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Follow-up Survey of Healthcare Workers: COVID-19 Vaccine Refusal Rate Has Decreased from 15% to 11% Since December

Surgo Ventures' second survey of HCWs finds inequities still exist and employers play a big role in vaccine uptake

WASHINGTON, February 12, 2021—Today Surgo Ventures released the results of its second vaccine hesitancy [survey](#) of healthcare workers (HCWs) in the United States—a sample of the large group of HCWs Surgo [surveyed in December](#).

In its first survey conducted December 17-30, 2020, Surgo surveyed 2,504 healthcare professionals, categorized in three groups: “Healthcare Professionals” (i.e., physicians, nurses, dentists); “Allied Health Professionals” (i.e., health technicians, EMS personnel, home health workers); and “Non-medical personnel working in healthcare settings” (i.e., administrative staff, operations staff). In that survey, 53% of the 2,504 HCWs had been offered at least one of the approved COVID-19 vaccines at the time they responded.

Among that 53%:

- 38% had already taken their first dose of the vaccine (20% of the total sample)
- 47% had not yet taken their first dose of the vaccine but planned to do so (28% of the total sample)
- 15% said they would refuse to take the vaccine.

For its second survey, conducted January 28-February 3, 2021, Surgo went back to the 47% who had not yet taken their first dose of the vaccine, and to those who refused but who were somewhat on the fence about their refusal, to see whether they had been vaccinated or had changed their minds about vaccination since December. The results were promising:

Majority of HCWs in Surgo's sample has now taken the vaccine

- Among the healthcare workers who had been offered the vaccine in December, **82% have now taken it.**
- However, **there is consistent inequity in which healthcare workers are being offered the vaccine, and who are being vaccinated:**
 - “Healthcare Professionals” (i.e., physicians, nurses, dentists) are more likely to have been vaccinated in the follow-up survey (88%) than “Allied health professionals” (i.e., health technicians, EMS personnel, physician therapists, home health workers) at 78%, and “Non-medical personnel working in healthcare settings.” (i.e., administrative staff, operations staff) at 63%.



Vaccine refusal has decreased from 15% of HCWs to 11% of HCWs in Surgo's sample

- Of those 15% of healthcare workers offered the vaccine who refused to take it in the December survey, 20% actually changed their mind as of the January survey. **This means that the refusal rate among HCWs has gone down to 11%.**
 - When breaking down respondents in this group by the three occupational groups, the refusal rate was highest for Allied Health Professionals (15% refused), followed by Non-medical personnel working in healthcare settings (10%) and Healthcare Professionals (9%).
 - When breaking down respondents in this group by race, refusal rates were similar. Black healthcare workers showed a refusal rate of 12%, followed by Latinx healthcare workers (12% refused), and white healthcare workers (10% refused).
 - When breaking down respondents in this group by political affiliation, the refusal rate was highest for Republicans (13% refused) and Independents (13% refused) and lowest for Democrats (4% refused).

Among healthcare workers, employers play a big role in improving vaccine uptake

- Surgo found that **healthcare workers who felt that they had received enough COVID-19 vaccination information from their employers got the vaccine at a higher rate (86%)** than those who felt that they did not (70%).
- And for those healthcare workers who have been offered but still have not taken the vaccine, **when asked what would convince them to take the vaccine, two themes emerged: 1) if their workplace mandated it, and 2) if they could see more evidence of efficacy.**

“What we found from our second survey of healthcare workers bodes well for efforts to get all healthcare workers vaccinated, although we still see troubling inequities,” said Dr. Sema K. Sgaier, Co-Founder and CEO of Surgo Ventures. “Given that we can reach healthcare workers through their workplaces, there are clear channels we can leverage to reach them and help change their minds—concrete, community-oriented efforts such as workplace ambassadors, one-on-one conversations, and listening sessions, for example.”

In the coming weeks, Surgo will release a follow-up report offering solutions for employers to help address healthcare worker vaccine hesitancy.

See a summary of the survey responses [here](#).

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