

**Put Me In COACH, I'm
Ready To Play:
Creating Stability During
Unstable Times**

Connecticut's Mental Health Waiver Response
to the COVID 19 Pandemic

Presenters



Erin Leavitt-Smith,
Director of Long-
Term Services and
Supports, CT
Department of
Mental Health and
Addiction Services



Katie Daly, Mental
Health Waiver
Program Manager,
CT Department of
Mental Health
and Addiction
Services



Cindy Dubuque-Gallo,
Legislative Liaison, CT
Office of Health Strategy

PhD Candidate, University
of Connecticut School of
Social Work

Principal Investigator: Wendy Ulaszek
Associate Research Faculty
University of Connecticut School of Social Work

Co-Author: Harini Buch
Data Manager, University School of Social Work-
DMHAS Research Division

Why study the impact of interventions during the pandemic?

We wanted to see whether Mental Health Waiver (MHW) services could support the individuals we serve during the unstable time of the pandemic years, and beyond, by delivering factual information about COVID safety and making decisions regarding whether to get vaccinated.

Moreover, we wanted to continue to monitor health and safety of participants during a time when there were fewer face to face contacts.

We offered interventions, including the COACH (COVID 19 Assistance for Community Health) service that was established in CT, which included an actual Coach, to provide pandemic-related information and resources for reducing isolation to older adults with mental illness.



Think, Pair, Share

What professional challenges did you face during the pandemic?



Community Support Program (CSP) workers provided participants with assistance scheduling vaccination appointments and transportation to vaccine clinics as needed.

Initial and annual clinical assessments were done virtually or by phone in order to reduce the possibility of exposure, or when conducting in-person was not safe.

If a participant tested positive in-home services were reduced to phone support to ensure safety, monitor symptoms, and provide access to basic needs services. Groceries or other necessities were delivered to doorsteps, etc.

Waiver providers offered more assistive technology options for accessing telehealth.

COVID 19 Pandemic Response



COACHes were available online, by phone, and in-person.

During the early days of quarantine, these introductory videos were one way they connected with the community and spread health information and resources.

COACH

COVID 19 ASSISTANCE FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH

Vaccination Survey

With the help of The University of Connecticut (UConn)'s Research Department, an electronic survey (powered by Qualtrics) was developed to track vaccination status of all waiver recipients.

Waiver clinicians conducted surveys during in-person and during telephonic meetings and entered the data using a simple survey link. Individuals who wanted more information in order to decide whether the vaccine was right for them were referred to a COACH (COVID-19 Assistance for Community Health) for additional phone support.

