



Duckworth Discusses Equitable COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution & Vaccine Hesitancy In Virtual Roundtable With Metro East Leaders

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) held a virtual roundtable today with Metro East leaders to discuss the disproportionate public health impact of COVID-19 on Black and Brown communities and the need to mitigate vaccine hesitancy. The group also discussed how Illinois can continue to equitably distribute the COVID-19 vaccine throughout the region, while also addressing medical racism, educational outreach and cultural sensitivities.

“As we continue working to increase vaccine supply in Illinois and across the country, we know that lack of availability is not the only hurdle we face,” said Duckworth. “Many Illinoisans, especially in Black and Brown communities and other hard-hit communities, are hesitant to take this vaccine. I’ll keep working with organizations and leaders in the Metro East and across Illinois to do everything we can we can earn trust and increase awareness throughout our communities that these vaccines are not only safe—they are one of the best things we can do to help end this pandemic and get things back to normal.”

Duckworth was joined at today’s roundtable by Illinois Department of Public Health Deputy Director Dr. Garth Walker, Illinois State Senator Christopher Belt (IL-SD-47), Illinois State Representative LaToya Greenwood (IL-HD-114), Fairmont City, Illinois, Mayor Michael Suarez, St. Clair County Health Department Director Barb Hohlt and Deputy Director Myla Blandford, Madison County Health Department Director Toni Corona, New Life Christ Church Senior Pastor Bishop Geoffrey Dudley, SIU Board of Trustees Vice Chair Ed Hightower and SIHF Healthcare Special Populations Program Manager Mercedes Collado.

Duckworth has been a leader in helping ensure states and municipalities have the resources they need to equitably and effectively distribute COVID-19 vaccines and ensuring Illinoisans know the vaccine is safe. Duckworth has [recently announced](#) nearly [\\$900 million](#) in federal funding for Illinois to support vaccine distribution, as well as expanding testing. In December, Duckworth also held virtual roundtables with [Black](#) and [Latinx](#) community leaders in Chicago to discuss the disproportionate public health impact of COVID-19 on people of color as well as plans to equitably distribute a safe vaccine to these communities in Chicago and across Illinois.