



# **Engaging Former NFL Players in Promoting Vaccination in Tennessee**

## **Presentation for 2024 VPDIP Immunization Provider Expo: Bridging Gaps to Immunization**

**National Football League Alumni Association (NFL Alumni)**  
**March 6, 2024**

# Overview of our Presentation



1. About NFL Alumni
2. About the GEAR UP, Tennessee! Vaccination Outreach and Education Program
3. Our Approach for Engaging and Collaborating with Community
4. Impact and Results
5. Key Take-aways

# About NFL Alumni

- Founded in 1967 by a small group of successful retired NFL players, the National Football League Alumni Association (NFL Alumni) is the oldest and most well-known retired player organization
- 40 Chapters across the U.S.
- Our Mission:
  - Caring for Kids
  - Caring for the Community
  - Caring for Our Own (through the Association)
- Strong Track Record of Engaging Retired NFL Players to Improve the Health of Communities



# NFL Alumni GEAR UP, Tennessee! Campaign



## ■ Overall Goal:

Increase COVID-19 vaccination and vaccine confidence in Tennessee through development and implementation of community engagement strategies to promote COVID-19 vaccination

## ■ Our Approach:

- ✓ Engage retired NFL players to serve as ambassadors for the campaign
- ✓ Raise awareness of the importance of getting vaccinated through player PSAs, social media, radio promotion, paid advertising, earned media, and community events
- ✓ Collaborate with community-based organizations and vaccine providers to host vaccination events
- ✓ Host town halls and listening sessions to engage, educate, and gain input from the community
- ✓ Measure and evaluate results to drive ongoing improvements and impact

# Our Approach for Engaging the Community



- **We Were Very Deliberate in Determining Where We Wanted to Go**
  - ✓ Conducted detailed analysis of demographics in the state
  - ✓ Targeted 2 counties that together would enable us to reach more than 50% of Black population in Tennessee
  
- **Our Strategies for Effectively Engaging the Community**
  - ✓ Engaging trusted community partners
  - ✓ Leveraging long-standing relationships with community leaders
  - ✓ Meeting people “where they are” in terms of locations of events, as well as in our interactions
  - ✓ Engaging individuals by asking for their insights and carefully listening to their concerns
  - ✓ Targeting our desired demographics, interests, and locations in our paid digital and radio promotion strategies
  - ✓ Utilizing spokespersons who would resonate with our target audience

