

National survey shows 13% of healthcare workers are vaccinated

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A 50-year-old white male doctor in the Northeast, earning more than \$200,000, is more than seven times likely to be vaccinated than a 45-year-old Black female nursing assistant in the South who earns less

than \$50,000, according to a new nationally representative [survey](#) conducted by experts from Northwestern, Northeastern, Rutgers and Harvard universities.

The survey finds that education, [income](#), gender and race/ethnicity are strong predictors of vaccination rates, as well as of vaccine hesitancy and resistance among those at the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19.

While [healthcare](#) workers held similar attitudes to most Americans on their hesitancy to get vaccinated, they were 13% more likely to have gotten the shot than Americans overall (2%) since they are on the frontlines as essential workers.

"While it is promising and sensible that healthcare workers are prioritized, the race and socioeconomic divide reflects a depressing reality of the inequities of American society," said political scientist James Druckman, the Payson S. Wild Professor of Political Science in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and associate director of the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern. He is one of the researchers investigating Americans' attitudes about COVID-19.

Druckman and his research colleagues focused on a representative sample of 1,797 healthcare workers from a larger survey of 25,640 individuals across the U.S., conducted between Dec. 16, 2020, and Jan. 11, 2021.

Key findings from the survey include:

- Men working in healthcare are nearly twice as likely as women to have received a vaccination—18% versus 9%—and have lower rates of resistance and hesitancy.
- Higher education and income levels are both strong predictors of whether a healthcare [worker](#) had received the vaccine.

- Those with [higher education](#) and income who felt more positive about getting vaccinated were also more likely to have received one. Individuals with a graduate degree had a 9% vaccine hesitancy rate and 23% of whom had received the vaccine compared with those with a high school degree or less who were nearly three times as hesitant (29%), but only 7% of whom had received the vaccine.
- Overall, 19% of Asian American healthcare workers reported being vaccinated versus whites at 13%, African Americans at 12% and Hispanics at 10%.
- African Americans are more likely to say that they have higher levels of vaccine hesitancy (42%) and resistance (27%) than any other racial or ethnic group.
- In terms of political affiliations, healthcare workers identifying as Democrats (15%) were slightly more likely than Republicans (13%) to have already received a vaccination.
- But vaccine resistance is more significant between Democrats (13%) and Republicans (30%).

The researchers' wider national survey previously [showed](#) racial, income and education differences in vaccine hesitancy and [racial differences](#) in the turnaround time individuals received COVID-19 test results. They note that healthcare workers represent a microcosm of U.S. society—one polarized by income and education levels from physicians and nurses to home healthcare and hospital cleaning staff. The survey reveals [medical professionals](#) have lower [vaccine hesitancy](#) (37%) and resistance (21%) than non-healthcare workers (41% and 23% respectively).

"It will be crucial that healthcare workers who recognize the importance of the vaccine communicate that as messages from the medical community are particularly effectual in reducing vaccine resistance," Druckman said.

Of healthcare workers who had already received a vaccine, income and education levels predict some of the largest disparities besides gender. Healthcare workers with a high school education or less report a 7% vaccination rate, as compared with 18% of college graduates and 23% of those with a [graduate degree](#). Individuals with a high school diploma or less were also most resistant to getting a vaccine: Nearly one in three (29%) said they did not want to get vaccinated, and 41% said they were hesitant to get one. By contrast, those with graduate degrees had the lowest levels of vaccine resistance (9%) and hesitancy (26%).

Researchers saw similar patterns based on income levels: 8% of [healthcare workers](#) earning under \$50,000 said they had been vaccinated. This rose to 13% for those earning between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and to 22% for those earning more than \$100,000. Additionally, [vaccine](#) resistance and hesitancy decline with income: Vaccine resistance among those earning less than \$50,000 is 27% and drops to 12% for those earning more than \$100,000.

More information: The COVID States Project #40: COVID-19 vaccine attitudes among healthcare workers: osf.io/p4q9h/

Provided by Northwestern University

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