Major ad effort seeks to help answer COVID-19 vaccine questions

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What’s the news: The AMA is joining many of the biggest names in health care and corporate America for a massive national communications effort on COVID-19 vaccines to send patients this message: “It’s up to you.”

More than 300 major brands, media companies, community-based organizations, faith leaders, medical experts and other trusted messengers are supporting the campaign designed to reach distinct audiences. The campaign was announced by the Ad Council and the COVID Collaborative, which have raised $52 million so far for the initiative.

Partners in the new campaign include Adobe, Disney, Facebook and Instagram, Google and YouTube, iHeartMedia, LinkedIn, NBCUniversal, Pandora, Salesforce, Snapchat, Spotify, Twitter, Unilever, Verizon, ViacomCBS and WarnerMedia.

The campaign’s messaging was created in close partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ensuring it is all rigorously vetted and backed by science. All campaign efforts drive audiences to GetVaccineAnswers.org—or DeTiDepende.org in Spanish—for answers to the top questions Americans have about the COVID-19 vaccines. The website’s information also is available in Chinese, Korean, Russian, Haitian Creole and Vietnamese.

The continually updated website answers common questions about COVID-19 vaccines such as:

- How they are authorized for use.
- How they keep people safe.
- Why there is more than one type of vaccine.
- How to get vaccinated.
- What it’s like to get vaccinated.
- How many people have been vaccinated.
Why it’s important: About 40% of Americans have not yet made a firm decision to get vaccinated as soon as vaccines are available to them, according to Ad Council research fielded by Ipsos Public Affairs in February.

The data shows the need for a tailored effort to reach the communities of color that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and where there is considerable distrust in the government and medical community and high hesitancy toward the vaccines.

Only 40% of Black and Hispanic Americans say they are confident they have enough information to guide their decision about getting a COVID-19 vaccination, compared with 60% in the overall population. According to new research fielded by the Ad Council in mid-February, about three-quarters of consumers who are vaccine hesitant say they want information to address their questions about the vaccines, even if vaccines are not yet available to them.

“Public education is a critical component of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic—it is a shared effort to empower people to protect themselves, especially those in disproportionately burdened populations,” said CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH. “Just as we are taking action to address the inequities this pandemic laid bare, we need a concerted approach to bring an end to the pandemic and to leverage the lessons learned during COVID-19 to achieve optimal health for all.”

Learn more about the six big fixes Dr. Walensky says are needed to crush COVID-19.

The campaign takes an empathetic approach that reaffirms that it’s understandable to have questions about the vaccines. The slogan—“it’s up to you”—is meant to convey that one of the best ways to get back to the moments and people we miss is by getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

Creative assets in English and Spanish started appearing nationwide across broadcast TV, digital, radio and social media in February. Additional work will also roll out over the coming weeks.

Learn more: The Ad Council and COVID Collaborative have made available a toolkit with tips, tools, language suggestions and key audience insights for the public health sector.

In addition, the AMA COVID-19 vaccines guide for physicians offers evidence-based messaging guidance and best practices for consideration in external communications on COVID-19 vaccine topics.