# NFL Alumni Ambassadors Engaged in Campaign

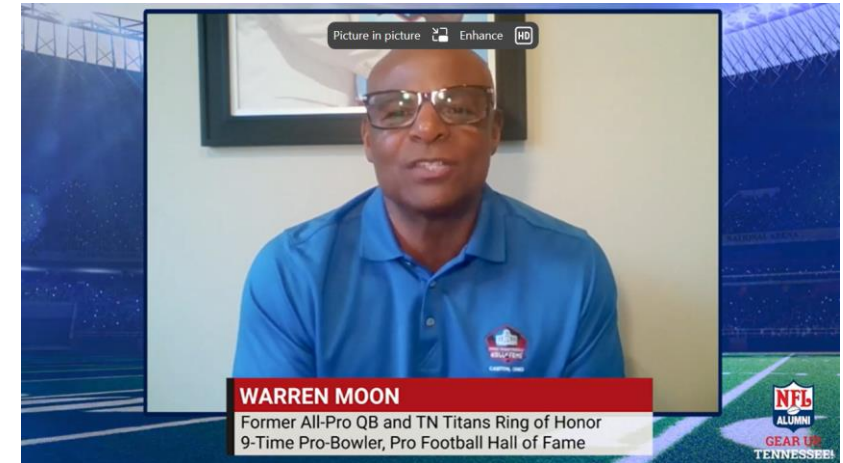


- Al Smith, NFL Alumni TN Chapter President, Former Houston Oilers All-Pro Linebacker
- Raul Allegre, Former Kicker, New York Giants, Indianapolis Colts
- Blaine Bishop, Former Pro Bowl Safety, Tennessee Titans
- Brad Edwards, Former Safety, Washington Commanders, NFL Alumni Chief Executive Officer
- Albert Haynesworth, Former Pro Bowl Defensive Tackle, Tennessee Titans
- Brad Hopkins, Former Pro Bowl Tackle, Tennessee Titans
- Chris Johnson, Former Pro Bowl Running Back, Tennessee Titans
- Jevon Kearse, Former Pro Bowl Defensive End, Tennessee Titans
- Joey Kent, Former Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans
- Erron Kinney, Former Tight End, Tennessee Titans
- Derrick Mason, Former Pro Bowl Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans and Baltimore Ravens
- Dexter McCluster, Former Running Back, Tennessee Titans and Kansas City Chiefs
- Warren Moon, Former All-Pro Pro Bowl Quarterback, Titans, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame and Titans Ring of Honor
- Donnie Nickey, Former Safety, Tennessee Titans
- Neil O'Donnell, Former Pro Bowl Quarterback, Tennessee Titans and Pittsburgh Steelers
- Brett Ratliff, Former Quarterback, Tennessee Titans and Tampa Bay Buccaneers
- Chris Sanders, Former Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans
- Delanie Walker, Former Pro Bowl Tight End, Tennessee Titans
- Nate Washington, Former Wide Receiver, Tennessee Titans
- LenDale White, Former Running Back, Tennessee Titans
- Lorenzo White, Former Pro Bowl Running Back, Houston Oilers

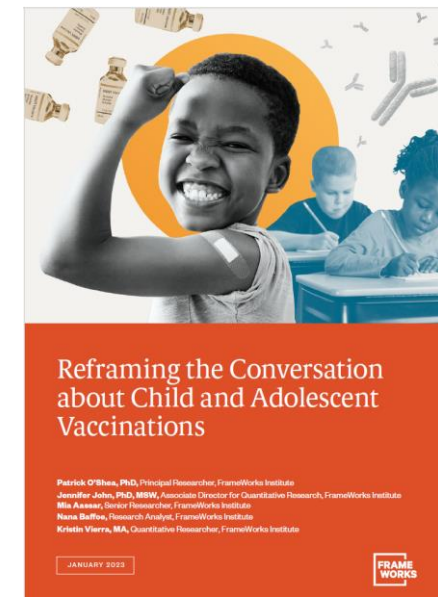
# Key Messages Integrate Tested Vaccination Themes Combined with Football Analogies About Preparation

## Sample PSA Script Aligns Messages Around Preparing the Immune System from the January 2023 [Frameworks Institute Report](#) With Football Themes Around Preparation and Protection


- “Hi, this is Warren Moon, former quarterback for the Houston Oilers, member of the Tennessee Titans Ring of Honor, 9-time Pro Bowler, and Member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame
- When I played, I worked hard to train my body, eat right and practice to make sure I was prepared on gameday.
- That’s what vaccines do for your immune system to keep you healthy, and why I chose to get vaccinated.
- Preparation keeps you game ready and reduces risk.
- Talk to your doctor. Make sure you’re up to date on all your shots and get the information you need to make an informed choice.
- GEAR UP, Tennessee! Find a shot near you by visiting [vaccines-dot-gov](https://vaccines-dot-gov) today!”



Control Click Image to Listen to PSA



# 12 PSAs Featuring Retired Titans and Alumni Leaders Featured on NFL Alumni GEAR UP, TN Campaign Site




**RAÚL ALLEGRE**  
Former Kicker, NY Giants, Indianapolis Colts  
2 Time Super Bowl Champion



**BLAINE BISHOP**  
Former Tennessee Titans Safety  
Four-Time Pro Bowler




**BRAD EDWARDS**  
Former Safety, Washington Commanders  
Super Bowl Champion, CEO of NFL Alumni




**WARREN MOON**  
Former All-Pro QB and TN Titans Ring of Honor



**NEIL O'DONNELL**  
Former Tennessee Titans and Pittsburgh Steelers Pro Bowl Quarterback



**BEASLEY REECE**  
Former NFL Defensive Back  
Member, NFL Alumni Board of Directors



**BRAD HOPKINS**  
Former Tennessee Titans Tackle  
Two-time Pro Bowler



**CHRIS JOHNSON**  
Former Tennessee Titans Running Back  
Three-Time Pro Bowler



**JEVON KEARSE**  
Former Tennessee Titans Defensive End  
Three-Time Pro Bowler



**CHRIS SANDERS**  
Former Tennessee Titans Wide Receiver



**AL SMITH**  
NFL Alumni TN Chapter President  
Former Houston Oilers All-Pro Linebacker



**DELANIE WALKER**  
Former Tennessee Titans Tight End  
Three-Time Pro Bowler

**What Players are Saying Page of Campaign Site**  
<https://nflagearup.org/what-players-are-saying/>



# Social Media Plays a Key Role in Outreach Strategy



**26.6M Impressions Over  
14.5 Months**

1. Leverage NFL Alumni Social Media Channels, as Well as NFL Alumni (Retired Player) and Partner Social Media Channels
2. “Boosting” of Organic Posts Using Paid Digital Dollars Significantly Increases Our Reach
3. From Dec 2022 through Feb 2024 - 688 Social Media Posts, 26.6M Impressions,
4. Content Generally Includes:
  - Retired Player PSAs
  - Flyers and Player Videos to Promote Events
  - Event Recaps
  - Links to Media Coverage
  - General Key Messages



nflatnessee · Follow

nflatnessee 2w  
Jevon Kearse, #NFLATennessee Ambassador talks to @1045thezone & @1025thegamenashville about his involvement in the #GearUpTN campaign, aimed at promoting health & wellness, including the importance of vaccinations. #NFLATennessee @mykearseismygift @blaineandmickey @thejaredstillman

