bags at \$7 and \$10, enough to feed 1-2 people for a week.

VACCINATION

BMS has **administered 38,746 vaccinations** since the program's inception in April 2021 up to December 2022. This was made possible by the initial support of BMS staff volunteers, and subsequent support of the **Visiting Nurse Service**, funded by New York State. Doctors Without Borders also aided in scaling up and expanding vaccination efforts.



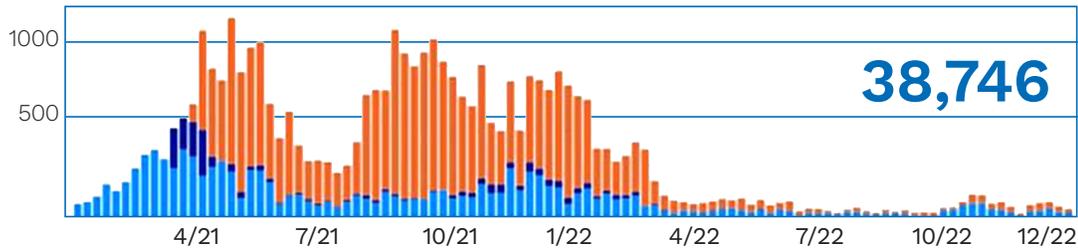
The following figures showcase the number of vaccinations, types that have been administered, and recipients by age, race and ethnicity. There has been a steady increase in vaccines being completed at all our vaccination sites including pop-ups.

Administering vaccines has been one of the most challenging tasks due to initial vaccines' insufficient production and distribution at the beginning of the pandemic, myths and disinformation around the virus, and shortages in personnel and supplies.

As of today **74.1%**, of Brooklyn residents have completed the primary series of vaccines, one of the lowest rates in NYC. Across the five boroughs, As of today, only **62.5%** of Black residents have completed the primary series of vaccines in NYC, the lowest rate among all ethnicities.⁵

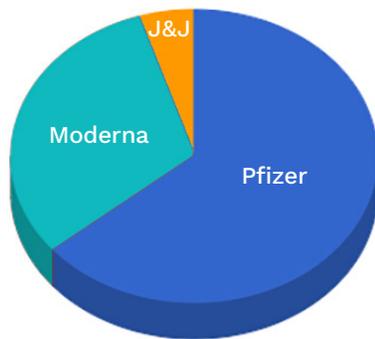
38,746 TOTAL COVID-19 VACCINATIONS ADMINISTERED

Vaccines Administered Over Time



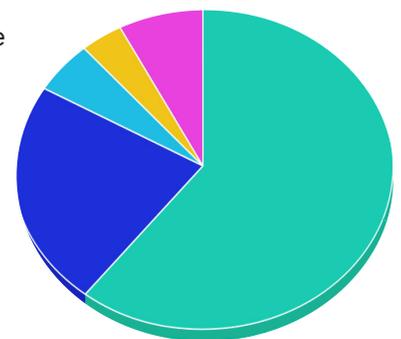
Vaccines by Brand

- Pfizer: 24,909
- Moderna: 11,993
- J&J: 1904

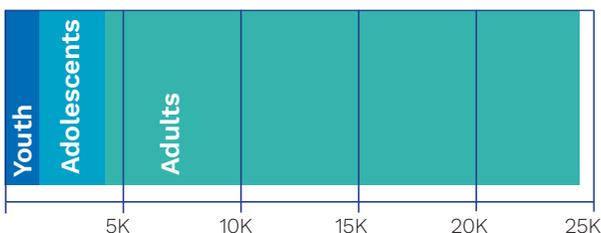


Vaccines by Race

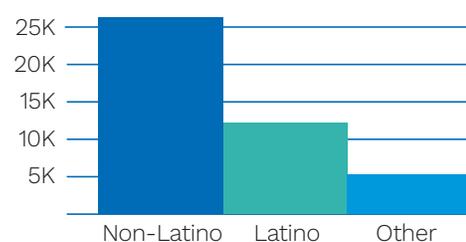
- Black: 60.6%
- Other: 22.6%
- White: 5.4%
- Asian: 3.8%
- N/A: 7.6%



Vaccines by Age Group 24,120 Patients Vaccinated



Vaccines by Ethnicity



All Data Source: BMS's own records from Athena.

BMS captures data guided by HRSA's categories of sex, race, and ethnicity.

