



Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic highlights historical inequities that exist between racial/ethnic groups in the US

Structural Determinants

Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

Health Outcomes

- The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) has Health Equity and COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Teams that work to minimize adverse COVID-19 health outcomes and risks by prioritizing equity and health among all Cuyahoga County communities

Learning Objectives

- Understand how CCBH's legislative declaration of *Racism as a Public Health Crisis* informs COVID-19 disparities within the community
- Identify barrier(s) between vulnerable populations and COVID-19 resources
- Develop COVID-19 communication materials and action-oriented programming that eliminate existing barriers

Deliverables

- Broadcasted a Public Service Announcement on WRUW radio station about travel tips and protective measures that reduce COVID-19 risks
- Co-hosted and produced a Podcast discussion on the long-term mental health impact of COVID-19

Populations of Interest & COVID-19

- The demographic breakdown of Cuyahoga County is white (59.0%) followed by Black (29.1%)
- Black individuals are over-represented in COVID-19-related hospitalizations in the county (Figure 1) and underrepresented in COVID-19 vaccinations in the county (Figure 2)

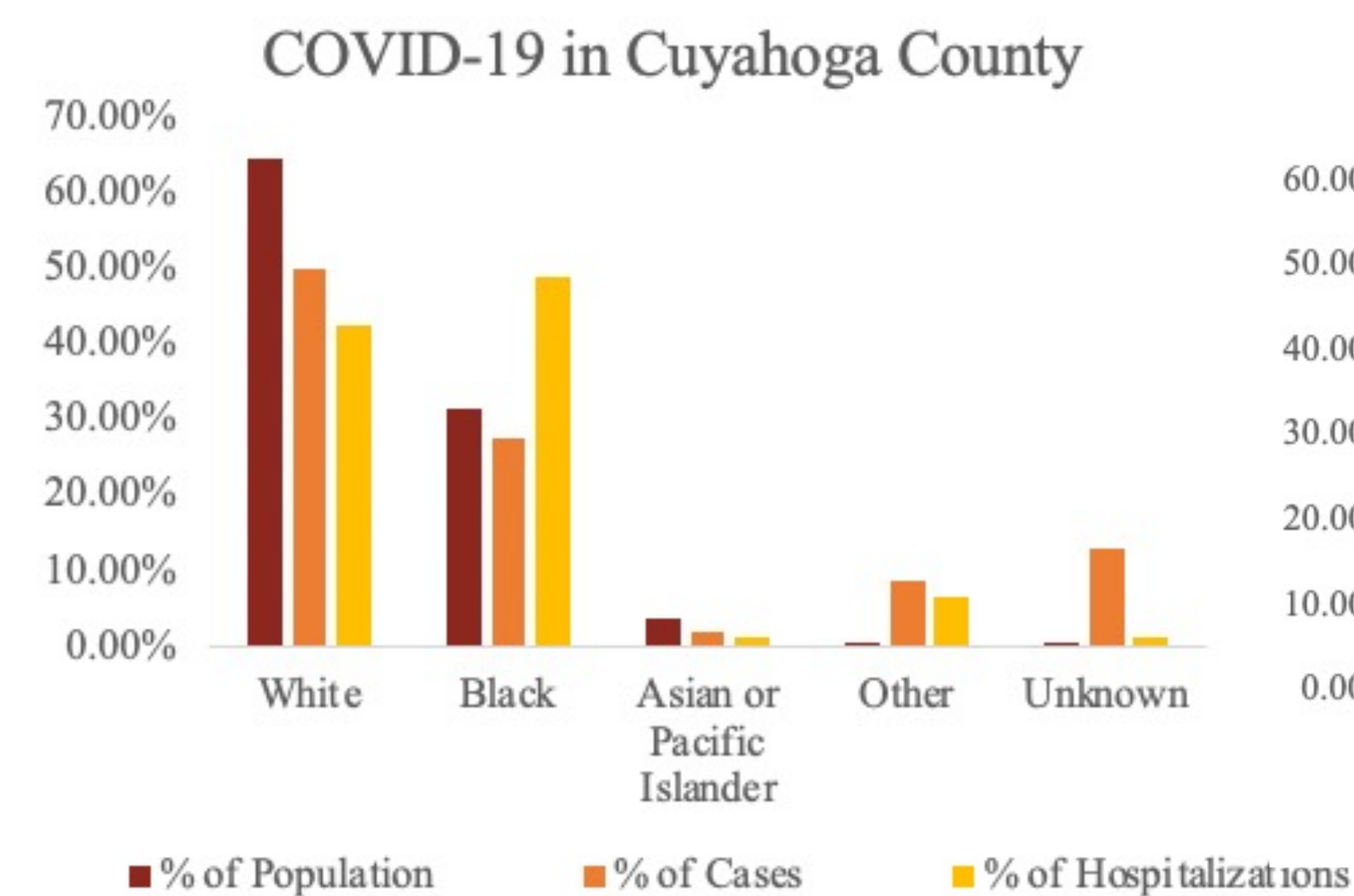


Figure 1. The percentage of the population, the percentage of cases, and the percentage of hospitalizations related to COVID-19 is broken down by race in Cuyahoga County.