https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eaqLgAHQWZJOJPo

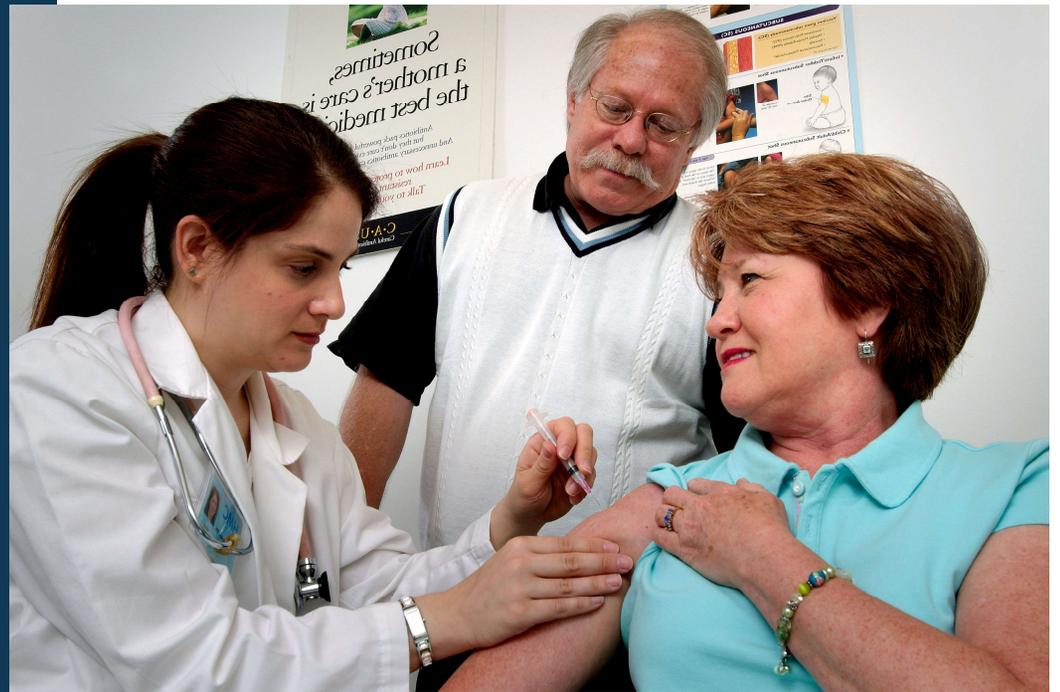


COVID-19 Vaccine Survey Results

Sample (n=381)

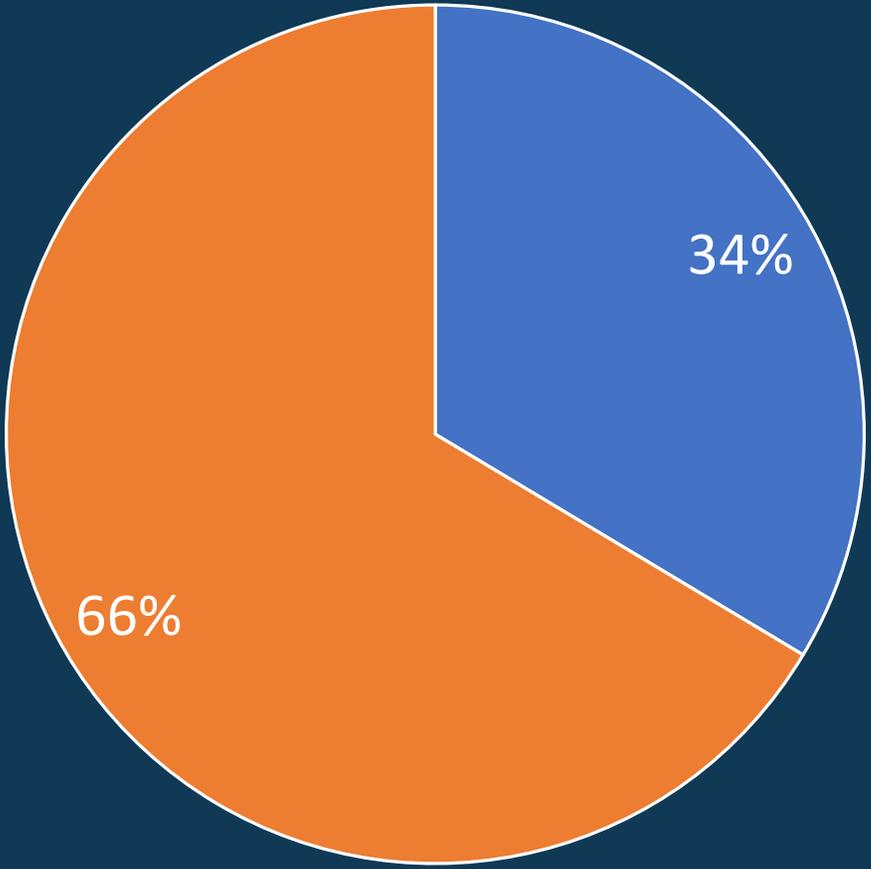
Survey Results (Quantitative)

Survey Results (Qualitative)



