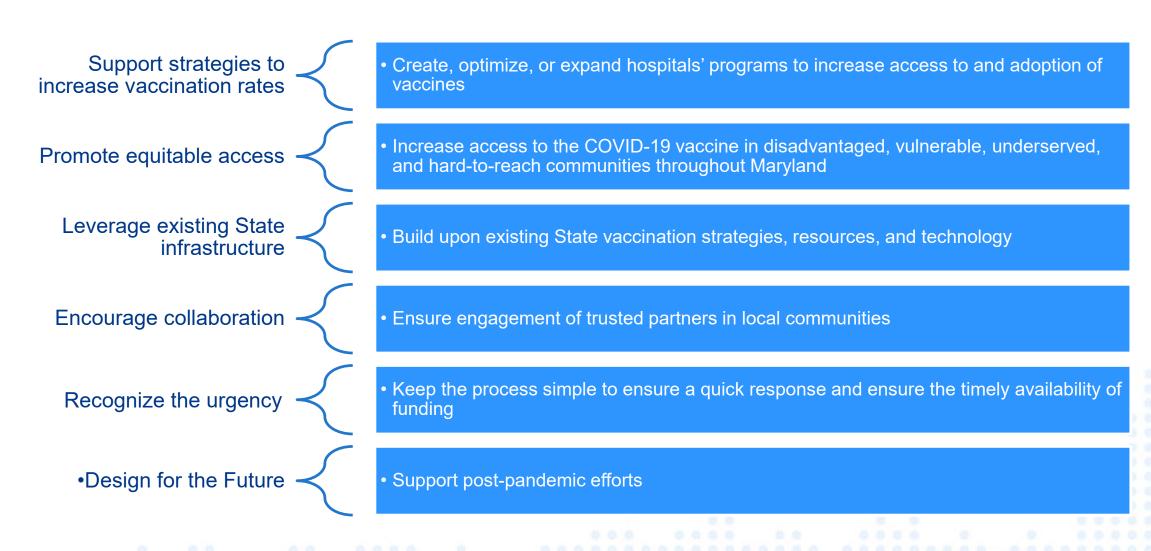# COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program

COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program

- Maryland seeks to increase the statewide COVID-19 vaccination rate, particularly for underserved and vulnerable populations

- Despite an unprecedented statewide effort to vaccinate all Marylanders, key challenges persist and threaten our ability to achieve herd immunity.
  - Vaccine supply chain issues that prevent the State from meeting consumer demand
  - Vaccine registration processes that are difficult for consumers to navigate
  - Mass Vaccination Sites that are inaccessible for large portions of the State
  - Communities of color are disproportionately affected by these issues which exacerbates disparities

- To support the State's effort to increase vaccination rates, staff recommends establishing a new "COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program" that would run through the end of FY2022.

- The COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program is intended to provide short-term funding to hospitals in order to allow for the optimization/expansion of their community-based vaccine dissemination strategies in areas with vaccine rates lower than the State average.

Program Guiding Principles

Support strategies to increase vaccination rates
- Create, optimize, or expand hospitals' programs to increase access to and adoption of vaccines

Promote equitable access
- Increase access to the COVID-19 vaccine in disadvantaged, vulnerable, underserved, and hard-to-reach communities throughout Maryland

Leverage existing State infrastructure
- Build upon existing State vaccination strategies, resources, and technology

Encourage collaboration
- Ensure engagement of trusted partners in local communities

Recognize the urgency
- Keep the process simple to ensure a quick response and ensure the timely availability of funding

•Design for the Future
- Support post-pandemic efforts

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Program Overview

- Fund the program with the remainder of the set aside funds that the Commission allowed in the FY21 update factor ($12M)
  - Amended rate orders would be issued for FY2021 or as part of the FY2022 update factor depending on timing of awards
- Any acute care hospital that is under HSCRC rate-setting authority will be eligible to apply
  - A single hospital may submit an application, or multiple hospitals may jointly apply under a single application
- Hospitals will be encouraged to establish partnerships with local health departments, non-profits, faith-based entities and/or other community-based organizations
  - The application will require hospitals to explain the strategy for engagement of trusted community partners

Targeting High Need Populations

- Hospitals must volunteer for zip codes that have been identified by the Vaccination Equity Task Force (VETF) or Local Health Departments as disadvantaged, underserved, vulnerable, and/or hard-to-reach areas.

- Awards will be made to hospitals that agree to focus on the below targeting strategies:

  - **Target Strategy 1: Priority Area Zip Codes (zip codes defined by the VETF)**

    - Hospitals select zip codes that the VETF has identified as priority

  - **Target Strategy 2: Additional Zip Codes (justification required in application)**

    - Hospitals apply for funding for alternative zip codes with an explanation of other special consideration populations that need to be targeted (disabled, home bound, homeless, etc.)

    - Hospitals must include a statement from the local health department confirming the vaccine targeting strategy and including data to verify the demographic/special needs of the zip code to be targeted

- The evaluation committee will give preference in scoring to hospitals that agree to Target Strategy 1.

Targeting Approach

- The program will be designed to avoid having multiple hospitals run programs in the same zip codes so that resources can be spread as widely as possible

- To prevent overlap of hospitals:

  - Hospitals may opt to partner on vaccination strategies in shared zip codes OR
  - The HSCRC will use its preferred assignment of zip codes to assign hospitals based on a combination of "Primary Service Area Plus" and hospitals with the greatest share of ECMADS.

Impact Measurement & Reporting

- Hospitals participating in the funding program will be required to provide data on their vaccination activities through ImmunNet, CRISP, and/or other HSCRC reporting.

- Data will be collected on the following:
  - Type of vaccination events
  - # of vaccination events
  - Total # of patients vaccinated (1st dose, 2nd dose, single dose)
  - # of patients vaccinated by Race/Ethnicity/Age/Gender Identity/Zip

- Impact of the funding program will be measured based on the following areas that will be tracked:
  - # of Vaccines Applied during reporting period
  - Vaccination Rate by zip code (comparison to pre-program baseline)
  - Vaccination Rate by race, ethnicity, age (comparison to pre-program baseline)

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Request for Application (RFA) Process

- HSCRC will require hospitals to submit applications to be eligible for funding
  - Staff will develop a standard application template for hospitals to complete
  - RFA will be made public on March 25th
  - Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until $12M in funding is fully awarded
  - Priority consideration will be given to applications received by April 8th

- Evaluation criteria will include consideration of the following elements of each application:
  - Community Collaboration Model
  - Targeting Approach
  - Impact Potential
  - Budget for COVID-related activities
  - Implementation Plan

- The HSCRC staff will form an unbiased evaluation committee including a commissioner appointed by the HSCRC Chairman.

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Recommendation Summary

- Establish a new COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program that will run through FY2022

- Allocate the remainder of the FY 2021 set aside to fund the vaccination program for FY2021-FY2022

- Issue an RFA to competitively bid funds

- Delegate authority to HSCRC Staff to:
    - Develop the COVID-19 Community Vaccination Funding Program RFA
    - Publish the RFA
    - Evaluate applications submitted for funding
    - Make award determinations up to the approved limit of $12M

- HSCRC staff will work with one or more Commissioners during the process

Thank You!

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