COVID-19 HMIS Data Usage

Background

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is working in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide guidance and planning support to homeless service systems with the goal of ensuring the equitable distribution of the vaccine to people experiencing homelessness and essential homeless services staff, based on community prioritization strategies. To achieve this goal, HUD sets out clear objectives, including calling on communities to:

1. Ensure the demographics of people experiencing homelessness who have been vaccinated mirrors the demographics of the population of people experiencing homelessness.
2. Strive for an overall vaccination rate of people experiencing homelessness that is comparable to or better than the vaccination rate of the general population.
3. Lead with a race equity lens by focusing on establishing vaccine confidence in historically marginalized communities, developing meaningful engagement strategies for these populations, and continuously examining our data to determine if we are making measurable improvements.
4. Create engagement strategies that focus on the intersection of race and other historically marginalized populations who are overrepresented in the population of people experiencing homelessness, such as people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTQ.

Introduction and Purpose

The Data Collection Options document released in February 2021 recommended COVID-19 vaccination screening and vaccine status data that communities could collect in, and extract from, their Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) or other data collection systems. The intent is that the recommended data ONLY be collected if a community intends to use it to analyze and improve vaccine distribution to people experiencing homelessness.

The upcoming series will provide real work scenarios constructed using a performance improvement strategy that is grounded in both equity and data. The Data Collection Options document will serve as a guide for the example data sets that will follow. Each entry will include guidance for:

- Analyzing data.
- Drawing sound conclusions about the story that the data is telling.
- Designing data-informed improvement strategies.
- Monitoring and evaluating strategies to assess whether the intended results have been achieved and are equitable.

Collecting vaccine-related data alongside HUD's required Data Elements gives communities the ability to disaggregate by population groups including race, ethnicity, gender, age groups, geography, people with disabilities, or any other groups identified by your community. The resulting data set enables the intersectional analysis of groups to allow communities to ensure they are not overlooking any specific population and better equip them to examine their systems for effective and equitable vaccine outreach and distribution. Those looking to examine homeless system data and gain data-informed insight into their homeless system should refer to the Data and Equity: Using the Data You Have document on the HUD Exchange website.