

COMMANDERS/LEADERS

BACKGROUND: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) booster vaccination is recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Booster vaccination is highly encouraged by the DoD and DAF but not currently mandatory for Service members.

Variation in COVID-19 vaccine booster uptake exists throughout DAF. Although multiple factors contribute to these variations, supportive leadership and senior leader encouragement was one of the most cited factors for increased vaccine booster uptake among high performing MAJCOMs.

INTERVENTION OVERVIEW: Early efforts to promote COVID-19 vaccine uptake explored the impact of financial incentives and persuasive messaging on vaccination behavior. Results suggest that incentives generally fail to sway the vaccine hesitant and can, in some cases, backfire.^{1,2,3} By contrast, tailored reminders and interventions which render vaccination more convenient may augment COVID-19 vaccine booster uptake. Persuasive messaging or ‘debunking’ of vaccine misinformation may increase intentions to be vaccinated, but may not by itself increase vaccine uptake.³ Tackling misinformation with tailored messaging or measures to maximize convenience may help increase vaccine uptake.

INTERVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

	Concept	Details
1	<i>Tailored Messaging</i>	<p>Hearing important health information one’s community and leaders helps frame vaccine uptake as a prevailing social norm.^{4,5}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When people think that most people around them want to be vaccinated, they are more likely to be vaccinated as well. • Endorsements from peers in social networks can also help spread credible information about the vaccines. • COVID-19 booster information and talking points from trusted sources are available to leaders to ease communication.
2	<i>Maximize Convenience</i>	<p>Even among those who wish to receive a booster, ‘behavioral friction’ (e.g., uncertainty concerning location or hours of operation; effort required to travel from workplace to clinic or pharmacy) can create a substantial gap between intention and action. Recent evidence</p>

¹ Thirumurthy, H., Milkman, K. L., Volpp, K., Buttenheim, A., & Pope, D. G. (2021). Association between statewide financial incentive programs and COVID-19 vaccination rates. Preprint not peer reviewed.

² Walkey, A. J., Law, A., & Bosch, N. A. (2021). Lottery-based incentive in Ohio and COVID-19 vaccination rates. *JAMA*, 326, 766-767.

³ Chang, T., Jacobson, M., Shah, M., Pramanik, R., & Shah, S. B. (2021). Financial incentives and other nudges do not increase COVID-19 vaccinations among the vaccine hesitant. National Bureau of Economic Research, DOI 10.3386/w29403

⁴ Sandra Crouse Quinn, Karen M Hilyard, Amelia M Jamison, Ji An, Gregory R Hancock, Donald Musa, Vicki S Freimuth, The influence of social norms on flu vaccination among African American and White adults, *Health Education Research*, Volume 32, Issue 6, December 2017, Pages 473–486, <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyx070>

⁵ Bronchetti, Erin Todd & Huffman, David B. & Magenheim, Ellen, 2015. "Attention, intentions, and follow-through in preventive health behavior: Field experimental evidence on flu vaccination," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, Elsevier, vol. 116(C), pages 270-291.

		<p>suggests that maximizing ease of access countervails vaccine hesitancy.⁶</p> <p>Possible strategies to ease access include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility in duty schedule to allow Service members get a booster at the immunization clinic. • Block scheduling for units to have scheduled appointments at immunization clinic. • Mobile immunization unit providing booster clinic at squadron work site. • Provide transportation from duty site to vaccination clinic.
3	<p><i>Tackling Misinformation</i></p>	<p>Informational videos on safety and COVID-19 disease increased vaccination intentions 5-8.6% but did not increase completed vaccinations.³ Combating misinformation along with the above measures is more likely to increase vaccination intentions and follow through.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all messages are accurate, transparent and truthful. • Avoid exaggerating the benefits or minimizing the risks of vaccination; be clear that the vaccine is not an instant fix or a “silver bullet”. • Work with local MTF for to combat misinformation. Additional resources below.

USEFUL LINKS:

DHA and DAF Resources:

- DoD [COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit](#)
- DAF [COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#)

HHS We Can Do This Campaign: An initiative to increase confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and reinforce basic prevention measures

- [Communicating With a General Audience About COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters](#)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Myths and Facts About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

⁶ Mayer, B., Helm, S., Heinz, E., Barnett, M., & Arora, M. (2022). Doubt in store: vaccine hesitancy among grocery workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10865-021-00276-0>

