

# The Future of Health Equity: Lessons from Arkansas

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# Overview

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- The Arkansas Context
- Pandemic Activities
- Lessons Learned
- Implications for Addressing Health Equity

# The Arkansas Context

- 47<sup>th</sup> overall in Health Outcomes
- Within the state, data shows racial disparities in premature death overall and chronic disease morbidity and mortality
- Complex interaction of historical, social, environmental, socioeconomic and healthcare system factors



Source: America's Health Rankings, United Health Foundation <https://assets.americashealthrankings.org/app/uploads/annual20-rev-complete.pdf>

# ABCBS and Social Determinants of Health

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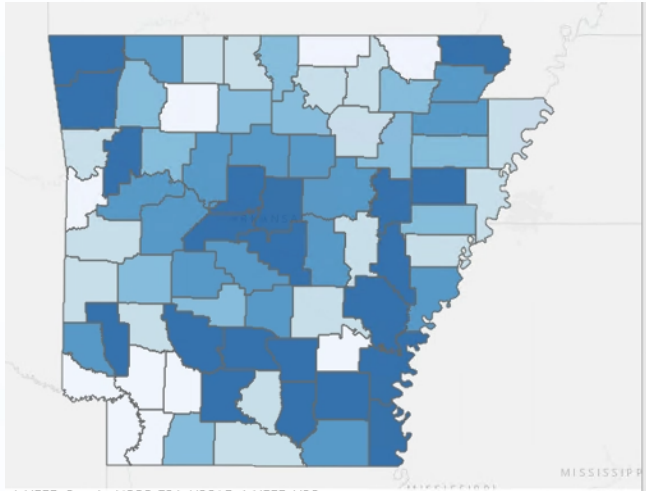
- Community-based case management
- Social workers on the medical management teams
- Incorporating social determinants of health measures into population risk stratification
- Blue & You Foundation

# The Arkansas Context

- As in the nation as whole, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact in communities of color
  - Increased exposure
  - Increased presence of chronic diseases
  - Lack of access to resources:
    - Information
    - Technology
    - Testing
    - Healthcare access
    - PPE
    - Quality Healthcare
- Job loss, homelessness or near homelessness, evictions, incarceration

# Current Vaccine Administration

- 36% of the population age 16+ is fully vaccinated
- Varies by geography and race



Race/Ethnicity	Population %	Vaccination Administration %
White	72.4%	73.4%
Black	15.3%	11.3%
Hispanic	7.8%	5.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	.29%	.2%
American Indian/Alaskan	.68%	.3%
Asian	1.5%	1.8%

Source Arkansas Department of Health 5-16-2021

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c2ef4a4fcbe5458fbf2e48a21e4fece9>

# Vaccinate The Natural State (VTNS)

- **Business-to-Business Engagement**
  - Reaching out to employers in the state to help them prepare to get employees vaccinated
- **Community Engagement**
  - Community-based organizations and trusted partners working in communities
  - Emphasis on rural, underserved communities

# Vaccinate the Natural State

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- General and Targeted Media Campaigns
- Supporting Mass Vaccination clinics
- Deploying ABCBS Volunteers
- Responding to Local Community Needs:
  - Vaccine awareness
  - Coordination and collaboration with organizations – academic, government and CBOs
  - Funding mobile units
  - Data analysis and support



# Key issues in the Arkansas Delta

- The faith community has historically played an important role in both spiritual and physical health of the community
- This is especially true in minority communities, which are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
- Faith leaders throughout the state were invited to participate in an interview to capture both quantitative and qualitative data regarding their thoughts and experiences about COVID-19

Source: -- Preliminary Report -- Arkansas FAITH Leaders and COVID-19 March 3, 2021. Arkansas Faith Network.

# Key issues in the Arkansas Delta

- Barriers identified include:
  - Lack of transportation
  - Lack of technology
  - Lack of capacity to use technology
  - Lack of information about the vaccines
  - History of mistreatment of African Americans in government funded research and in the current healthcare system
  - Concern the vaccines were developed too quickly, potential short- and long-term side effects from the vaccine, and uncertainty of the length of efficacy of the vaccine
  - The role of systemic racism
- Expertise of their members in the medical field

# Delta Initiative

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- **Fostering Partnerships**

- Arkansas Faith Network
- Arkansas Department of Health, Office of Faith-Based Outreach
- Arkansas Medical Dental and Pharmaceutical Association

- **Activities**

- “Concierge Service” for faith leaders in rural and communities of color
- Outreach to faith leaders in local, rural communities: information, education, access to resources, navigation and access to vaccines in the local community
- Utilizing health educators and community health workers
- Speaker’s Bureau of minority healthcare providers

# The Future of Health Equity

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- Data collection and analysis:
  - Racial/ethnic groups
  - Gender
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Rural-urban residence, geographic region
  - Disability status
  - Social Determinants of Health
  - Social Vulnerability Index
- Healthcare system needs to address Health Equity as a component of quality

# The Future of Health Equity

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- **Partnerships**
  - Public/private
  - Cross sector
- **Link to community social services and resources in healthcare transformation**
  - Community health workers (CHWs)
- **Hesitancy and mistrust must be addressed**
  - Community concerns about systematic/structural racism
  - Collective action to improve health opportunities in communities of color

# Lessons Learned

**Data driven, evidence-based approaches**

**Public/private partnerships and engaging impacted communities**

**Addressing Social Determinants of Health and historical systems of disadvantage through partnerships**

**Build community and organizational capacity for future population health improvements**



**THANK YOU**