

**WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT TO
COMMUNITY VACCINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CVAC)
Submitted from May 10 to June 21, 2021**

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Thank you for your leadership over the course of the past few months as you have worked to ensure the safety of all Californians during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a federally qualified health center providing healthcare services to underserved and uninsured communities in South Los Angeles, St. John's Well Child and Family Center has been on the front lines in the battle against this virus throughout this emergency. To date, we have provided over 100,000 COVID tests and administered over 250,000 vaccine doses. We understand the detrimental impacts of health inequities on our communities and worked against them by focusing our testing and vaccination efforts on communities of color and other groups at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19. More than 80% of all vaccines administered by St. John's went to African American and Latino residents. As such, we are requesting that at its final meeting, the Community Vaccine Advisory Committee discuss what we have learned about vaccine equity and how we can use these lessons to help ensure health equity moving forward.

As Californians continue to get vaccinated and our COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths decrease, there is a high risk of losing the momentum the state has gained on addressing vaccine equity, and the larger issue of health equity. Vaccine equity is not specific to only COVID-19. It is an issue that the healthcare system needs to address with all immunizations to ensure the protection of all our communities.

St. John's is holding a vaccine equity town hall on June 16 with state and county leaders, elected officials and labor leaders to determine strategies that worked in reaching equity, and importantly, where California can go from here. This conversation is critical so that we can take the lessons learned during this pandemic and use them to establish health equity in our delivery systems and communities as we move towards recovery and life following this health emergency. We urge the Community Vaccine Advisory Committee to discuss these issues at its final meeting or establish a pathway to do so in the near future. It is an important step in moving towards health equity for all Californians.