No comments yet.

17 likes  
February 13



Meet NFL Legends @ChrisJohnson28 & @therealJendale along w/ @asmith54pro @delaniewalker82 @JevonKearse @dextermcclaster, Neil O'Donnell & Lorenzo White for King Day Celebration in Memphis. Monday, Jan 15 at The National Civil Rights Museum from 10 - 2 pm. #GearUpTN @CDCgov



Brad Hopkins  
@B\_Hop72

It was an honor to participate in the #GearUpForFall Health and Wellness Fair! The energy at this past Saturday's event was amazing!  
#GearUpTN @NFLAlumni @NFLATennessee

2:15 AM · Sep 27, 2023 · 364 Views



See how Vice Chairman of the Board & Chapter President, @alsmith5454 & fellow former players are helping keep their community safe. You can read all about it in today's op-ed piece at @tennesseanews. #GearUpTN #NFLATennessee #NFLAlumni #alsmith54

From tennessean.com

# Radio Promotion Supports Event Attendance and General Awareness of Benefits

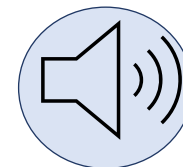
Partnering with 4x Nashville stations and 2x Memphis stations that adhere to Urban Audience + Sports Fans.

Station	Impressions to Date
	1,650,500
	784,600
	919,285
	912,853
	520,510

**Total Impressions  
Delivered to Date: 4,787,748**



*Air-Check of Event Promo on 92Q*



*Air-Check of General Campaign PSA on V101*

# Paid Digital Campaign Through Outbrain



**GEAR UP,  
TENNESSEE!**

Utilizing placement of native ads, which look like part of the editorial flow of various websites, to reach users consuming Sports (Football), Health, News, Entertainment, and Education Topics in Nashville/Memphis areas.

Imp to Date	Clicks to Site	Cost Per Click	CTR
49.1M	78,550	\$0.77	0.16%

### Top Interests:

- Top Interest by Impressions/Clicks**
- Sports / Football
- Top Interests by CTR:**
- Health / Aging
- Top Publisher Clicks**
- Fox News

### **Top Performing Headline:**

*Is your health game ready? Former NFL Stars Urge Tennesseans to 'Gear Up'*

# Earned Media Has Resulted in 281M Impressions



GEAR UP,  
TENNESSEE!

- Despite declining interest in COVID-19, we were still able to secured earned media for the campaign
- Infusing additional news “hooks” has been helpful

92 Hits Yielding  
281M Impressions



ADVERTISE WITH US | Bluff City Life | Contests | Chick-fil-A Community Champions | FedEx St. Jude Championship | YMCA Backpack Drive

ACTION NEWS 5

Watch Live | Digital Desk | Latest Video | News | First Alert Weather | Sports | Traffic | Share Your Pics

Flood Warning Is In Effect

ADVERTISEMENT

### NFL Alumni Association and Shelby County Health Department host wellness fair

WARREN MOON ON PATRICK MAHOMES-TOM BRADY COMPARISONS

LAS VEGAS – The possibility of Patrick Mahomes winning his third Super Bowl ring with the Kansas City Chiefs this weekend has resulted in comparisons to arguably the greatest NFL player of all time, Tom Brady.

The similarities are there. If Mahomes wins, it will be three rings in seven NFL seasons. Brady had the same number of rings through seven seasons, too. If the Chiefs win, Mahomes will pick up that third ring as the Chiefs go back-to-back, in the same way Brady won as well during the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

CLICK HERE FOR MORE SPORTS COVERAGE ON FOXNEWS.COM

FOX 17 WZTV NASHVILLE | NEWS | FOX 17 CODE RED WEATHER | FOX 17 INVESTIGATES | NASHVILLE CAM

https://www.knoxnews.com/story/opinion/2023/01/09/opinion-i-thought-the-pandemic-was-over-u...

knox news. Which movies are set in Knoxville or East Tennessee? | Know Your Knox

News Sports Business Go Knoxville Shopper News Advertise Obituaries eNewspaper Legals 75°F

OPINION This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.

