

Battling Vaccine Hesitancy in African American Communities

OSF Physician Encourages African Americans to get the COVID-19 Vaccine

(Interview Transcripts)

John Hobbs, M.D., OSF Medical Group Physician

“I did get the COVID vaccine and did not experience any side effects as a matter of fact. Under the circumstances, I felt it was very important to set an example. As an assistant pastor of a church for 35 years now, I figured I need to set an example because it is much easier to go to your congregation and encourage those who are reluctant to do so if you yourself have already done it. So it actually was a role model situation as much as a safety factor for myself.” (:26)

John Hobbs, M.D., OSF Medical Group Physician

“Credibility is everything. You can’t send Caucasians into the African American community and tell a 65-year-old African American ‘I have something for you that will protect you’ because there will be hesitancy. However, that does not go across the board because, for example, a Caucasian or non-people of color who practice medicine and have established a great rapport with their black clientele – those people will be more accepting of the recommendation.” (:28)

John Hobbs, M.D., OSF Medical Group Physician

“We always open a sermon or preaching of the gospel by mentioning the vaccine. And because a number of reliable, accepted individuals who do preaching at the church are looked upon with honesty and integrity, we always open that way. One of the things we always say is ‘I got the vaccine and before we get started let’s emphasize the fact that you need to get the vaccine as well’ – because it’s going to save your life. It is going to keep grandmamma safe. And that’s who we worry about is grandmamma, grandpapa and potentially even parents.” (:31)

John Hobbs, M.D., OSF Medical Group Physician

“It can certainly keep you from getting severely ill and needing hospitalization and potentially even dying. We encourage everybody to get the flu vaccine for example simply because we know historically that it works.” (:11)

John Hobbs, M.D., OSF Medical Group Physician

“There are a number of our African American clientele and individuals in the community who are not internet savvy or social media savvy. So I say to the younger generations, you know this stuff to help your parents and grandparents. Go through the process and help them do whatever is necessary to get registered. If they get frustrated because either something gets delayed or was canceled at the last minute, don’t allow their frustration to allow them to give up. Be persistent.” (:32)