

News & Updates

from the Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project



September 2021

Resource Reminders

COVID-19 Rapid Response Requests

Twenty-two months into the worldwide pandemic, the Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (TX RPC) Project continues to develop accessible and accurate resources from health experts in the field. If you would like to request information on a public health topic, please complete the following form.

[ACCESS FORM
HERE](#)

The Texas RPC Project resources are available on our website. We hope these resources are valuable to your respective offices.

- [TX RPC Health Policy Resources](#) (resources available to policymakers to provide facts and evidence on health-related topics)
- [Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinars](#) (includes COVID-19 specific webinars)
- [TX RPC Newsletters Archive](#)
- [Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)
- [Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)

General COVID-19 Resources

The TX RPC Project is committed to promoting optimal health for all Texans. For further information and updates on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and [World Health Organization](#) provide masking and social distancing guidelines, as well as recommended best practices to limit transmission of the coronavirus.

Texas Research-to-Policy Newly Released Reports

COVID-19 Myth vs. Fact Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration

As of September 22, 2021, only 64.3% of people ages 12 years or older in the U.S.

are fully vaccinated, and rates of infection, hospitalization, and death remain high. Using evidence-based information, this resource clarifies several misconceptions about the safety and effectiveness of masks and vaccines for protection against COVID-19.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccines are not safe and were developed too rapidly.

FACT: The COVID-19 vaccines are **safe and effective**, and the risks from the vaccines are extremely rare. (2)



The vaccines were developed under the same rigorous standards as other vaccines, and the technology used has been in development and studied by researchers for decades. (9) On August 23, 2021, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) **fully approved** the Pfizer vaccine for COVID-19 in people 16 years of age and older. (10)

Key Takeaways:

- Vaccination is the best path to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The FDA's full approval of the first COVID-19 vaccine is an important milestone that should reassure anyone who has concerns about getting vaccinated.
- Get vaccinated and continue to wear a mask, social distance, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces, and wash your hands often.

[VIEW THE REPORT](#)

Highlights from TX RPC Network Members Conducting COVID-19 Research

[How to talk to your loved ones about getting the COVID-19 vaccine](#)
George Delclos, MD, MPH - UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston

As the pandemic continues, health experts are discussing how to have conversations with loved ones about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Health experts point out that it is important to remind your loved ones that discussing the vaccine with them comes from a place of compassion, and to listen and stay calm with your family members during the talk. TX RPC Network Member Dr. George Delclos was interviewed in the Houston Chronicle where he noted that vaccinated people can communicate vaccine benefits through personal experiences when talking to a loved one who may be wary of getting the COVID-19 vaccine. He says

honesty is the best medicine, and that “somebody close can play a tremendous role (in getting someone vaccinated), especially if it’s one of the folks who was hesitant but got vaccinated and saw it was no big deal.”

Key Takeaways:

- Sharing personal experiences about receiving the vaccine can help unvaccinated individuals make decisions about scheduling an appointment.
- Compassion and understanding are an effective approach to having a discussion about the vaccine. Judgment will make people stop listening during a conversation.

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

33% of Texas children have antibodies to fight virus

Sarah Messiah, PhD, MPH - UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston

The Texas CARES study conducted by UTHealth researchers found that 2 out of 3 school-aged children do not have antibodies to fight COVID-19 as of August 2021. As the school year begins, it is important to keep in mind that masks add an extra layer of protection for everyone, especially people who are unable to be vaccinated. TX RPC Network Member Dr. Sarah Messiah spoke about children’s vulnerability noting that younger aged children are still not eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Health experts urge parents to think about their children’s safety when sending them to school and to consider having children wear masks while at school.

Key Takeaways:

- Around 2/3 of children have not been exposed to COVID-19 so their immune systems have not been able to produce antibodies to fight the virus.
- Masks add an extra layer of protection, especially for school-aged children who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated.

[WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

[LEARN MORE ABOUT PROTECTING KIDS FROM COVID-19](#)

TX RPC Partner Events

**VIRTUAL EVENT: 2021 Philip R. Nader Legacy of Health Lectureship
Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living**

Join the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living for the Philip R. Nader Legacy of Health Lectureship on Thursday, October 7, 2021 from 12:00 - 1:00pm

CT. The keynote speaker, Dr. Rafael Perez-Escamilla will give a presentation on “Responsive Feeding and Childhood Obesity Prevention: An Equitable Nurturing Care Perspective”.

Dr. Perez-Escamilla is a professor of Public Health, the Director at the Office of Public Health Practice, Director of Global Health Concentration, and Director of Maternal Child Health Promotion Program at the Center for Methods on Implementation and Prevention Sciences (CMIPS) at Yale School of Public Health.

