



COVID-19 Vaccination Newcomer Outreach: Service Provider Survey Results Summary

May 13, 2021

To help Canada's efforts with the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines to Canada's newcomers, AMSSA has conducted a survey on behalf of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to seek settlement service provider input and advice.

AMSSA surveyed IRCC-funded agencies, aiming to gain recommendations on how to improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake among newcomers, gather resources to share among organizations, and compile an inventory of initiatives organizations have undertaken to encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake, dispel myths, reduce vaccine hesitancy, and identify partnerships in the community related to these initiatives.

The survey was open from Friday April 30th, 2021 to Friday May 7th, 2021. A total of 23 complete responses were gathered from service provider agency representatives.

The survey included three open ended questions:

- Please briefly describe your recommendations to improve COVID-19 vaccine uptake among newcomers.
- If you have good tools or resources to share with other organizations, please share them with your umbrella organization.
- Please briefly describe initiatives your organization has undertaken to encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake, dispel myths, and reduce vaccine hesitancy. If applicable, identify partnerships and resources in place to support them.

Below are the key theme areas and findings based on the survey results.

1. Recommendations for improving COVID-19 vaccine uptake

Service providers were asked an open question about their recommendations for improving COVID-19 vaccine uptake among newcomers.

To improve vaccine uptake, many respondents emphasized the importance of **multilingual communication about vaccine benefits, common myths, possible side effects and supports.**

- *More media adverts calling attention to all newcomers of the benefits of getting vaccinated.*
- *Public awareness about safety, effectiveness and the results of not getting vaccinated. I believe the BC Government has done this very well including pushing out materials in multiple languages.*
- *Increase awareness about myths and facts about COVID-19 Vaccine. This information should be made available in different languages.*
- *Continue to relay information to clients.*
- *Emphasis on how it is safe and how it saves lives, how it will enable us to return to a new normal, is what getting a vaccine represents.*
- *More information about vaccines and opportunities for newcomers to ask questions and voice concerns or counter misinformation*
- *Clear information on possible side effect(s).*
- *Rather than repeating the mantra that all vaccines are safe, address the concerns and provide tangible examples of how one will be supported should one happen to have a negative reaction.*

Many also drew special attention to the **importance of multilingual communication, or resources that communicate simple information.**

- *All material (brochure, posts, posters, videos) must be available in several languages.*
- *Multilingual information everywhere - online but also posters that could be downloaded and printed for distribution in communities. A lot of newcomers are not surfing English websites, and don't read English newspapers or posters. The multilingual posters should have large enough fonts to catch their eye when passing a notice board. They should also refer to multilingual information online where they could read more about side effects and myth-buster info, etc. The*

posters can't have too much text without getting into literacy issues but they could refer to websites or leaflets being available in different languages, which could also be available for us to download, print, and distribute also for those who are not online.

- The online booking forms and registrations need to be provided in other languages, along with consent forms.*
- Develop a campaign in a variety of languages ads in social media and television.*
- Providing on-line registration details and support in various languages.*
- Provide consistent clear and direct COVID-19 information in simple English/French and in clients' first language through trusted sources, e.g. government health officer, family doctors, and settlement workers quoting the source of information.*
- More translated materials are needed to improve on the information sent out for COVID-19 vaccination roll-outs. Hoping there has been promotional materials about the vaccine roll-out in different languages to respective ethnic/linguistic media outlets (thinking radio, tv, print, as well as social media). More information needs to be provided to everyone in different languages to ensure clear communication is being disseminated.*
- Simplified English language, clear directions to vaccination clinics.*
- First language information in less common languages (eg Tigrigna), infographics.*
- Advertise on cultural radio stations and TV shows. Have translated materials posted across the region and mailed in areas with lots of non-English speaking newcomers and low uptake of vaccines. Provide funding for settlement services and neighbourhood houses to accompany people with language barriers to appointments.*

Service providers identified **a need to help newcomers understand the vaccine process, specifically registering and booking appointments, the first and second shot, and protocols after receiving the initial dose.**

- Provide better info of available numbers of empty spots and assisting newcomers to book appointments*
- Show videos and share information about the vaccination process.*
- The process should be very simple - some newcomers might not know the process of registrations. Just booking should be good enough.*