5 New York City Department of Health, COVID-19 Data. Data. Retrieve on January 2023 from <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/COVID-19-data-vaccines.page>

INCENTIVE STRATEGIES

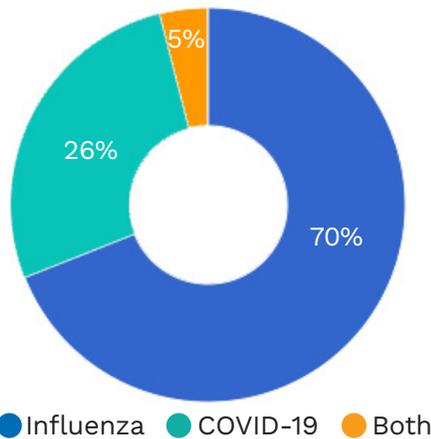
As part of the strategy for increasing COVID-19 among pediatric patients, BMS devised a plan to provide \$100 Incentive Gift Cards to patients 17 and under that completed a COVID-19 or Influenza vaccine at a BMS vaccination site. In total, more than 68% of the gift cards administered have gone to BMS Patients. As a proxy measurement for the number of families impacted by this initiative, BMS has counted the number of unique phone numbers provided to our staff for this project: of the **188 cards distributed**, this has gone to 84 families.

The following figures show the percentage of incentives by vaccine type from August to December 2022.

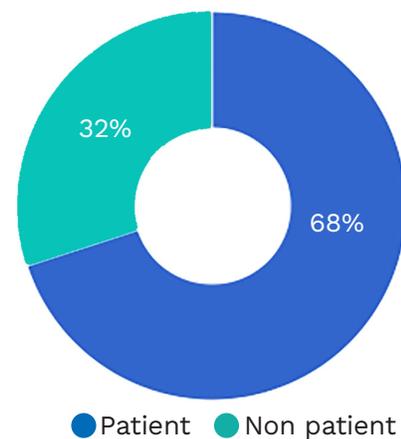


BMS DELIVERED 188 ADDITIONAL VACCINATIONS TO 84 FAMILIES

Incentives by vaccine type



Incentives patient



Source: BMS's own records from Athena

SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION CAMPAIGN RAISED VAX RATES 23%



BMS School-Based Healthcare Center at Jefferson Campus implemented a successful campaign to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among students once restrictions lifted and schools reopened in New York City.

Given the student's hesitancy to get vaccinated, BMS implemented an education campaign with the

support and commitment of the school's administrative staff. Regularly BMS health educators provided information to students about the importance of getting vaccinated using presentations, fun Jeopardy-styled games, and materials in the classroom. Such activities contributed to debunking myths and misconceptions about COVID-19 and vaccines. BMS also brought weekly COVID-19 pop-ups to the Jefferson Campus and gave out appealing incentives such as ice-skating trips, movie tickets, and free brunches.

When BMS started this campaign in November 2021, **the vaccination completion rate among students was 49%, which increased to 72%** by December 2022, making this campaign an outstanding best practice that BMS has replicated in multiple settings.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

COVID-19 not only threatens at-risk patients of catching this virus but also makes it more difficult for people to start or continue treatment to tackle other health conditions. BMS experienced a 50% decline in in-person appointments for medical services, and social programs' activities had to slow. The BMS team designed and tested an outreach strategy to sustain engagement with patients and the local community, which included the following components:

Marketing Campaigns

- Care Message texting for new patients and out-of-care patients
- Electronic letter to patients regarding the importance of maintaining routine care, and BMS updates
- Social media campaign through BMS profiles and partners
- TV ads and high-quality videos in partnership with Doctors Without Borders to promote vaccination and COVID preventive measures



Increased Huddles

- Daily 8:00 AM organization-wide huddle telephone calls to report in, develop real-time strategies, and increase communication regarding pandemic issues.



Phone Call Outreach

- Redeployment of outreach, operations and quality staff teams to contact out of care patients via telephone and book appointments for all practices
- Once the dental department was able to reopen, dental staff made outreach phone calls to patients who had not been able to come in during the closure.



Community Engagement

- Reaching essential workers at schools and community centers for testing and vaccination.
- Training Master of Public Health students as interns.
- Engaging vaccine ambassadors at events and conduct community outreach.
- Implementing vaccination pop-ups in schools, churches, community centers and food pantries.
- Distributing literature at community events.
- Providing \$100 gift card as incentives to increase vaccination rates.



BMS found that the most effective approaches to engage the community were language access for Spanish speakers (clear signs and Spanish speaking staff), placing BMS health educators at already established events that gathered a large volume of individuals and having medical providers in the various BMS locations encouraging their patients to get vaccinated/boosted.