

The Global VAX Project



A client receives COVID-19 vaccination from an HST Global Vax team member.

Since April 2023, Health Systems Trust's Global VAX Project – embedded in the SA SURE PRO programme and funded through the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Task Force for Global Health (TFGH) – has rolled out community-based COVID-19 vaccination in the Zululand and uMgungundlovu Districts of KwaZulu-Natal.

Implemented to support the objectives of the United States (US) Government's 'Initiative for Global Vaccine Access', the project supports the Global VAX Programme's aim of "turning vaccines in vials to vaccinations in arms".

This campaign expands assistance and enhances co-ordination for identifying and rapidly overcoming barriers to vaccine access in sub-Saharan Africa, and augments the bilateral efforts of the South

African and US governments to strengthen the country's health systems.

The project is layered on HST's HIV and TB service footprint for accelerated community entry in six sub-districts – one in uMgungundlovu and five in Zululand.

The project's vaccination teams partner with PEPFAR-funded community-based service providers and other civil society organisations to reduce stigma and vaccine hesitancy, and increase COVID-19 vaccine uptake.

Working closely with the Department of Health, the key objectives are to improve awareness and demand creation for vaccine services in the selected sub-districts, and to strengthen integration of vaccination services in



In uMgungundlovu, HST's mobile team mobilises Mpofana community members for COVID-19 vaccination.

facilities through the provision of technical assistance and service delivery by mobile health teams.

To broaden the scope of vaccine education and provide specific access to those most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection, demand-creation activities focus on bringing vaccinations to people in rural and hard-to-reach areas, and on the demographic groups with the greatest gap to vaccine target – such as youth, and those in the 35- to 49-year age group, among whom vaccination rates are the lowest nationally.

The project includes an evaluation component to investigate the lessons learnt from community-driven campaigns, so that these can be applied through community mobilisation for multiple disease responses.

The vaccination application will be broadened beyond COVID-19, and HST works with the Department of Health to strengthen integrated vaccine provision through technical assistance, health promotion activities, and health literacy programmes.

The target set by the National Department of Health is to reach a total of 27 000 patients – 4 500 in uMgungundlovu's Mpofana Sub-district, and 22 500 in Zululand (4 500 per sub-district).

People wishing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine should get in touch with their nearest healthcare facility, or access the following sources for credible information and contact details:

National Health Hotline: 0800 029 999
WhatsApp Support Line: 0600 123 456
healthhotline@health.gov.za



For more information on this programme do email HST on hst@hst.org.za