

Addressing COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among healthcare workers: policy brief, May 2022

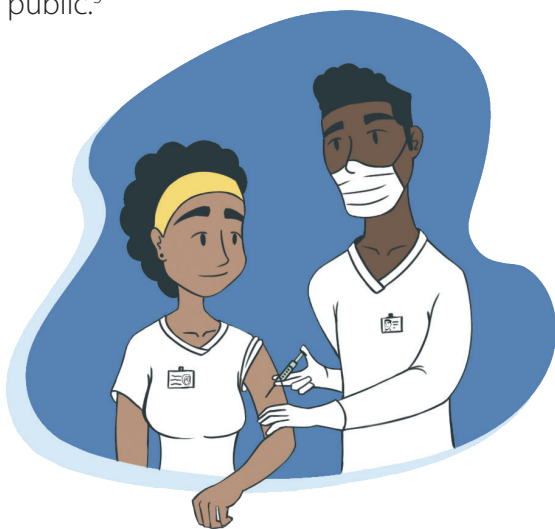
Introduction

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The 39th meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) in November 2020 mandated the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in collaboration with PAHO to establish a Human Resources for Health Action Task Force (HRH-ATF) to advise and monitor the development of public policy in the countries and territories of the Caribbean, recognising the critical role of a resilient health workforce to local, national, and regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the global challenges related to the health workforce labour market.^{1,2}

The launch of the HRH-ATF on April 20, 2021 brought forward concerted regional action to strengthening HRH relevant to the current international health context.

Healthcare workers represent a fundamental element of national and regional response to COVID-19. HCW play a vital role in supporting COVID-19 vaccination efforts to the wider public especially given that they are cited as one of the “most trusted source of information on vaccination.” At the same time HCW are vulnerable to the same set of drivers related to vaccine acceptance as the general public.³



A PAHO led study identified^{3,4}:

- COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among healthcare workers (HCW) in the Caribbean was 23%.
- Only 4% of all participants stated an intention to refuse a COVID-19 vaccine altogether (8% male vs. 3% female).
- COVID-19 vaccine acceptance differs among various categories and specialties of HCW, being higher among nurses (34%) than physicians, and among younger age groups.
- COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy varies among the vaccines available and is influenced by local, regional, and global events. It also varies with time.
- 48% of respondents stated the country of manufacture of a COVID-19 vaccine shaped their opinion on a COVID-19 vaccine, and 47% of respondents agreed that development of COVID-19 vaccines may be rushed, or that the vaccines have not been thoroughly tested.
- 30% of respondents agreed that they do not yet know enough about the vaccine to decide whether to get vaccinated or not.
- 30% of respondents reported that information they have seen on social media shaped their opinion of a COVID-19 vaccine.

1 Pan American Health Organization. Human Resources for Health Action Task Force launched in the Caribbean - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization [Internet]. [cited 2021 Nov 15]. Available from: <https://www.paho.org/en/news/25-5-2021-human-resources-health-action-task-force-launched-caribbean>

2 Liu JX, Goryakin Y, Maeda A, Bruckner T, Scheffler R. Global Health Workforce Labor Market Projections for 2030. Hum Resour Health [Internet]. 2017 Feb 3 [cited 2021 Nov 8];15(1):1–12. Available from: <https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-017-0187-2>

3 PAHO. Concerns, Attitudes, and Intended Practices of Healthcare Workers to COVID-19 Vaccination in the Caribbean. [Internet]. 2021. Available from: https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/54964/PAHOCPCCOVID-19210001_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

4 Puertas EB, Velandia-González M, Vulcanovic L, Bayley L, Broome K, Ortiz C., Rise N., Vera Antelo M., Rhoda DA. Concerns, attitudes, and intended practices of Caribbean healthcare workers concerning COVID-19 Vaccination: A cross sectional study. The Lancet Regional Health - Americas, Volume 9, 2022, 100193, ISSN 2667-193X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lana.2022.100193>.