

**PANDEMIC'S IMPACT ON
AFRICAN AMERICANS
KEY FACTS**

Fellow Fiskites:

I have had the privilege of supporting vaccine development over the past 40+ years, coincidentally married to the chief architect and senior researcher who developed the active component of most SARS-CoV-2 vaccines. Together for 42 years, Dr. Barney Graham and I have traveled an interesting road, and in the process, I have become an "armchair vaccinologist". Thus, here are some key facts about the pandemic's impact on African Americans:

- Coronavirus continues to be a threat disproportionately in African American communities, with three times the hospitalization rate and death rate of the majority population;
- It is possible for the death rate of African Americans to increase to 4 times or more the rate of majority Americans if AA vaccination rates are low;
- Vaccine distribution and access is also a problem that may be as great a barrier as vaccine hesitancy for achieving a high level of population immunity in the black community.
- It is important to raise questions with your local community vaccine distributors, or create a community monitoring system to assure racial equity in distribution. Make sure that data collection includes designation of race in your community;
- Masks and handwashing are still important and effective measures. In high-risk environments where social distancing is not possible or air flow is limited, double masking is recommended;
- Minimizing community infection rates decreases the chances for developing viral mutations. So everything you can do to prevent becoming infected and/or infecting others will help. Current mutant viruses are sensitive to current vaccines, except for the Astra Zeneca vaccine which is not available in the United States.

For more information: <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2021/01/26/moderna-covid-vaccine-science-fast/6555783002/>

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