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## **FACT SHEET:**

### **HUD and HHS Announce Joint Effort to Increase Access to COVID-19 Vaccinations**

On Wednesday, May 5, 2021, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia L. Fudge and U.S. Housing and Human Service (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a joint-agency effort to increase access to COVID-19 prevention and treatment services, including testing and vaccines, among disproportionately affected communities, including among HUD-assisted households and people experiencing homelessness.

The joint effort reflects the fact that while more than 100 million Americans are now fully vaccinated, many others need help overcoming barriers to getting vaccinated.

### **HUD-Assisted Households and People Experiencing Homelessness are Disproportionately Affected by COVID-19**

The people and households assisted by HUD have a higher prevalence of risk factors that may place them at increased risk of COVID-19 transmission, illness, and mortality. A large proportion of those who are helped by HUD programs are people of color, age 65 or older, have disabilities, and have underlying health conditions. They often live in high-density housing or congregate settings (e.g., homeless shelters) and have mobility and transportation needs. Additionally, many HUD-assisted individuals and households live at or below the poverty level.

HHS and HUD will work collaboratively and leverage available resources to increase access to the full range of COVID-19 prevention and treatment services, including tests and vaccines, among HUD-assisted households and people experiencing homelessness.

### **Facilitating Broader Access to COVID-19 Vaccines and Testing**

HUD and HHS are directing all community health centers to establish or expand existing partnerships with local HUD grantees and program participants, including single- and multi-family housing owners/managers, public housing authorities, Continuums of Care, and homeless providers.

The HUD-HHS partnership will cover:

- Approximately 7,500 public housing properties
- More than 6,000 multi-family housing properties
- More than 6,700 homeless shelters

HUD and HHS have laid out several steps and strategies the agencies will direct community health centers, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Area Agencies on Aging, Centers for Independent Living, state Assistive Technology Act programs, and HUD grantees and programs to take to expand access to COVID-19 vaccines and testing:

- Conducting targeted outreach regarding COVID-19 vaccine efficacy and safety to encourage all eligible individuals to obtain COVID-19 tests and vaccines;
- Assisting with registering and scheduling COVID-19 tests and vaccine appointments;
- Facilitating on-site vaccine clinics at HUD-assisted or insured properties, public housing developments, homeless shelters, and through mobile facilities serving people experiencing unsheltered homelessness;
- Using state assistive technology accessibility kits to provide accessible testing and vaccination sites;
- Assisting with transportation as needed to vaccine sites, including for people who have limited mobility;
- Supporting self, mobile, drive-up, and/or walk-up testing that addresses the unique and evolving access barriers experienced by disproportionately affected populations;
- Providing information regarding access to comprehensive primary health care services; and
- Ensuring that communications are provided in plain language and in formats that are accessible to people with disabilities.

### **Ensuring an Equitable COVID-19 Response Through Highly Targeted Efforts**

As part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to an equitable response to COVID-19, the HUD-HHS effort recognizes that bringing vaccinations to all Americans means adding highly targeted efforts focused on vulnerable communities alongside mass vaccination efforts for the general public.

As part of these efforts:

- HHS’s Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) will track data on the number of people experiencing homelessness and in HUD-assisted housing being vaccinated.
- HUD will track the number of vaccine clinics for HUD-assisted households via its Office of Field Policy and Management (FPM).
- HUD will use a newly developed mapping tool to help broker partnerships between health centers and HUD housing and homelessness programs.
- HUD will use the mapping tool to identify high-need areas where COVID-19 rates are high and where there are large distances between HUD programs and health centers.

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