New Research Affirms Increase in Access, Equity of COVID-19 Vaccines Administered in Dialysis Centers

Results demonstrate the importance of vaccinating patients at trusted sites of care

DENVER and WALTHAM, Mass., April 4, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- A federal partnership established to help increase access to COVID-19 vaccines for end stage kidney disease (ESKD) patients receiving dialysis was successful in reducing racial disparities in vaccination coverage, new research published today in *JAMA Internal Medicine* affirms. Compared to white patients, Hispanic, Black and Asian patients were more likely to receive at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine in a dialysis center.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collaborated with DaVita, Fresenius Medical Care North America and other partners in March 2021 to create the Federal Dialysis Provider COVID-19 Vaccine Partnership. Both providers received allocations of COVID-19 vaccines from the federal government to administer to patients in dialysis centers and distribute to other dialysis providers across the country.

"We were steadfast in our advocacy efforts to support patients with kidney failure by providing access to the vaccine through the pandemic. We're incredibly grateful for the collaboration between the CDC and the kidney care community to leverage our capacity, experience and footprint to bring dialysis patients direct access to COVID-19 vaccines," said Dr. Jeff Giullian, chief medical officer for DaVita and study co-author. "The results of this study affirm that providing vaccines at trusted sites of care is an effective approach to helping to reduce hesitancy and advance equity for patients of color who have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic."

"I appreciate all the members of our frontline care teams who worked so hard to efficiently vaccinate our vulnerable patient population," said Dr. Jeffrey Hymes, global head of clinical affairs for Fresenius Medical Care and another study co-author. "This important partnership with the CDC shows how well our dialysis centers can be used to reach often underserved populations and improve equitable access to care, especially for people at highest risk of complications from viruses like COVID-19."

The new study evaluated the impact of dialysis clinics serving as COVID-19 vaccine providers on vaccination coverage and disparities from Dec. 1, 2020, through June 13, 2021. Vaccination coverage was calculated using the number of patients at nearly 5,200 Fresenius and DaVita dialysis centers who received at least one dose of vaccine, regardless of location. Researchers found that:

- As of March 28, 2021, shortly after the federal partnership launched, vaccination coverage among white patients was 52%, exceeding coverage in Black (45.2%) and Hispanic (51.3%) patients. Asian patients had higher vaccination coverage (60%) than white patients.
- By June 13, 2021, vaccination coverage among Asian (74.1%) and Hispanic (69.5%) patients exceeded that of white patients (65.5%), with vaccination coverage among Black patients slightly lower (63%).
- Overall, 50.7% (312,046) of vaccinated patients were vaccinated in a dialysis clinic during the evaluation. Compared to white patients (42.5%), Hispanic (62.2%), Black (55.4%) and Asian (49.5%) patients were more likely to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in a dialysis center.

The researchers recommend that public health agencies and policymakers prioritize dialysis centers for federal vaccine allocations and on-site vaccine administration in the future.

More than 500,000 Americans diagnosed with ESKD receive life-sustaining dialysis care. Due to underlying conditions that may compromise their immune systems, these patients are often at higher risk for COVID-19 infection. ESKD patients are also some of the most racially and ethnically diverse in health care.

Study author affiliations: Fresenius Medical Care, DaVita Inc., Minnesota Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention detailed to Puerto Rico Department of Health, American Society of Nephrology and Yale University School of Medicine, and the American Society of Nephrology and Rogosin Institute.

About DaVita Inc.

DaVita (NYSE: DVA) is a comprehensive kidney care provider focused on transforming care to improve the quality of life for patients globally. The company is one of the largest providers of kidney care services in the U.S. and has been a leader in clinical quality and innovation for more than 20 years. DaVita is working to help increase equitable access to care for patients at every stage and setting along their kidney health journey—from slowing progression of kidney disease to streamlining the transplant process, from acute hospital care to dialysis at home. As of December 31, 2021, DaVita served 203,000 patients at 2,815 outpatient dialysis centers in the U.S. The company operated an additional 339 outpatient dialysis centers in ten countries worldwide. DaVita has reduced hospitalizations, improved mortality and worked collaboratively to propel the kidney care community to adopt an equitable, high-quality standard of care for all patients, everywhere. To learn more, visit DaVita.com/About.

About Fresenius Medical Care North America

Fresenius Medical Care North America (FMCNA) is the premier healthcare company focused on providing the highest quality care to people with renal and other chronic conditions. Through its industry-leading network of dialysis facilities and outpatient cardiac and vascular labs, Fresenius Medical Care North America provides coordinated healthcare services at pivotal care points for hundreds of thousands of chronically ill customers throughout the continent. As the world's largest fully integrated renal company, it offers specialty pharmacy and laboratory services, and manufactures and distributes the most comprehensive line of dialysis equipment, disposable products, and renal pharmaceuticals. For more information, visit the FMCNA website at https://fmcna.com/.

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