UW Health, UW-Madison: Focus on diversity for COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial

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MADISON, Wis. – As UW Health and the University of Wisconsin begin scheduling participants for the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine study, experts and leaders are focused on equity and inclusion to ensure a diverse population takes part in this phase 3 clinical trial. A diverse group of participants will give researchers the best understanding on how and if this vaccine works for everyone.

UW Health, UW and the trial's sponsor are working to ensure that language is not a barrier to accessing the clinical trial, developing webpages and hotline options in both Spanish and Hmong. The health system is also ensuring qualified medical interpreters are available to speak with potential participants in 240 languages.

Researchers are working to enroll a diverse patient population across gender, age, race and ethnicity. Acknowledging the historic trust gap for communities of color when it comes to clinical trials, UW Health is working with local partners including churches, nonprofits and community organizations to ensure Black and African American, Latinx, Asian and Indigenous populations are informed about the opportunity to participate in this clinical trial.

"People of color are a vital population to making this study a success," said Shiva Bidar-Sielaff, vice president and chief diversity officer at UW Health. "We want to make sure those who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 will have access to the safest, most effective vaccine possible."

UW Health is cognizant of the barriers many people face to get to the appointments associated with a clinical trial like this, and are offering things like transportation

assistance to ensure all participants can travel to their trial site.

Interviews and video are available.