## I thought the COVID-19 pandemic was over – until I infected my family | Opinion

Brad Hopkins Guest columnist  
Published 6:00 p.m. ET Jan. 9, 2023

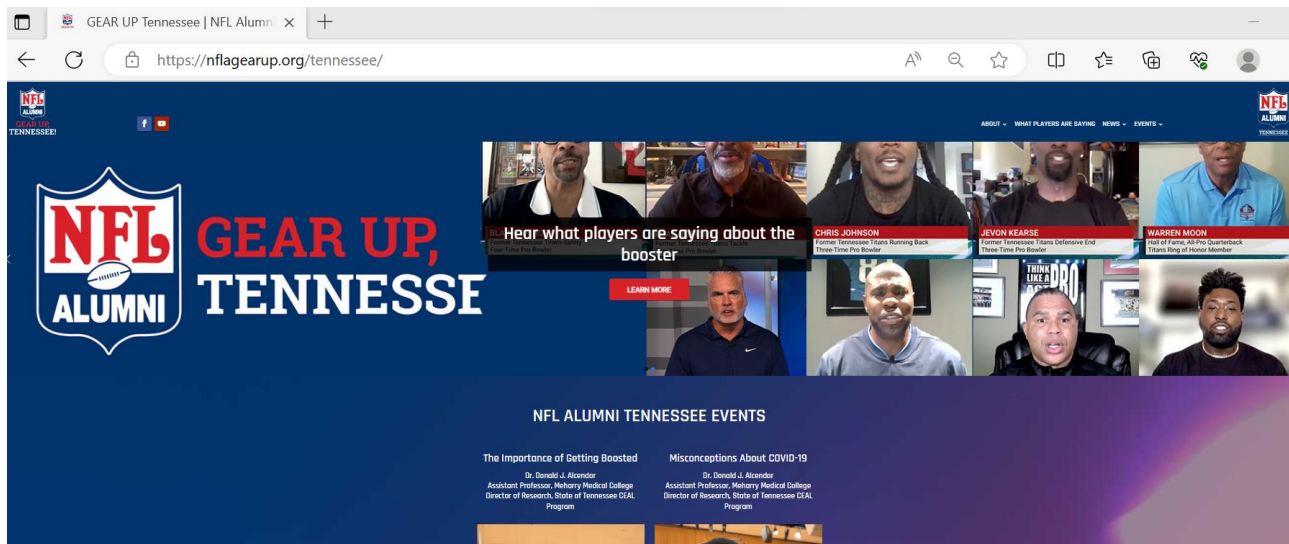
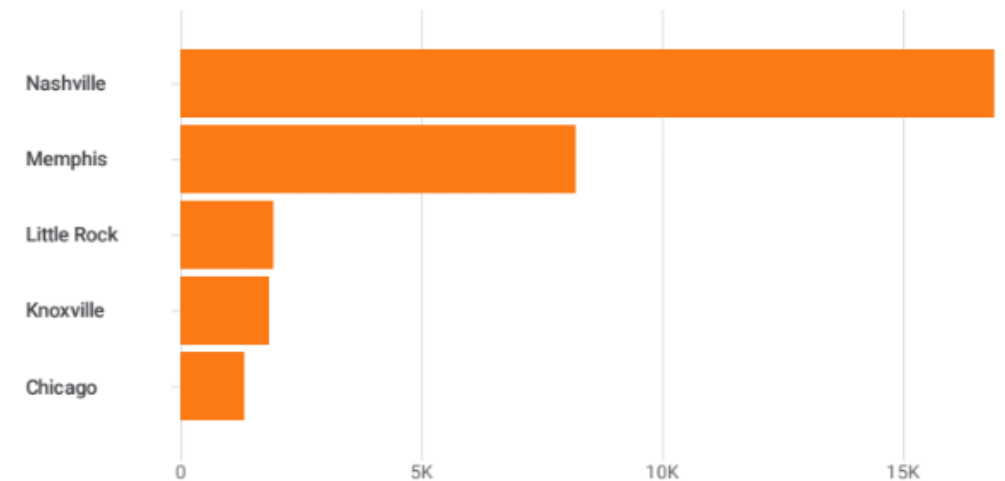
### Tennessee Titans join forces with state health department in spreading COVID-19 awareness

by WZTV | Tue, December 13th 2022, 3:25 PM EST

# Campaign Website Showcases Activities

- NFL Alumni launched a new GEAR UP, Tennessee Campaign website in conjunction with its launch of the campaign in December 2022
- Website link, <https://nflgearup.org/tennessee/>

Users by City



# Vaccination Events Have Increased Awareness, # Shots, Understanding of Barriers and Influencers



GEAR UP, TENNESSEE!

