



## Educating the community on the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations.

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Director, Population & Community Health Kawana Cohen-Hopkins, MSN, RN, recently participated in a virtual COVID-19 vaccine panel discussion for Maple Springs Baptist Church in Capitol Heights. Here, she helped answer questions about vaccine hesitancy among community members in Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.

Many of the questions from the audience centered around who should receive the vaccine, vaccination availability, side effects, the process for vaccine approval, overall benefit, and the origins of COVID.

"I think afterwards people were more open to receiving vaccines," says Cohen-Hopkins, noting the Community Health team saw a higher number of vaccine clinic participants following this event. "A lot of myths were dispelled during the informational panel. We explained the process for getting vaccines approved, while also letting folks know that it is safe for protecting yourself and your loved ones. Even in the community now, we're seeing between 30 and 60 people at community events just to receive booster shots."

Others spoke alongside Cohen-Hopkins at this event, including Prince George's County Health Officer Ernest L. Carter, MD, PhD, and Tamera Coyne-Beasley, MD, MPH, director of the Division of Adolescent Medicine at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

### Letter from the president.

Dear Community Member,

It is important that MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center showcase its highest commitment to protecting our community. Our hospital did just that by providing onsite COVID-19 vaccinations and booster shots to community members, as well as educating them about the importance of vaccinations, which you'll learn more about here.

Your individual efforts in responding to this pandemic will help us continue moving along the path toward a promising future as we strive to regain a sense of normalcy.

Kindest regards,

Christine R. Wray, FACHE

Senior Vice President,  
MedStar Health

President,  
MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



As a former member of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Hopkins said Dr. Beasley clarified that individuals with a comorbidity—such as high blood pressure or lupus—need to get vaccinated because their risk of contracting COVID, or dying from COVID complications, is higher.

Reverend Jerome (Sam) Tarver, DMIN, pastor of Maple Springs Baptist Church, also served as an advocate for vaccinations.

“Man’s treatment is a part of God’s healing,” he said. “Getting the vaccine may not prevent you from getting COVID, but it will go a long way in saving your life.”

Cohen-Hopkins agreed with this.

“Taking some Tylenol to help get rid of a fever while lying in bed is easier than being on a ventilator. That resonated with people in a way that they were not expecting,” she said.



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—Kawana Cohen-Hopkins

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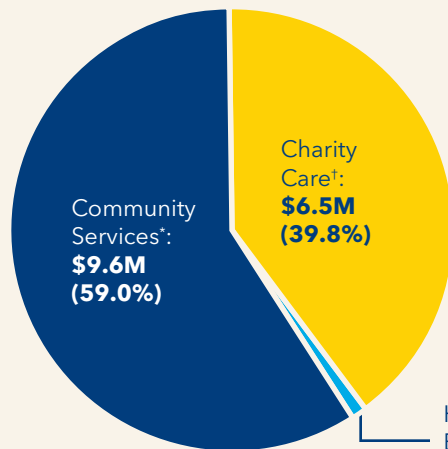
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## 2021 Community benefit contribution: \$16.2M

\*Includes subsidies, community health improvement services, community building activities, financial contributions, and community benefit operations

†Includes Medicaid assessments

Health Professions Education:  
**\$0.2M (1.2%)**