[REGISTER FOR THE EVENT](#)

[WEBINAR: Resuming In-Person Physical Activity Safely: Updated COVID-19 Guidance and Practical Recommendations](#) **Live Smart Texas**

Live Smart Texas hosted a webinar on September 23, 2021 with Dr. Bertha Hidalgo from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Vanessa Castro from IT'S TIME TEXAS, and Heidi Swartz from Cowtown Marathon about resuming in-person physical activity safely during the COVID-19 pandemic. They reviewed current guidelines and discussed how to participate in physical activities safely based on the latest research and evidence. They mention that participation safety may vary by sport.

[WATCH THE RECORDING](#)

[WEBINAR: COVID Quo Vadis? Variants, Sick Kids, Vaccines and the Unvaccinated](#) **Michael and Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living**

Drs. Fisher-Hoch and McCormick from the UTHealth School of Public Health in Brownsville gave a presentation about how COVID-19 variants form and the current state of the Delta variant. They took a deeper look at the impact of the Delta variant on unvaccinated individuals and in children, and a look at emerging variants of interest. The best protection against COVID-19 hospitalizations and death continues to be vaccinations and masking adherence.

[WATCH THE RECORDING](#)

[Texas Obesity Awareness Week](#) **Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living**

Texas Obesity Awareness Week was established in the 80th Legislative Session by House Bill 2313 and is designated to occur in the second full week of September each year. The purpose of the week is to raise awareness of the health

risks associated with obesity and to encourage Texans to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Although Texas Obesity Awareness Week has passed, the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living has rounded up our most recent and popular obesity resources below:

Resource Highlight:

[COVID-19: Impact of Childhood Obesity on Health Outcomes](#)

[COVID-19: Impact of Adult Obesity on Health Outcomes](#)

[Child Obesity Toolkit](#)

[Child Nutrition Toolkit](#)

[The Texas of Today is the United States of Tomorrow](#)

[What Can I Pack in My Child's Lunch?](#)

Recent Publications by TX RPC Researchers

COVID-19 Publications

Loria, H., **McLeigh, J.**, Wolfe, K., Conner, E., Smith, V., Greeley, C. S., & Keefe, R. J. (2021). Caring for children in foster and kinship care during a pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 1-24.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15548732.2021.1965065>

Non-COVID-19

Abrams S. A. (2021). Vitamin D and bone minerals in neonates. *Early Human Development*, 105461. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2021.105461>

Akinlotan, M. A., Primm, K., Bolin, J. N., Ferdinand Cheres, A. L., Lee, J., Callaghan, T., & **Ferdinand, A. O.** (2021). Racial, Rural, and Regional Disparities in Diabetes-Related Lower-Extremity Amputation Rates, 2009-2017. *Diabetes Care*, 44(9), 2053–2060.

<https://doi.org/10.2337/dc20-3135>

Baggett, K. M., Davis, B., Sheeber, L., Miller, K., Leve, C., Mosley, E. A., **Landry, S. H.**, & Feil, E. G. (2021). Optimizing Social-Emotional-Communication Development in Infants of Mothers With Depression: Protocol for a Randomized Controlled Trial of a Mobile Intervention Targeting Depression and Responsive Parenting. *JMIR Research Protocols*, 10(8), e31072.

<https://doi.org/10.2196/31072>.

Balasubramanian, B. A., Higashi, R. T., Rodriguez, S. A., Sadeghi, N., Santini, N. O., & Lee, S. C. (2021). Thematic Analysis of Challenges of Care Coordination for Underinsured and Uninsured Cancer Survivors With Chronic Conditions. *JAMA Network Open*, 4(8), e2119080.

<https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.19080>

Balogun, T., **Troisi, C.**, Swartz, M. D., & Beyda, R. (2021). Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth: Preventive Health Services Received Prior to Detention. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 10.1089/jchc.20.01.0002. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1089/jchc.20.01.0002>

Caze, T. J., Price, A., **Knell, G.**, Ellis, C., Abt, J., & Burkhart, S. (2021). The Clinical Utility of the Vestibular and Ocular Motor Screening for Protracted Recovery in Pediatric Concussion Patients. *Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine*, 9(7_suppl3), 2325967121S00163.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2325967121S00163>

Crawford, A., Varghese, C., Oh, Y., Guttentag, C., Zucker, T., **Landry, S.**, & Cummins, R. A. (2021). An Initial Investigation of the CIRCLE Infant-Toddler Teacher Training for Toddler Teachers. *Early Education and Development*, 1-25.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10409289.2021.1961427>

Egbuonye, N. C., Ishdorj, A., **McKyer, E. L. J.**, & Mkuu, R. (2021). Examining the Dietary Diversity of Children in Niger. *Nutrients*, 13(9), 2961. <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/13/9/2961>

Hodgson, N. A., Gooneratne, N., **Perez, A.**, Talwar, S., & Huang, L. (2021). A Timed Activity Protocol to Address Sleep-Wake Disorders in Home Dwelling Persons Living with Dementia: The Healthy Patterns Clinical Trial. *BMC Geriatrics*, 21(1), 451. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12877-021-02397-2>

Nabeel, I., Caraballo-Arias, Y., **Perkison, W. B.**, McCarthy, R. B., Saberi, P., Berenji, M., Goldman, R. H., Laestadius, J. G., Sokas, R. K., Das, R., Senay, E., Wilkenfeld, M., Cook-Shimanek, M., & ACOEM Work Group on Mitigation/Adaptation Strategies Related to Climate Change (2021). Proposed Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies Related to Climate Change: Guidance for OEM Professionals. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 63(9), e650–e656. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000002321>.

