

# Prisons need better vaccine education for inmates, advocates say | PBS NewsHour

By Dave Collins

April 9, 2021

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Shortly before COVID-19 vaccinations began in January at the federal prison in Danbury, Connecticut, officials held town hall meetings for inmates about the vaccines and put up informational posters around the facility.

Yet when vaccination time came, 212 of the nearly 550 inmates who were offered the shots refused to take them, according to federal prison officials, shining a light on prisoners' skepticism of the vaccine that is permeating many correctional institutions in the country.

In Massachusetts, more than 5,500 state and county prisoners have refused the vaccines, compared with nearly 7,800 who have received the first of two doses, officials say.

Inmate advocates and researchers say prison systems need to do more to educate prisoners about the vaccines, as available data and surveys show that many inmates decline or express hesitancy about getting the shots. Efforts should include bringing in outside experts and trusted community members, especially people of color, not just passing out flyers and having talks by prison staff, they say.

[...]

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