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UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH
CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA

Why Faith Community is Important

- ▶ Mission Aligned - We are all on the same team with the same goals.
- ▶ Unique perspective and trusted voice
- ▶ Create a groundswell of positive peer pressure –
 - ▶ Creating a situation [in which] you look around and see everyone else is doing it -- all your “tribe”-- is doing it and then you would feel safer doing it,” - Professor Ayelet Baram-Tsabari, Professor of Science Communication
- ▶ Role modeling Vaccine-“Anti Hesitancy” - Your place of worship wouldn't host something they didn't believe in.

HOW YOU CAN GET THE FAITH COMMUNITY INVOLVED

- ▶ Co-Branded Educational Programs
- ▶ Vaccine Access Task Force
- ▶ **Vaccine Drive Hosting**
 - ▶ **Be Clear what the Church/Synagogue/Mosque etc... needs to offer**
 - ▶ Specific Space requirements
 - ▶ Parking
 - ▶ Waiting areas
 - ▶ Social Distancing
 - ▶ **Clarify Their potential concerns**
 - ▶ Staffing
 - ▶ Liability
 - ▶ Data Privacy

The pandemic continues to inflict significant harm on our nation and world. The plague has brought illness and death, financial challenge, and emotional distress, and the toll is rising. The arrival of the vaccines has given us reason to be hopeful. However, in order to get maximum participation in the vaccination campaign, this is the moment for government to partner with our faith communities.

The vaccine will only be effective if people get it. And the challenges to that are both emotional and logistical. Emotional, due to the concerns people may have about the vaccine's safety and efficacy given the record speed of its development. The logistical challenge is that our country has never undertaken the overwhelming task of inoculating tens of millions of its people in a matter of months. How many people at a time will be able to make appointments and line up at the CVS, Walgreens, or the doctor's office? It is simply unrealistic.

Here is where our faith communities can help. We represent hundreds of houses of faith throughout North America. **Our congregations and their members are eager to participate in the vaccine program with the strong encouragement of their leaders.**

Many of our congregations have facilities with large social halls that can handle significant numbers of people coming through efficiently and safely. These facilities have therefore been used countless times over the years for blood drives and bone marrow swabbing, and — more recently — for COVID-19 testing and plasma donations. At times, we simply provided the space in our facilities for these purposes; at others we created and managed the reservation and appointment systems, and even brought together medically trained volunteers to run the full program.

There are vast numbers of synagogues, churches and mosques located in virtually every community that could be deployed to help in this vaccine effort, making it accessible to so many Americans.

Many of our congregations are ready, willing and able to share any or all of these assets with our local governments and health departments as they undertake the vaccination campaign.

We would welcome the opportunity for many of our facilities to serve as vaccination sites. Allow us to help you with coordinating appointments, and/or to provide you with the medically trained volunteers to administer the shots. We can also work with you to spread awareness to our communities about the importance of the vaccines. Aside from the logistical benefits, members of our communities will feel reassured if they can come to their neighborhood houses of faith for the vaccination. We will gladly service anyone in need of vaccination, whether or not they are members of our congregations or of our neighborhoods.

Houses of worship have other benefits than just logistics. Clergy can reinforce the need to vaccinate from the pulpit and we can promote it in our communications to the faithful. These are powerful tools that should be deployed in this effort.

Faith communities play a significant role in the lives of tens of millions of Americans, providing educational and social frameworks, financial and health support, employment services and programming for youth, seniors, and the disabled. We are well positioned to persuade our members to receive the vaccine and to, in partnership with public health staff, deliver it.

These are very hard times. Americans need a shot in the arm. Let us work together to make sure they get it.

Rabbi Moshe Hauer is the executive vice president of the Orthodox Union, with many hundreds of congregations in its synagogue network.

Walter Kim is president of the National Association of Evangelicals, which includes more than 45,000 churches from 40 denominations and serves a constituency of millions.



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