- *There is confusion from our clients about the booster vaccine shot, who provides the appointment or how do clients ensure they will receive the booster by the 16 week mark, instructions were not clearly provided.*
- *Another communication piece is needed for those that have been vaccinated about continuing to follow protocols; we have had clients who have received their first vaccine shot, being resistant to wearing a mask as they feel protected. I believe information from the US has caused confusion and clients are not sure if they still need to follow protocol after having the vaccine.*
- *Distinction between registration and appointment times.*

In addition to recommending multilingual communication, service providers recommended **using multiple communications channels, including targeted efforts to reach different groups.**

- *Use social media and informal channels, first language to get information out. Newcomers we are working with are getting more information from social circles than from government sources.*
- *As most immigrants have a doctor, or have seen one, perhaps doctor's offices should be sending their patients information in the language used during visits with their healthcare provider. LINC instructors could be sent information in different languages that they could share with their students.*
- *Targeted efforts to reach newly arrived Government Assisted Refugees and Privately Sponsored Refugees, as well as individuals with temporary / precarious / no legal status.*
- *Many newcomers are part of faith groups - promoting to faith groups may help - small & rural centers may not have bus systems and clients may need transportation -- or mobile services - poster information in various languages that could be emailed or posted on social media - clinics where you do not have to register - line up and first come, first serve*
- *Host vaccination clinics at settlement organizations for their clients. This is a safe space where culturally appropriate and translated services are available. Funding to pay for current settlement staff to act as community ambassadors for their organization's clients and wider community. These settlement workers can support with distributing information and registration/booking drives.*

One service provider suggested there is a need to **learn more about newcomer perceptions of vaccines.**

- *Survey to those using newcomer services to ask about perceptions of vaccine and for newcomers to identify their own needs for education*

Finally, a service provider notes that newcomers **need better access to vaccine sites**.

- *Opportunities for vaccine clinics in neighbourhoods (for example in a local school gym) - it's hard for many clients that don't drive to get to centralized vaccine sites.*

2. Identifying tools and resources

In an open question, service providers were asked to share any tools or resources that they found useful in communicating COVID-19 vaccine information to newcomers.

Many service providers indicated **that sharing external or partner resources with their clients** has been very helpful.

- *Vancouver Coastal Health has sent some great translated COVID-19 and vaccination information that is being shared with participants.*
- *We have shared all materials from Provincial and Federal government. These have been useful.*
- *We have been drawing on information and resources from Ministry of Health, Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure information is accurate.*
- *AMSSA sent out information on "Pop-up" Clinics and townhalls in various languages – great idea. Fraser Health provided transportation for community.*
- *We don't have clear tools or resources. We work closely with Division of Family Practices and Doctors to provide support on Vaccine hotline and DocTalk.*
- *We are already sharing between all organizations and with umbrella organizations.*
- *Fraser Health has done a wonderful job at providing us translated resources/graphics that we've been sending to clients. They have partnered with us to host vaccine webinars.*

Service providers also indicated that **connecting with newcomers directly via email, phone, or social media** has remained important.

- *Our best practice has been to reach out as many clients as possible through email. We also reached out to vulnerable clients over the phone.*
- *We probably do what others do - sharing the latest info we have through social media, WhatsApp group, mailing lists*
- *We've mainly been sending plain-language emails summarizing news releases (such as when a new age group is able to register) and providing contact information.*
- *Multi-lingual staff, our website, social media, newsletters*

One service provider reported that they **created a dedicated support contact to communicate important information.**

- *We have a dedicated Manager, COVID-19 Support that is able to be the point of contact for public health and staff. This position is able to gather resources, streamline communications, and answer staff/client questions.*

In addition to sharing external resources, some service providers **created and shared resources of their own.**

- *We created simple posters we share with our clients and on facebook. LINC is including the topic in their course plan, and Community Connections invited well respected Newcomers in our community to do an info session on zoom early June.*

3. Initiatives to encourage COVID-19 vaccine uptake, dispel myths, and reduce vaccine hesitancy.

A final open question asked service providers to describe initiatives their organization has undertaken, and to identify any applicable partnerships and resources in place that support those initiatives.

Many service providers reported **creating and/or sharing awareness-raising resources.**

- *Posters sent to client list via newsletter, social media posts, included in LINC as part of the course plan and Community Connections zoom workshops*
- *We share information from our local Divisions of Family Practice in org-wide emails as well as on our social media. We were able to offer early vaccines to our staff through a partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, as we have so*

many frontline workers. We encourage all clients to review posters and other print information to help them feel comfortable with the vaccine.