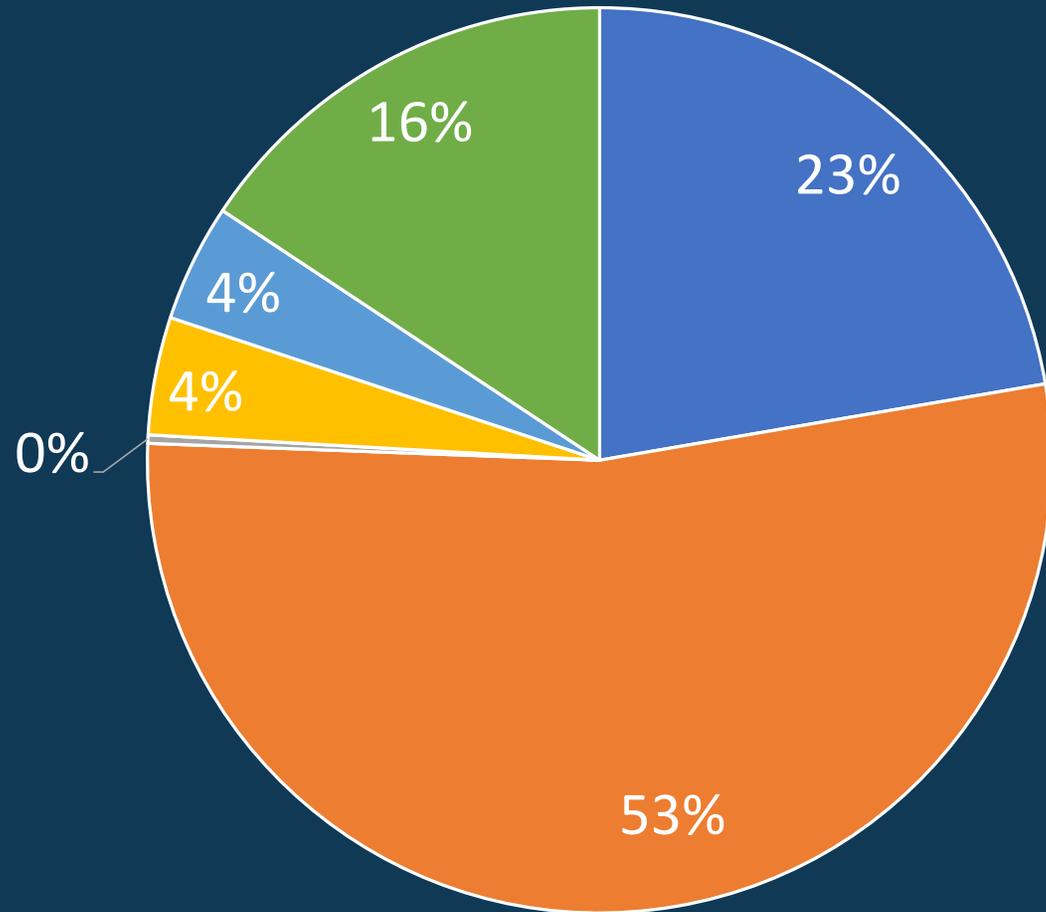
Participant Gender

- Male
- Female



Participant Race

- African American
- White
- Asian
- Multiracial
- Other
- Missing/Refused

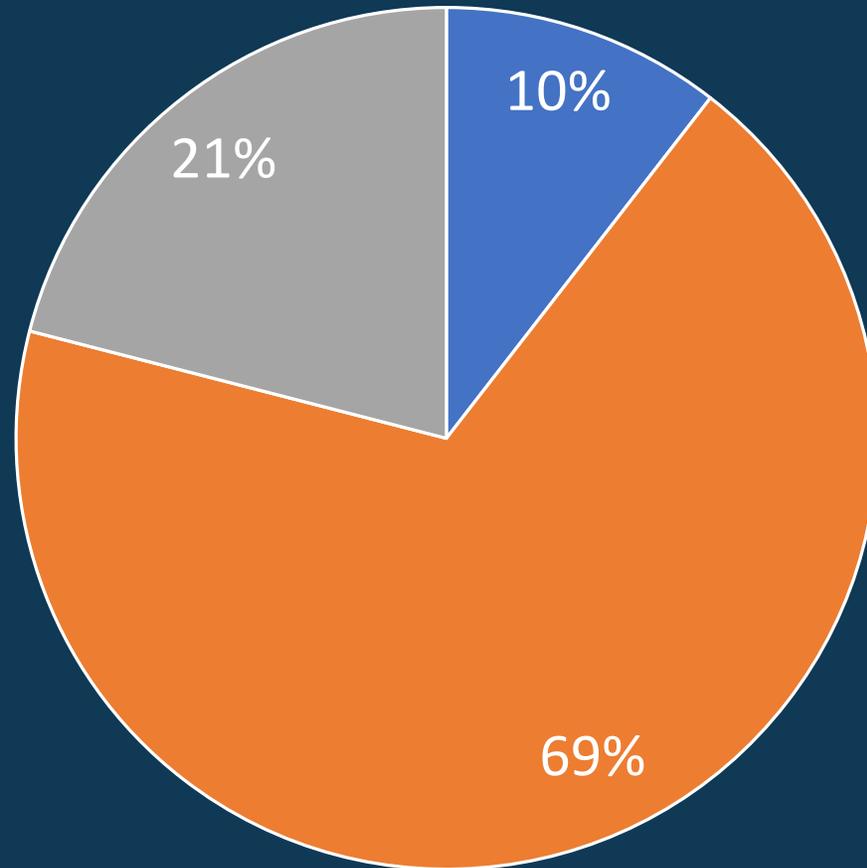


Slide 10

A0 Change refused to "declined to respond"
Author, 2023-07-28T16:17:59.008

Participant Ethnicity

- Hispanic/Latine
- Non-Hispanic
- Missing/Refused





Participant Summary

Participants with matching demographic data, predominantly:

- Female (66.4%)
- White (63.2%)
- Non-Hispanic (86.7%)

Audience Poll

What percentage of Mental Health Waiver participants do you think reported receiving any dose of the vaccine?

