

How to Make the COVID-19 Vaccine More Inclusive of People with ID

THE PROBLEM

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic began, people with intellectual disabilities (ID) were facing enormous disparities in health care systems. Inequity, injustice and inconsistent policies led to glaring gaps in health care, social exclusion and isolation in the community and at home. These disparities were horrifying enough and the pandemic has only deepened the divide.

Across the board, **people with ID are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic** in healthcare, especially in terms of access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

PEOPLE WITH ID ARE DYING AT ALARMING RATES



People with ID already **die 16-20 years earlier** than the general population due to preventable illness.

People with ID are almost **6x** more likely to die from COVID-19

People with ID who live in congregate settings are dying at even higher rates due to COVID-19 because of challenges with social distancing.



5 WAYS TO MAKE THE COVID-19 VACCINE MORE EQUITABLE FOR PEOPLE WITH ID

- 1 PRIORITIZE PEOPLE WITH ID FOR VACCINES:** Advocate for people with ID to be on the CDC's list of people at risk for severe COVID-19 illness. The people on that list get priority access to COVID-19 vaccines. People with ID are not on that list. **Join Special Olympics' advocacy efforts and be a part of their VoterVoice campaign! Visit www.specialolympics.org to learn more!**
- 2 EDUCATE PEOPLE WITH ID AND THEIR CAREGIVERS:** Develop COVID-19 vaccine education resources that respond to specific concerns and share them in multiple accessible formats to reduce vaccine hesitancy and create demand. **Visit www.specialolympics.org and use their accessible education materials!**
- 3 MAKE VACCINE DISTRIBUTION INCLUSIVE:** Design COVID-19 vaccine scheduling and delivery sites to be accessible to people with ID. Special Olympics has decades of experience hosting low-barrier, high-quality mobile health experiences through the Healthy Athletes program. **Partner with Special Olympics to host a vaccination event targeting people with ID!**
- 4 TRAIN HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS:** Require health care providers, who give vaccines, to complete training about treating people with ID. **Share the useful training resources at learn.specialolympics.org or contact COVID@specialolympics.org to learn more about how you and Special Olympics can work together to increase the reach of this training.**
- 5 GATHER DATA:** Encourage health systems to gather information about the number of people with ID who receive the COVID-19 vaccine. **Continue to raise awareness and advocate for those with disabilities!**