

National Center on Birth Defects & Developmental Disabilities  
(NCBDDD):

## Addressing Antiviral Uptake & Vaccine Misinformation



### Overview

Goal of meeting: enhance collective work in improving the health of children and adults with or at-risk for disabilities

Participants: *Dr. Karyl Rattay (DHDD Director), Julia Abercrombie (Associate Director for Policy), Helen Kingery (Associate Director for Communications), Dr. Shannon Griffin-Blake (Senior Disability Advisor from the CDC COVID-19 Chief Health Equity Officer Unit), Anastasia Lambrou (CDC COVID-19 Response/ Treatment Innovation Lead)*

### Discussion Questions

- **What are major barriers to COVID19 antiviral uptake in the disability community?**

Answers: Barriers include sensory, communication, navigating appointments, schedules, and transportation to access vaccination services. Limited free vaccinations, complications in scheduling transportation and appointments which demand more time for people with disabilities. Lack of education around vaccinations regarding the administering of vaccines and side effects.

- **What are major provider barriers?**

Answers: Prescribers cannot provide antivirals due to low supply and an increasing demand due to advertisements about getting vaccinated. Healthcare workers are exhausted. There is discrimination against advocates for disabled patients which creates discouragement. Prescribers need confidence in knowing who can safely receive antiviral treatments. Access to patients in order to diagnose COVID and prescribe antivirals has been difficult.

- **What specific disinformation is circulating about COVID19 antivirals? What myths exist about antivirals? And what efforts are being made to address this disinformation?**

Answers: There is a distrust of the efficiency of vaccinations. There are patients who are concerned about having to go off their previous medications in order to receive antiviral treatments due to potential drug interactions between the medications. Vaccine hesitancy fueled by lack of knowledge on vaccines.

- **What tools and information are needed to better navigate the treatment space with a focus on antivirals?**

Answers: Popup events that could offer vaccinations for free. Partnering of local health departments and retail pharmacies to host vaccination events. Assist physicians who are confused on testing resources.

- **What are the best communication channels to get information to members of the disability community?**

Answers: Use long-standing methods to get information and messages to groups. Use traditional media activities like commercials or closed points of distribution with wellness programs. Messengers could include self-advocates, trusted parent caregivers. Overall, invest in the relationships held within the disability community.

- **What long COVID or post COVID condition advocates should the CDC be working with? Are there any activities within organizations?**

Answers: Accessible and affordable housing should be prioritized especially due to the large amounts of retirement age groups that will continue to increase and will require housing. So, groups that prioritize this should be contacted.

## **Next Steps**

Support programs that will address barriers around antiviral uptake in the disability community as well as barriers for providers. Bridge the gap between the two by serving as a platform for communicating each group's needs. Look into and promote safe popup events to increase education and access to antiviral and vaccination treatments.

Offer self-advocates and trusted caregivers a platform to serve as a channel of communication. Finally, promote advocates on long COVID and post COVID conditions.