SHOW OF HANDS

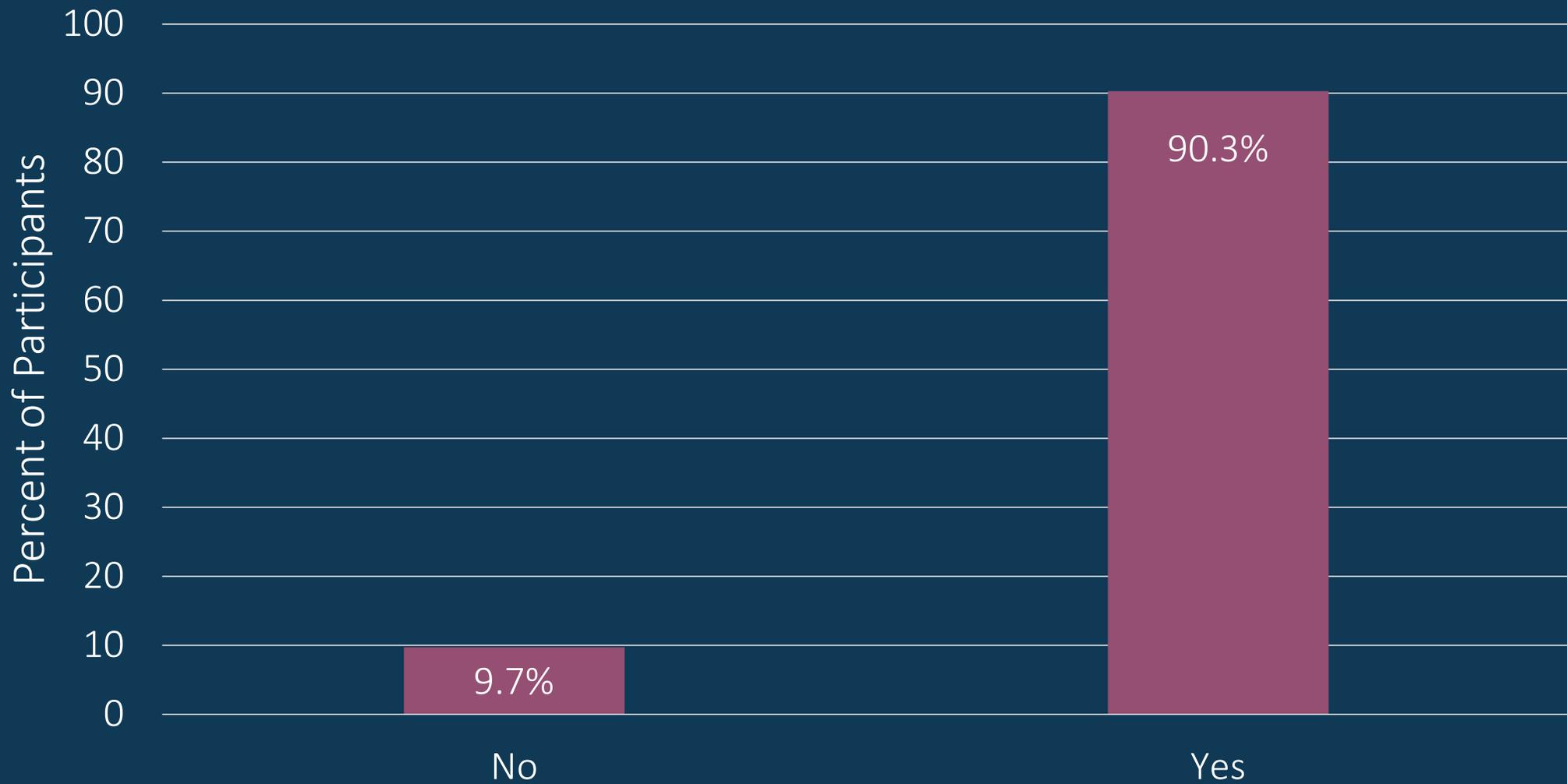
What percentage of Mental Health Waiver participants do you think reported receiving any dose of the vaccine?

