

South Asian Health Institute (SAHI): Outreach & Delivery of COVID-19 Vaccines

**Racial Equity in Immunization
BC Immunization Forum 2022**

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Presenter Disclosure

Samantha Tong

I have no Conflict of Interest to disclose.

I acknowledge that Fraser Health provides services within the unceded and traditional lands of the Coast Salish & Nlaka'pamux Nations.



Outline

- Context
- Barriers & Facilitators
- SAHI role during COVID-19 pandemic
- Acknowledgements

Overview:

South Asian Health Institute (SAHI)

- Over 75% of BC's South Asian population live in Fraser Health region
- SAHI was created in 2013 to advance understanding of key health issues affecting the South Asian population and to support development of culturally appropriate strategies for improving the health of the diverse South Asian community in Fraser Health

Pandemic context

High disease burden among:

- Large multi-generational or overcrowded households with predominantly racialized groups
- Large workplace outbreaks (i.e. food/meat processing) involving workers from diverse racial backgrounds



Gaps in culturally appropriate messaging, language services and effective ways of engagement with impacted communities



Impacts on case and contact management, effectiveness of broad public health measures

Barriers and Facilitators

COVID-19 VACCINE UPTAKE

Some Barriers

- **Individual/groups**

- Fear/anxiety, low health literacy, transportation, mobility issues, technological/digital literacy and access, vaccine hesitancy, lack of trust in health system, system navigation, language, immigration status concerns

- **Community level**

- Stigma, overwhelming information/conflicting information from country of origin vs BC, influence of global trends

Some Barriers

- **System level**

- Health system designed for English speakers
 - Assumptions of health seeking behaviours (e.g., navigation of systems), information access
 - Unmet needs for diverse communities – e.g., lack of culturally relevant information and messaging available in other languages in various formats (e.g., written, audio)
- Lack of accessible/available/appropriate services and safe spaces
 - Assumptions that current model and spaces are
- Lack of paid time to get vaccine (financial impact)
- Staff: competing priorities, need for awareness and professional competency for culturally safe care

Facilitators

- **SAHI**

- Established connections to the diverse South Asian community in Fraser Health through existing partnerships prior to the pandemic and new partnerships developed during
- Team members from diverse South Asian community with fluency in different languages
- Understanding of the cultural context

Facilitators

- **Strengths of community**
 - Social responsibility to help community
 - Partners (new and existing)
 - Supportive in sharing and promoting COVID-19 relevant information to community members
 - Willing to host vaccination clinics for community
- **Community trust of community partners**
- **Community familiarity with locations of clinics**

SAHI's Role

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

SAHI's Role in Fraser Health's COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Engaging with the diverse South Asian community in the Fraser Health region to safely and appropriately practice COVID-19 safety and prevention

Learning and understanding the needs of the community during the pandemic

Advocacy

SAHI's COVID-19 work

- Health literacy, education and awareness
- Knowledge translation (e.g., PHO orders)
- Development and dissemination of culturally relevant resources and messaging/campaigns (available in different languages)
- Consults (e.g., contact tracing team, BCCDC KT)
- System navigation support
- Outreach (in-person, cold calling)

SAHI Role: COVID-19 vaccine delivery and outreach

- Collaboration with Fraser Health COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Team
- Community in-reach vaccination clinics (Apr – Oct 2021):
 - Planning and coordination of clinic logistics for wrap around supports for clinical team (e.g., front end, after care)
 - Coordination of external volunteer groups
 - SAHI staff and volunteers with ability to speak different South Asian languages
 - Held at various community settings where South Asian community frequented (e.g., place of worship)
- Open to and accessed by all community members in the area

SAHI Role: COVID-19 vaccine delivery and outreach

- In partnership with community partners:
 - Delivered 29 in-reach vaccination clinics
 - High demand but limited capacity to offer more
 - 7,171 community members vaccinated (~mid-May to Oct)
 - 1,967 = 1st doses (mid-Jun to Oct)
- Significant support provided for registration with provincial COVID-19 vaccination system and getting temporary PHNs

In-reach Vaccination Clinics

Reduced Barriers

- Language
- Transportation
- Technological/digital
- Health and community system navigation
- Vaccine hesitancy
- Addressed immigration status concerns
- Minimized stress/anxiety

Vulnerable/at-risk members vaccinated

- Seniors, although eligible for COVID-19 vaccine early 2021, chose to get vaccinated at in-reach clinics instead
- Undocumented/migrant workers
- Truck drivers (walk-in accessibility)
- Mobility issues

Thank you

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you...

- **Fraser Health Teams**

- Vaccine Outreach Team, Corporate Communications, Contact Tracing Aides, SAHI Wellness Ambassador Volunteers

- **Community Volunteer Groups**

- BC Muslim Association
- Place of Worship volunteers
- SSISY
- Khalsa Aid
- Emergency Support Services
- Mission Rotary
- SA COVID Taskforce
- Sikh Health Foundation
- Unidentified

- **Community clinic partners**

- Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford
- Khalsa Diwan Society, Surrey
- Abbotsford Islamic Centre
- Masjid Al-Salaam
- Vancouver Islamic Centre
- Gurdwara Sahib Dasmesh Darbar
- Surrey Jamie Masjic
- Lakshmi Narayan Mandir
- Burnaby Hindu Temple
- Gurdwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib
- Fiji Islamic Centre
- Masjid ur-Rahman
- Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara
- BCMA Islamic Centre, Abbotsford
- John Volken Academy
- Mission Gurdwara
- Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Gilley Temple
- Gurdwara Sahib Sukh Sagar
- Gurdwara Kalgidhar Darbar Sahib

SAHI Team





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