1. Participants receive postcards that highlight benefits of vaccination and where to get a shot
2. Individuals are invited to complete a brief survey to gain insights on influencers for and barriers to getting vaccinated
3. A sign at the table contains a QR code enabling individuals to access additional information



NFL Alumni Tennessee Brief Questionnaire

1. How did you hear about this event? (select all that apply)
  - Flyer
  - Social Media
  - Radio Promotion
  - Other (List) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you received a COVID-19 vaccine or booster?
  - Yes
  - No
3. What has made it difficult for you or made you hesitant to get a COVID-19 vaccine or booster? (select all that apply)
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I can't go on my own (physical limitation)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It's too far away</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't know where to go to get vaccinated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I have a medical reason that makes me ineligible to get vaccinated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't have transportation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The hours of operation are inconvenient</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The wait time is too long</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It is difficult to find or make an appointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am too busy to get vaccinated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It was difficult to arrange for childcare</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I don't have time off work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I need more information about the vaccine</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I was concerned about side effects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I was concerned about long-term effects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It was not difficult or I was not hesitant</li> </ul>
--	--
4. What has motivated you or would motivate you to get vaccinated? (select all that apply)
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protect my health</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protect health of my family and/or friends</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To get back to work or school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To resume social activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To resume travel</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To receive medical care</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To attend mass public gatherings (e.g., sporting events, concerts, etc.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> To attend religious services</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Because others encouraged me to get vaccinated</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</li> </ul>
---	---
5. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your race?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Other
  - Don't Want to Say
7. What is your ethnicity?
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Not Hispanic or Latino
  - Don't Want to Say

**Learn More About How You Can GEAR UP!  
and Train Your Immune System to  
Stay Game Ready!**

**Why GEAR UP?**

- Vaccines are the best way to ensure your body and immune system are ready to fight off illness and disease.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is proven safe and effective at ensuring your immune system is prepared and game ready.

**How You Can GEAR UP!**

- Talk to your doctor or trusted health care provider to get the facts so you can make an informed decision about vaccines.

**What is GEAR UP?**

- NFL Alumni Tennessee Chapter and Tennessee Department of Health are partnering on a statewide vaccine awareness and education campaign urging Tennesseans to GEAR UP! and tackle COVID-19.
- More than 150 current and former players have supported NFL Alumni's immunization education campaign nationally, including several here in Tennessee.

[nflagearup.org/tennessee](http://nflagearup.org/tennessee)

**Where You Can Go to  
Get Your Vaccine**

Walgreens

CVS

Kroger

Publix

To Find a Vaccine  
Near You

For more information visit [www.nflagearup.org/tennessee](http://www.nflagearup.org/tennessee)

# Vaccination Events At a Glance



**GEAR UP,  
TENNESSEE!**

**> 20  
COMMUNITY  
EVENTS**

**> 100  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS**

**> 3,200  
VISITED OUR  
TABLE**

**> 580  
COVID-19 SHOTS**

**> 270  
COMPLETED  
SURVEYS**

**> 20  
PLAYERS  
ENGAGED**



# “Sizzle” Reel From One of Our Events (Control Click to View Video)



GEAR UP,  
TENNESSEE!



**WARREN MOON**

Former All-Pro QB and TN Titans Ring of Honor  
9-Time Pro-Bowler, Pro Football Hall of Fame



# 6 Town Halls & Listening Sessions Have Increased Our Understanding of Community Perspectives



- Mar 23, 2023 Virtual Town Hall: Tackling Your Health and Wellness, Including COVID-19
- Jan 2023 Listening Sessions with LEAD Academy
- Apr 29, 2023 Listening Session in Memphis: Straight Talk About Your Health and Wellness, Get Your Questions Answered
- Dec 9, 2023, Feb 3, 2024 and Mar 2, 2024: Series of 3 Listening Sessions with Metropolitan Housing Development Authority

**GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED ON COVID-19 AND CANCER**

Town Hall Hosted by TN CEAL, NFL Alumni TN, the CEO Roundtable on Cancer, and MDHA

**Saturday, March 2, 2024 - 11am to 2pm**

Vine Hill Studio Apartments  
625 Benton Avenue, Nashville, TN 37204

**FREE LUNCH PROVIDED!**  
This project is supported by a grant from the State of Tennessee Department of Health

**NFL ALUMNI TN AND VANDERBILT HEALTH HOST VIRTUAL EVENT: TACKLING YOUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS, INCLUDING COVID-19**