A. 64%

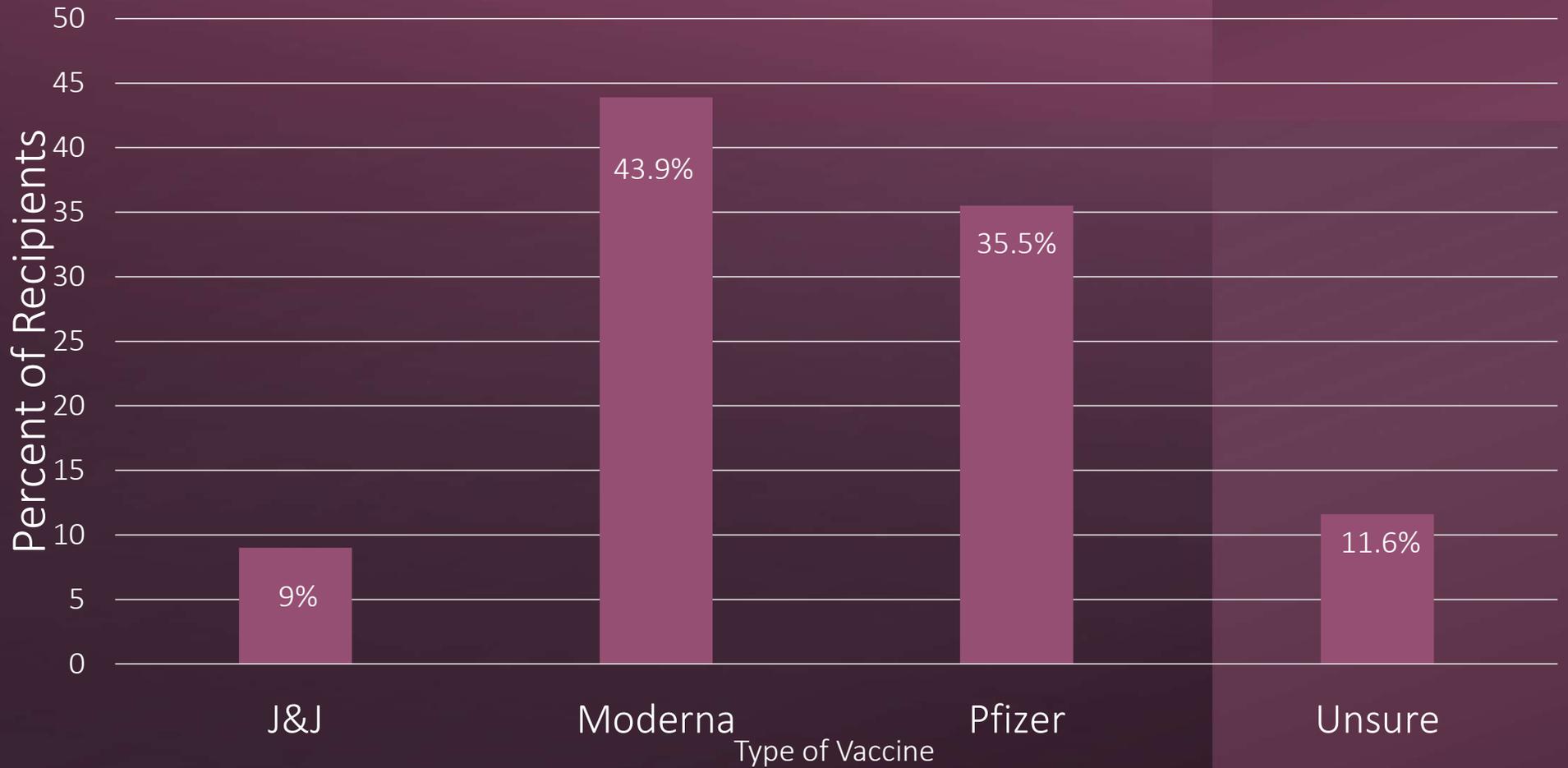
B. 78%

C. 90%

Received COVID-19 Vaccine (n=381)



Which Vaccine Did You Receive? (n=344)



Audience Poll

What percentage of Mental Health Waiver participants do you think reported being fully vaccinated?

SHOW OF HANDS

What percentage of Mental Health Waiver participants do you think reported being fully vaccinated?

A. 52%

B. 88%

C. 92%

If Applicable, Received Second Dose (n=311)

	n	%
Yes	303	97.4
No	7	2.3
Unsure	1	0.3
Total	311	100

Finding: 87.7% are considered fully vaccinated* (334/381)

*those who have received all doses within the primary series of vaccinations (303 2nd dose plus 31 J&J = 334)



COVID-19 Vaccination Rates Summary

- 90.3% (n=344) of respondents received at least one dose of the vaccine
- Most received Moderna (43.9%), followed by Pfizer (35.5%) then Johnson & Johnson (9%)
- 9.7% (n=37) did not receive a COVID-19 vaccine
- 97.4% of eligible respondents received the second dose
- 87.7% are considered fully vaccinated* (334/381)

Think, Pair, Share

What do you think were the biggest motivators for getting vaccinated and why?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE:

What do you think were the biggest motivators for getting vaccinated and why?