Page, R. L., Han, G., Akinlotan, M., **Patron, M. P.**, Gandhi, H., & Kochan, K. J. (2021). Telomere Length and Preterm Birth in Pregnant Mexican-Origin Women. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 10.1007/s10995-021-03209-0. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-021-03209-0>.

Palasi, S., Zhang, N., Bankston, M., Godby, J., Burrows, H., Lagunas, J., **Perkison, W.**, Gunn, B., Chambers, M. S., Rosenthal, D. I., Morrison, W., Garden, A., Fuller, C. D., Giordano, S., & Koay, E. J. (2021). Factors Associated with Complex Oral Treatment Device Usage in Patients with Head and Neck Cancer. *Clinical and Translational Radiation Oncology*, 30, 78–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctro.2021.08.004>.

Yoon, J. H., Suchting, R., de Dios, C., Vincent, J. N., **McKay, S. A.**, **Lane, S. D.**, & **Schmitz, J. M.** (2021). Decreased Cocaine Demand Following Contingency Management Treatment. Drug and alcohol dependence, 226, 108883. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2021.108883>

Texas Population Publications

General:

Gulas-Wroblewski, B. E., Kairis, R. B., Gorchakov, R., Wheless, A., & **Murray, K. O.** (2021). Optimization of DNA Extraction from Field-Collected Mammalian Whole Blood on Filter Paper for *Trypanosoma cruzi* (Chagas Disease) Detection. *Pathogens (Basel, Switzerland)*, 10(8), 1040. <https://doi.org/10.3390/pathogens10081040>

Landry, M. J., **van den Berg, A. E.**, **Hoelscher, D. M.**, Asigbee, F. M., Vandyousefi, S., Ghaddar, R., Jeans, M.R., Waugh, L., Nikah, K., **Sharma, S.V.**, & Davis, J. N. (2021). Impact of a School-Based Gardening, Cooking, Nutrition Intervention on Diet Intake and Quality: The TX Sprouts Randomized Controlled Trial. *Nutrients*, 13(9), 3081. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu13093081>

Robertson, M. C., Cox-Martin, E., Liao, Y., Flores, S. A., Shegog, R., **Markham, C. M.**, Fujimoto, K., Durand, C. P., Brewster, A., Lyons, E. J., & Basen-Engquist, K. M. (2021). Acceptance- and Mindfulness-Based Techniques for Physical Activity Promotion in Breast Cancer Survivors: A Qualitative Study. *Supportive Care in Cancer*, 1–9. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-021-06428-x>

Szeszulski, J., Walker, T. J., Robertson, M. C., & Fernandez, M. E. (2021). Differences in Psychosocial Constructs Among Elementary School Staff that Implement Physical Activity Programs: A Step in Designing Implementation Strategies. *Translational behavioral medicine*. Advance online publication, ibab120. <https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibab120>

North Texas:

Messiah, S. E., Xie, L., Mathew, M. S., **Delclos, G. L.**, **Kohl, H. W.**, & Kahn, J. S. (2021). Results of COVID-19 Surveillance in a Large United States Pediatric Healthcare System over One Year. *Children*, 8(9), 752. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-9067/8/9/752>

South Texas:

Bauer, C., Zhang, K., Lee, M., Fisher-Hoch, S., Guajardo, E., de la Cerda, I., Fernandez, M.E., &

Kudos

Accolades 2021: The Academy Awards of Child Advocacy CHILDREN AT RISK

CHILDREN AT RISK Annual Accolades Luncheon: The Academy Awards of Child Advocacy will be held on October 8th, 2021. The luncheon is focused on recognizing the collective effort of advocates and community partners from across the state to ensure they create a better Texas for all our children. TX RPC Project Network Member Dr. Shreela Sharma won a statewide award in the category of Outstanding NonProfit Researcher for her project Brighter Bites. Additionally, TX RPC Project Advisory Committee Member, Clayton Travis was recognized as a Rising Star in Child Advocacy for his work with the Texas Pediatric Society. Congratulations to both of these individuals and to CHILDREN AT RISK for their efforts on behalf of Texas children!

[LEARN MORE](#)

About the TX RPC Project

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration (Texas RPC) Project is a non-partisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and policymakers.

[Learn more online.](#)

The Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration Project team and overall network are available to support Texas policymakers with informational requests or resources related to health topics, during the interim and throughout the 2021 Legislative Session.

Contact Us

For more information, email TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

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