

Vanderbilt Child Health Poll Shows Eroding Trust among Tennessee Parents in COVID-19 And Vaccine Information

Fewer Tennessee parents polled by the Vanderbilt Center for Child Health Policy in fall 2021 reported they trust information they receive about vaccines than the same time in 2020, according to the latest analysis of the annual Vanderbilt Child Health Poll.

Only 51% of the 1,026 polled said they trust the information they receive about shots, not just the COVID vaccine, down from more than 61% in fall 2020.

"Pediatricians have been worried that misinformation about COVID-19 vaccination would erode parental confidence in *all* childhood vaccines," said Stephen Patrick, MD, MPH, Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Child Health Policy. "It is deeply concerning that in just one year, there has been a 10% drop in the number of Tennessee parents who say they trust information they receive about vaccines."

Trust in information from health care providers about the pandemic, including school re-opening policies and how to protect yourself also increased from 2020 to 2021 from 35% to 45%. The most trusted sources across the state were health care providers, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the state Department of Health, which was consistent across region and race and ethnicity of parents across the state.

Among racial and ethnic groups across the state, White parents showed the largest decline in trust in all vaccines, falling from 66% to 50%. Trust among Black parents in all vaccines increased 5%, according to poll results.

Patrick said the findings stress the importance of health care providers to educate patients and the public about safe and effective health care practices supported by the evidence.

"As parents' most trusted partners, it is important that health care providers and public health systems work to fill the trust gap parents have for vaccines," said Patrick. "We need to ensure that parents feel confident in what the evidence tells us — childhood vaccines are safe and effective."

The Vanderbilt Child Health Poll is conducted annually each fall and surveys more than 1,000 Tennessee parents about various issues impacting them and their children around the state.

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