**Thursday, March 23, 2023 - 6:30pm - 7:15pm CT**

This Event will be Simulcast on the NFL Alumni YouTube and Facebook Channels

This Project is Funded by a Grant Contract with the State of Tennessee

**TN CEAL** **NFL ALUMNI** **CEO ROUNDTABLE ON CANCER**

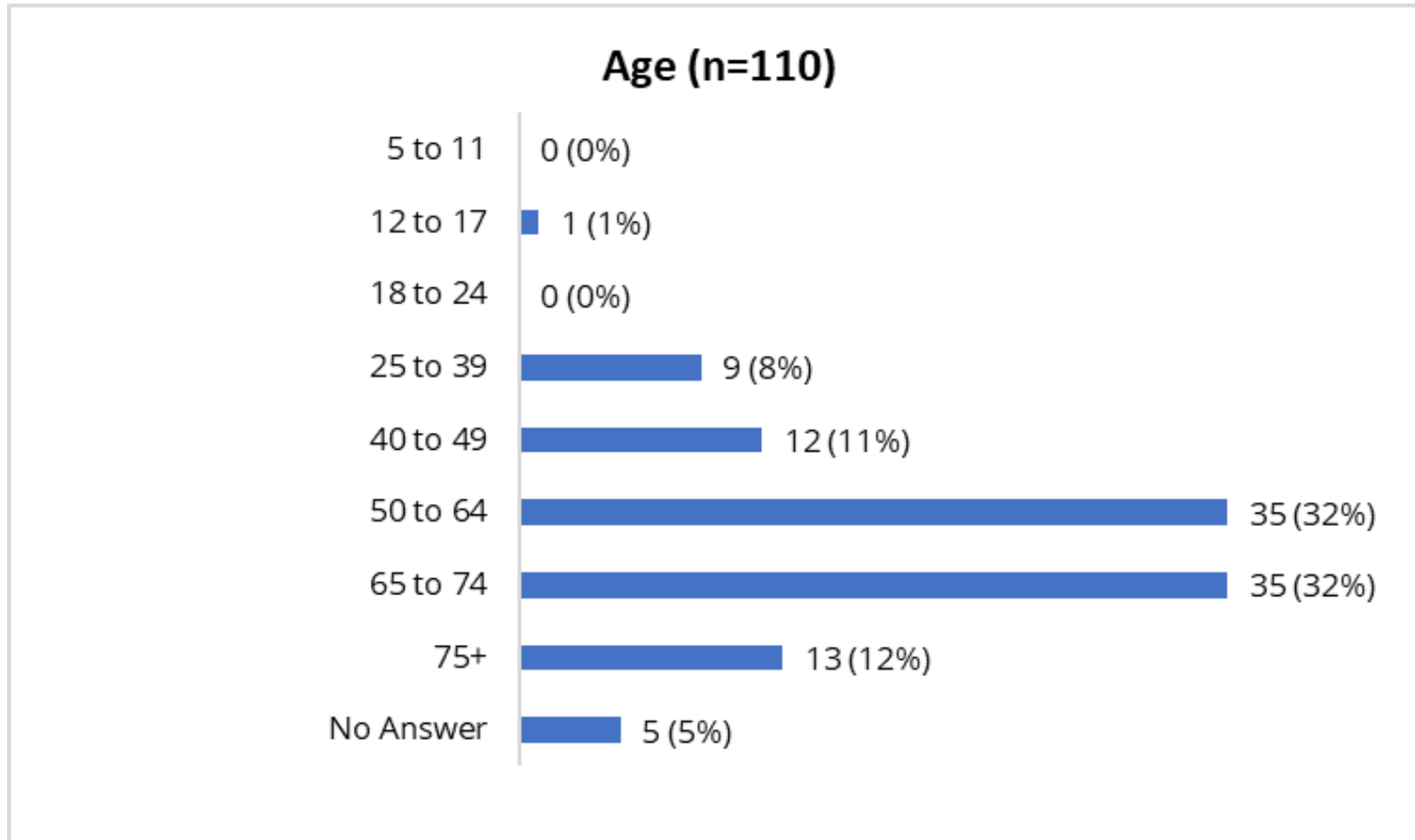
Get Your Questions Answered on COVID-19 and Cancer  
February 3, 2024  
Town Hall Hosted by TN CEAL, NFL Alumni Tennessee, CEO Roundtable on Cancer, and MDHA  
NFL ALUMNI SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANTS

- How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender
  - Male
  - Female
  - Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_
- What is your race?
  - American Indian or Alaska Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Other (list) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Don't Want to Say
- What is your ethnicity?
  - Hispanic or Latino
  - Not Hispanic or Latino
  - Don't Want to Say
- What zip code do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you received a COVID-19 vaccine or booster?
  - Yes
  - No
- How many COVID-19 vaccines or boosters have you received? \_\_\_\_\_
- What has motivated you or would motivate you to get vaccinated? (select all that apply)
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Protect my health	<input type="checkbox"/> To attend mass public gatherings (e.g., sporting events, concerts, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect health of my family and/or friends	<input type="checkbox"/> To attend religious services
<input type="checkbox"/> To get back to work or school	<input type="checkbox"/> Because others encouraged me to get vaccinated
<input type="checkbox"/> To resume social activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> To resume travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/> To receive medical care	

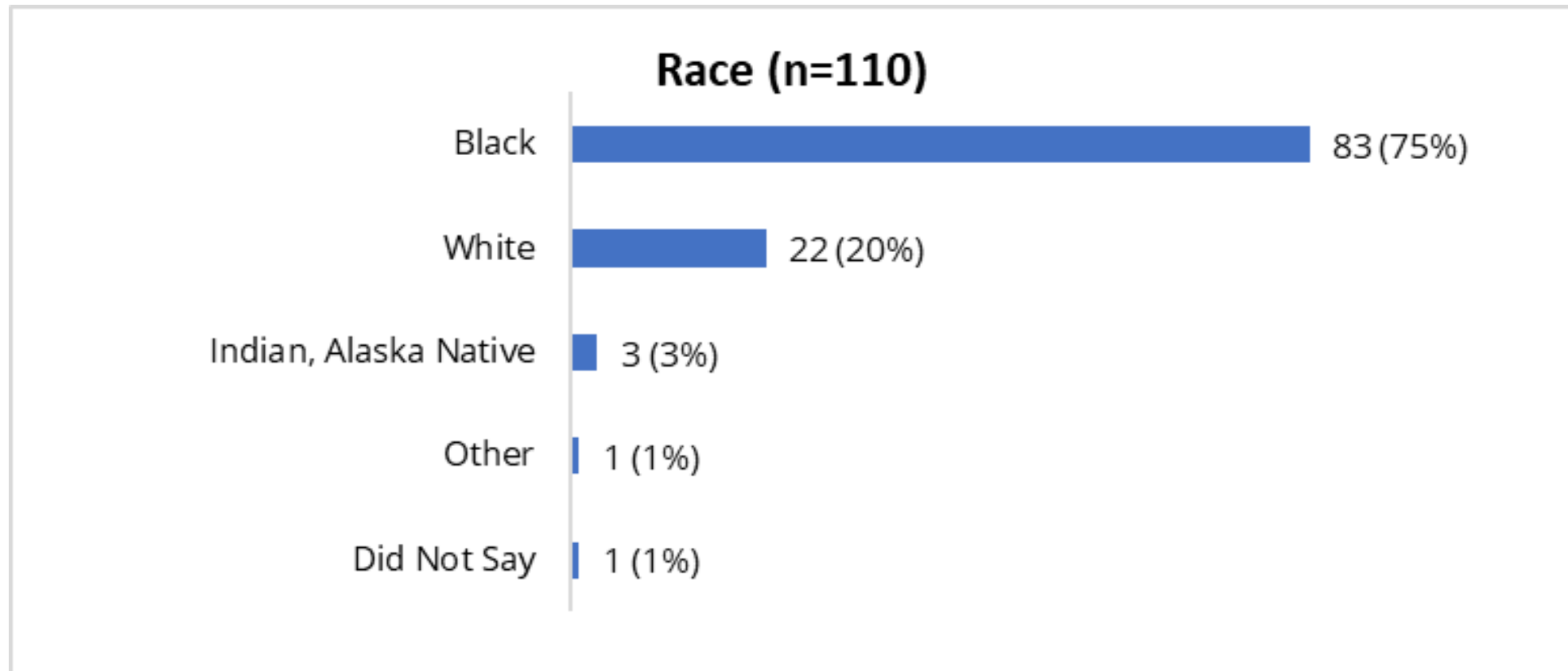
# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