- We actively participate and promote initiatives by Fraser Health (eg DocTalks), provide workshops in first language, etc.*
- Our organization is supporting staff and participants by providing information updates from reputable, government, public health sources that focus on encouraging vaccine uptake and dispelling myths/reduce vaccine hesitancy. We regularly share resources and other relevant updates from AMSSA and Public Health with staff and participants as needed.*
- We have shared Bonnie Henry and Adrian Dix as reputable health info sources since March 2020. We have shared the ways to register and book appts for vaccines with all clients.*
- We don't have clear tools or resources. We work closely with Division of Family Practices and Doctors to provide support on Vaccine hotline and DocTalk. Burnaby PCN is a great partnership in outreach to newcomers and seniors in isolation.*
- We provide information about registration for vaccines but not more to encourage vaccine uptake*
- Distribute information via newsletters, weekly emails, updated district website information*

A significant number also described **creating workshops or offering dedicated instructions or support.**

- Our front-line staff have the relationships with the clients, so ensuring they have the necessary vaccination information to share with their clients. Putting posters up and on all our online platforms helps too.*
- Working with Fraser health to provide informational workshops to clients.*
- Settlement workers and LINC teachers are encouraging participants to get vaccinated and provide resources in first language.*
- Fraser Health has partnered with us to deliver vaccine webinars in a variety of languages. We've been promoting the new town halls that Fraser Health is putting on. Our social media team has been active and staying up-to-date with Fraser Health's toolkit for COVID-19/vaccination. Staff are being sent emails weekly, if not multiple times a week, from the Manager, on the latest COVID-19 support information. Connecting with clients casually has been helpful.*

- *Lots of 1:1 phone calls; sharing credited information, including translated VCH materials; support to seniors with booking and transportation; consistent encouragement through programs, newsletters, etc.*
- *Information sessions and fast and smooth information sharing with our clients and support to register and book their appointments online.*
- *We have provided up-to-date information on vaccine age roll-outs for registration to all our staff to ensure our staff have the most recent information to share with our clients. We have worked with the Ministry's Special Design team to give feedback on the gaps for vaccine roll-outs and what the needs of our client are.*

Finally, some service providers **incorporated new, important information into their regular programming or communications activities.**

- *We provide information in our regular newsletter and incorporate it into all our programs: English classes, Information and Orientation and any meetings*
- *Using resources from the BC government, teachers have made this a topic in their classes. They have also encouraged clients to have conversations with their families and friends outside of LINC classes.*
- *Workshop orientation, emails, texts, social media.*
- *Information is included in LINC as part of the course plan and Community Connections held zoom workshops on the topic.*

Service providers listed a number of resources they employed to support COVID-19 vaccine uptake among newcomers while collaborating with a variety of partners. They include:

Partner	Resource
Public Health Partners	<p>Vancouver Coastal Health (translated COVID-19 and vaccination information)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shareable Resources <p>Fraser Health Authority (toolkit for COVID-19/vaccination; partnered to create multi-lingual vaccine webinars, town halls and workshops)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Information • Shareable Resources

Service Provider Partners

LINC course material (organizations adjusted course materials to include COVID-19 vaccine information)

**Community Connections
(organizations delivered zoom info session on COVID-19 vaccine and rollout)**

AMSSA

- [COVID-19 Resources](#)

Government Partners

General materials from provincial and federal governments

Government of Canada:

- [Vaccines for COVID-19](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Awareness Resources – information and resources available in multiple languages](#)

Province of BC:

- [BC's response to COVID-19](#)
- [How to get vaccinated for COVID-19](#)

BC Ministry of Health

- [COVID-19 General Information & Updates](#)
- [COVID-19 Immunization Plan](#)
- [Rollout Plan with translated materials](#)

Other Partners

Vancouver Divisions of Family Practice, Doctors of BC (partnered to create a vaccine hotline; DocTalks)

- [FAQ & Resources](#)
- [DocTalks Podcast “Vaccine Hesitancy – Talking to patients about the Covid-19 vaccine”](#)

Additional Resources:

- [This is Our Shot Campaign](#) with translated FAQs (available in 27 languages)

- [Answers for patients](#)
- [Vaccine office toolkit](#)
- [COVID-19 latest news](#)

Burnaby Primary Care Network

- [COVID-19 Shareable Resources & Updates](#)