- A. Friends and family getting the vaccine
- B. Other
- C. Already had COVID-19, don't want it again
- D. Concerned about the risk of getting COVID-19
- E. Family and friends wanted me to get vaccinated

What do you think were the biggest motivators for getting vaccinated?* (n=287)

	n	%
Concerned about the risk of getting COVID-19	262	76.2
Family and friends wanted me to get vaccinated	70	20.3
Friends and family getting the vaccine	65	17.1
Other	53	15.4
Already had COVID-19, don't want it again	18	5.2

*Participants could select more than one answer choice

“Other” reasons that led to your decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine*

- Doctor recommended and health risks (n=20, 51%)
- Protect themselves and others (n=9, 23%)
- Fearful or worried about getting COVID-19 (n=4, 10%)
- Job requirement (n=2, 5%)
- Received an incentive (n=2, 5%)
- “Becoming a stronger virus” (n=1, 2.5%)
- Considering traveling out of the country (n=1, 2.5%)

“Better safe than sorry.”

“Never occurred to me to not get it.”

*There were 39 qualitative responses.

Think, Pair, Share

What do you think were the biggest deterrents and why?

THINK, PAIR, SHARE:

What do you think were the biggest deterrents and why?

- A. Wants to wait and see
- B. Doesn't trust institutions making or distributing the vaccine
- C. Already had COVID and does not feel they need it
- D. Doesn't trust the vaccine
- E. Concerned about the side effects
- F. Haven't had a chance to get it
- G. Other

What are some factors that led to your decision to NOT get the COVID-19 vaccine? Participants could select more than one answer choice	n	%
Doesn't trust the vaccine	13	33.3
Concerned about the side effects	7	17.9
Doesn't trust institutions making or distributing the vaccine	4	10.3
Doesn't see COVID-19 as a threat	3	7.7
Wants to wait and see	3	7.7
Haven't had a chance to get it	3	7.7
Already had COVID and does not feel they need it	1	2.6
Other (outlined below)	17	43.6
Did not provide a reason per clinician	5/17	29.4
Medically advised not to receive vaccine/medical concern	5/17	29.4
Skeptical of the vaccine/wants more information	4/17	23.5
Decided doesn't want it (personal or family decision)	2/17	11.7
Planning to schedule	1/17	5.8

Responding to Data

Increased Assistive Technology options for Telehealth

Waiver recipients can receive a refurbished laptop through Assistive Technology service if clinical need is demonstrated

Waiver recipients can receive CLARIS Medical Tablet with medical monitoring



Vaccine Survey Extended

A second round of the vaccine survey was conducted through the end of 2022 to track number of waiver recipients receiving recommended boosters, and offer ongoing COACH support if requested.



Added Mental Health Counseling service

Waiver recipients can now receive in-home therapy from a licensed professional as part of their waiver services, if traditional outpatient settings or telehealth are not preferable/available.



Amendment to Waiver

Waiver Application was formally amended in 2023 to add verbiage allowing the face-to-face service requirement to be paused temporarily as needed in the event of another pandemic, epidemic, natural disaster, or in cases of contagious illness, apartment infestation, etc.



Future Uses

Survey Template



Microsoft Word
Document

[https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/
SV_eaqLgAHQWZJOJPo](https://uconn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eaqLgAHQWZJOJPo)

Model Across States

- Survey can be incorporated into initial and annual reassessments to provide real-time data of participant vaccination status (Influenza, COVID 19, Penumonia, Shingles, etc)
- Can track participation in preventative health initiatives (annual physical, mammogram, colonoscopy, eye exam, foot exam for diabetics, etc)

Contact with Questions



Erin Leavitt-Smith, MA, LPC

Director of Long term Services
and Supports

CT Department of Mental
Health and Addiction Services

Erin.Leavitt-Smith@ct.gov



Katie Daly, LCSW

Mental Health Waiver
Program Manager

CT Department of Mental
Health and Addiction Services

Katie.Daly@ct.gov



Cindy Dubuque-Gallo, LMSW, MAT

Legislative Liaison,
CT Office of Health Strategy

Doctoral Candidate, UCONN SSW

Cindy.Dubuque-Gallo@uconn.edu



Wendy Ulaszek, PhD

Associate Research Faculty

University of Connecticut
School of Social Work

wendy.ulaszek@uconn.edu