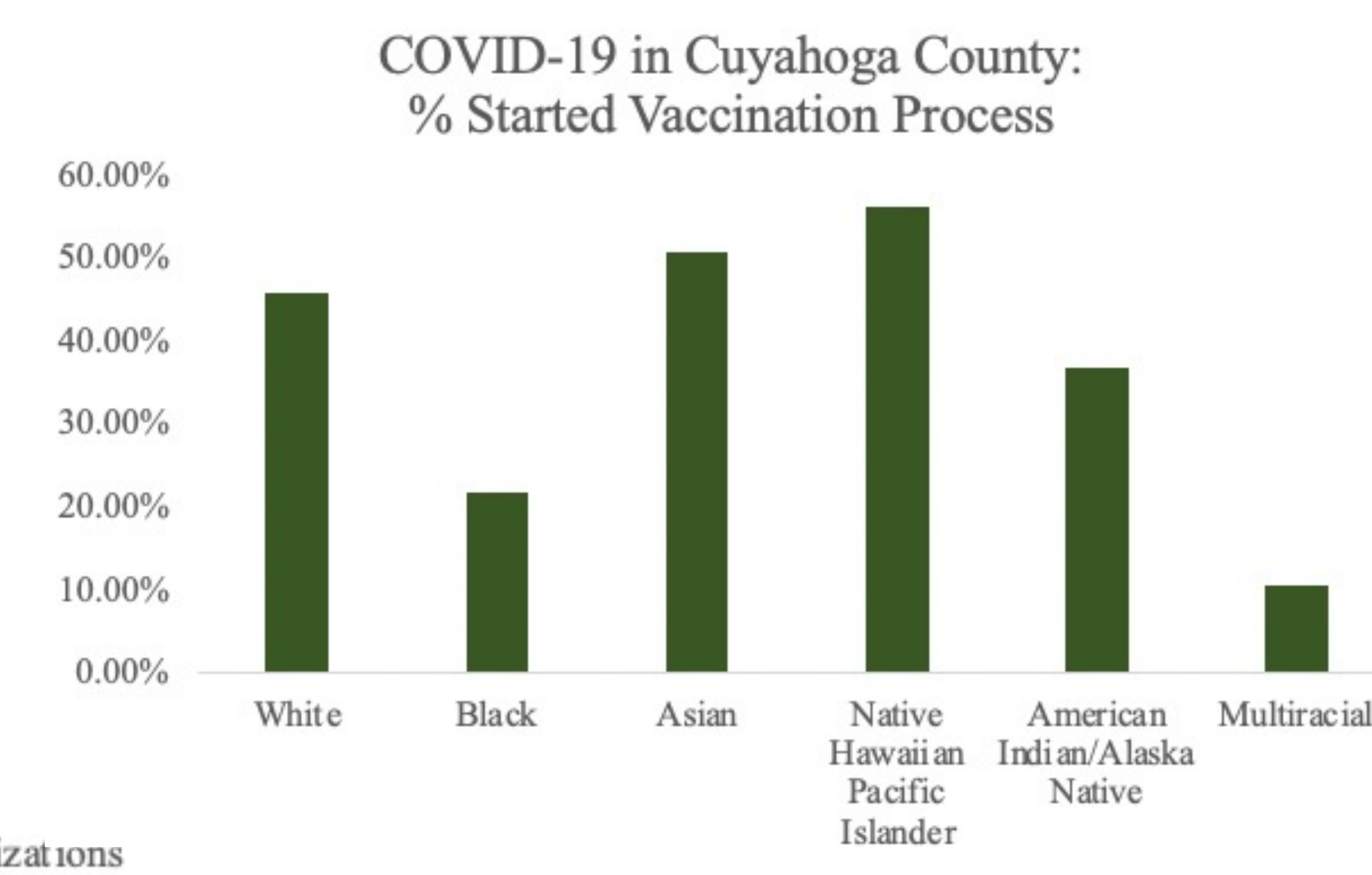


Figure 2. The percentage of those who have started the COVID-19 vaccination process is broken down by race in Cuyahoga County.

Activities

- Conduct a literature review about the legislative declaration of *Racism as a Public Health Crisis* to understand institutional racial disparities in Cuyahoga County
- Weekly participation in CCBH Health Equity Team Meetings to discuss efforts to eliminate barriers to health, protect the community from COVID-19, and combat disparities
- Bimonthly participation in CCBH Vaccine Equity Team Meetings to discuss vaccination clinics for primarily Black/Brown communities in Cuyahoga County
- Review, create, and give feedback on COVID-19 communication materials and programs
- Work with interdisciplinary teams to brainstorm messaging towards vulnerable communities

Lessons Learned

- Reaching out to vulnerable communities directly allows for effective, meaningful communication; this respects the public health mantra of “*nothing about us, without us*”
- Targeting specific at-risk communities with public health communication materials increases effectiveness and public confidence in CCBH's mission
- Health equity cannot be achieved without the buy-in of all communities, regardless of race

Public Health Implications

- Successful public health programs require wide engagement across communities, especially disenfranchised ones
- Equity in health cannot be achieved without acknowledging, understanding and addressing historical and contemporary institutional injustices
- Health communication builds trust between communities and improves health and well-being
- Action and trust-filled communication with Black communities in Cuyahoga County will mitigate health disparities

Acknowledgements

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