

## November 30<sup>th</sup> Vaccine CoP Video Call

10 am PST / 11 am Mountain and Saskatchewan / 12 pm Central / 1 pm EST / 2 pm Atlantic

**Attendance:** 37 people in attendance

**Indigenous Welcome:** Kevin Barlow

**Opening:** Courtney Pankratz, Knowledge Translation and Evaluation Lead

### Vaccine hesitancy and useful strategies for addressing vaccine hesitancy

#### Presenters:

- **Dalyce Sather-McNabb** is the healthcare lead at Northreach Society in Grande Prairie, Alberta.
- Northreach society is a recipient of the vaccination grant. The Northreach society used to focus on HIV/AIDS care, now it has expanded to other Harm Reduction areas. They run a supervised consumption site and support shelters with permanent supportive housing program. They just opened a supportive independent living facility. They have a street outreach program and Nursing program that works with COVID pandemic isolation hotels. They are also involved in STTB treatment. They work with people who are vulnerable, and street engaged. Their mission is to address the social determinants of health for innovation and collaboration, educational support, and vision is a safe and inclusive world.
- **Katy Ingraham** is a business owner in Edmonton, Alberta. Business is Fleisch Delikatessen - a deli and lunch spot by day and a bar by night. Previously, it was a bar in the same place but got shut down as a casualty of the pandemic. She is highly invested in being a living wage employer, she works with the Canadian restaurant workers coalition to support their efforts in creating a fairer, more equitable industry for Canadian restaurant workers. She also co founded the Edmonton independent cost coding community to provide a coordinated voice to government during the COVID pandemic for the specific needs of independent hospitality operators.

### Panel Discussion: Vaccine hesitancy and useful strategies for addressing vaccine hesitancy

- **How is vaccine hesitancy showing up in your community?**

**Katy:** As far as the provinces in Canada, Alberta has the largest amount of vaccine hesitancy. We have the lowest uptake of vaccine rate compared with other provinces however vaccine hesitancy in Edmonton areas and Calgary is much lower than other metropolitan areas. At Fleisch, we have not really faced that. We took a safety approach since the beginning, so we did not see the decline as other businesses did. This is because of our consistent approach to safety through the pandemic. We were the first business in Alberta to implement their own vaccine requirement to dine inside.

**Dalyce:** The case is very different here. In Grande Prairie, the rate of vaccinated is about 57% which is very low. There are people experiencing a lot of mistrust for healthcare and the government. The ICUs are fuller than ever.

- **What impact does this have on your work, if at all (E.g., are there any issues around service accessibility, tensions around vaccine passports, other)?**

**Dalyce:** The vulnerable/ homeless folks are facing a lot of hardship. Alberta got hit with COVID later than other provinces. There is shortage of staff to take care of the isolated folks. Our Safe Consumption Site is mobile, so it's been hard to ensure safety. We had to limit the number of folks allowed in the bus at any given time. A lot of our clients and staff unfortunately contracted COVID. The general populace not getting vaccinated which put the other folks who are vulnerable at risk.

**Katy-** For us, we were committed to making our staff safe. That was extremely difficult especially because we are an indoor dining restaurant and research has shown that indoor dining is a major contributor to the spread. Also, studies showed that restaurant line cooks had a lot of exposure to COVID-19, so we took staff safety seriously and closed down indoor dining since November 2020. We took a cautious approach throughout, prior to the Government of Alberta shutting down indoor dining. We did not open indoor dining until every of our staff had a chance to be vaccinated. Other restaurants in the community felt like they were overreacting. In Aug 2021, we implemented our own vaccine rules to indoor dining. And that helped us a lot. Although we probably would have been in a better financial situation if we did not. These actions exposed us to backlash from the public, we received a lot of hate from this decision. We had people protest in front of our businesses, as well as various threat calls.

- **What prompted your business to get involved with Each+ Every and to start thinking about Health and wellbeing as a local business?**

**Katy-** I recently fell into hospitality business and one thing I realized was that there are a lot of issues particularly in the area of labour relations, their work hours and wages. Becoming invested in that I got interested in other things that lead to poverty and addictions is one of them. That made harm reduction a priority for me. I co-founded the Edmonton independent hospitality to have a coordinated voice to the government because other larger organizations are not looking at other pieces that help independent operators. Through my work, I found out how a co-ordinated voice is important in reaching to the government and getting changes. Each+Every is a smart and savvy voice. The drug overdose crisis is not going away, how can the business community step in to provide solution.

- **From your perspective, what are the driving factors behind vaccine hesitancy?**

**Dalyce-** There is 2 perspectives- the greater populace and the more vulnerable street engaged folks. Grace Salvo, a physician in Edmonton came up with 3 C's of vaccine hesitancy that plays in both communities fairly well. It is about Convenience, Confidence and Complacency.

There are some who have not felt a motivation because they do not feel at risk. In this case it becomes "how can I help you find motivation" rather than appeal to their sense of public service.

**Comment** - Most people who don't want the vaccine to feel hesitant due to lack of trust and misinformation around the vaccine. Some women we serve had heard that the government was trying to put microchips in them to monitor them. It was important that we educate them and make them trust that the vaccine is safe.

**Katy-** In the hospitality setting, staff might not get motivated to get the vaccine. Because they lose their day's pay and even the following days trying to get well from the side effects of the vaccination. We had to coordinate and plan for our staff to get vaccinated. There is no consideration from the government to support restaurant staff.

- **What strategies have been helpful to explore or address these concerns, if any?**

**Dalyce-** Building trust. Taking time to develop trust is very important for the clients to feel comfortable to get vaccinated. Providing incentives, providing food security has encouraged participants to get vaccinated. The folks we serve have been more open to taking the vaccine when they are offered gift cards. This has helped increase uptake of Covid-19 vaccine. Expanded relationship- intensive questionnaire to determine who needs supported housing. Relationship with the public health- we have been able to call public health to get the vaccines, then our nurse gives it to them where they are. That has really helped them.

**Katy-** Inadequate information/ inaccurate sources of information have increased vaccine hesitancy. It is important that information is provided in various languages so that everyone can access accurate information.

- **Comments:** Using real life examples and culturally appropriate resources will help increase vaccine uptake.

- **Mini Evaluation: by Katherine and Amanda**

1. What is one thing you learned from today's call that you think could influence your work?

**Some of the responses:**

- Building trust with the clients we serve is key to increasing vaccine uptake
- The 3 C's model and to be trauma-informed when working with clients and vaccine hesitancy
- How to be focused and kind
- Different ways to motivate people to get vaccinated. Our client base is very motivated by grocery gift cards/ food security as well

2. What is one thing about today's topic that you want to learn more about?

**Some of the responses:**

- How to access culturally relevant resources
- How to get better and accurate information out there to all people
- How to help clients navigate through misinformation
- How different communities/ cultural organizations can work together to address hesitancy

**Closing:** Thanks to everyone for joining. Wishing you all a good rest of your day.