## Age of Respondents



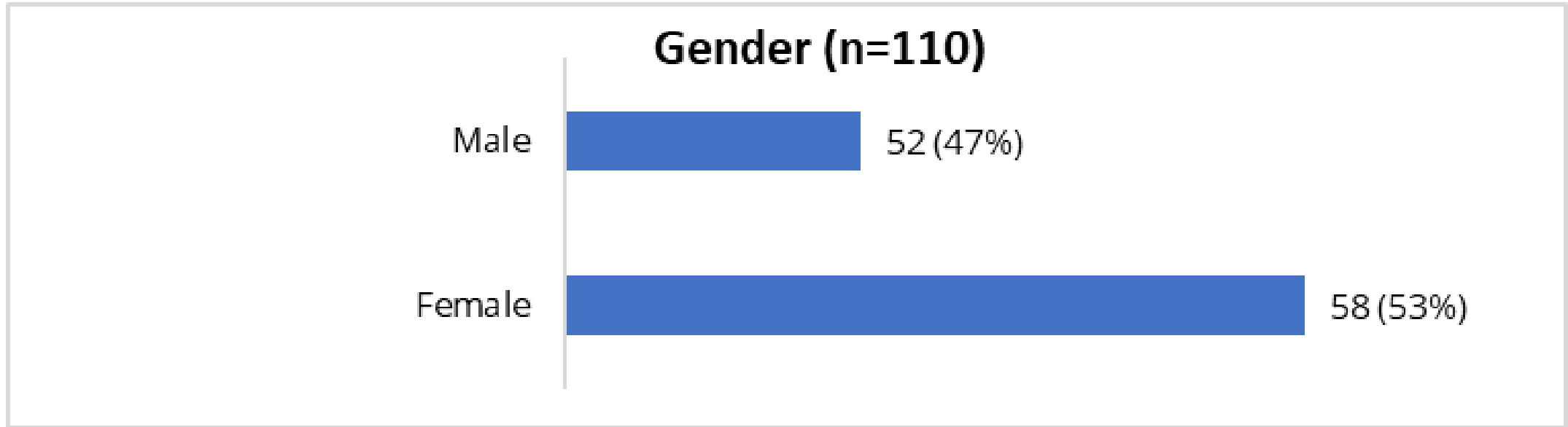
# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

## Race of Respondents

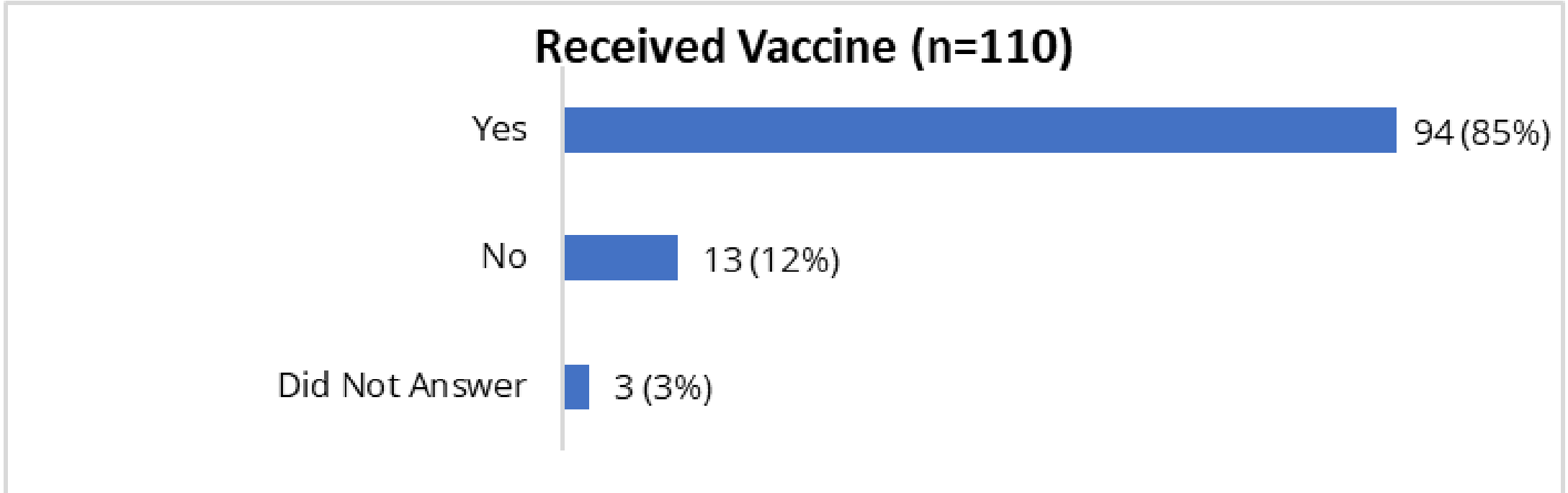


# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

## Gender

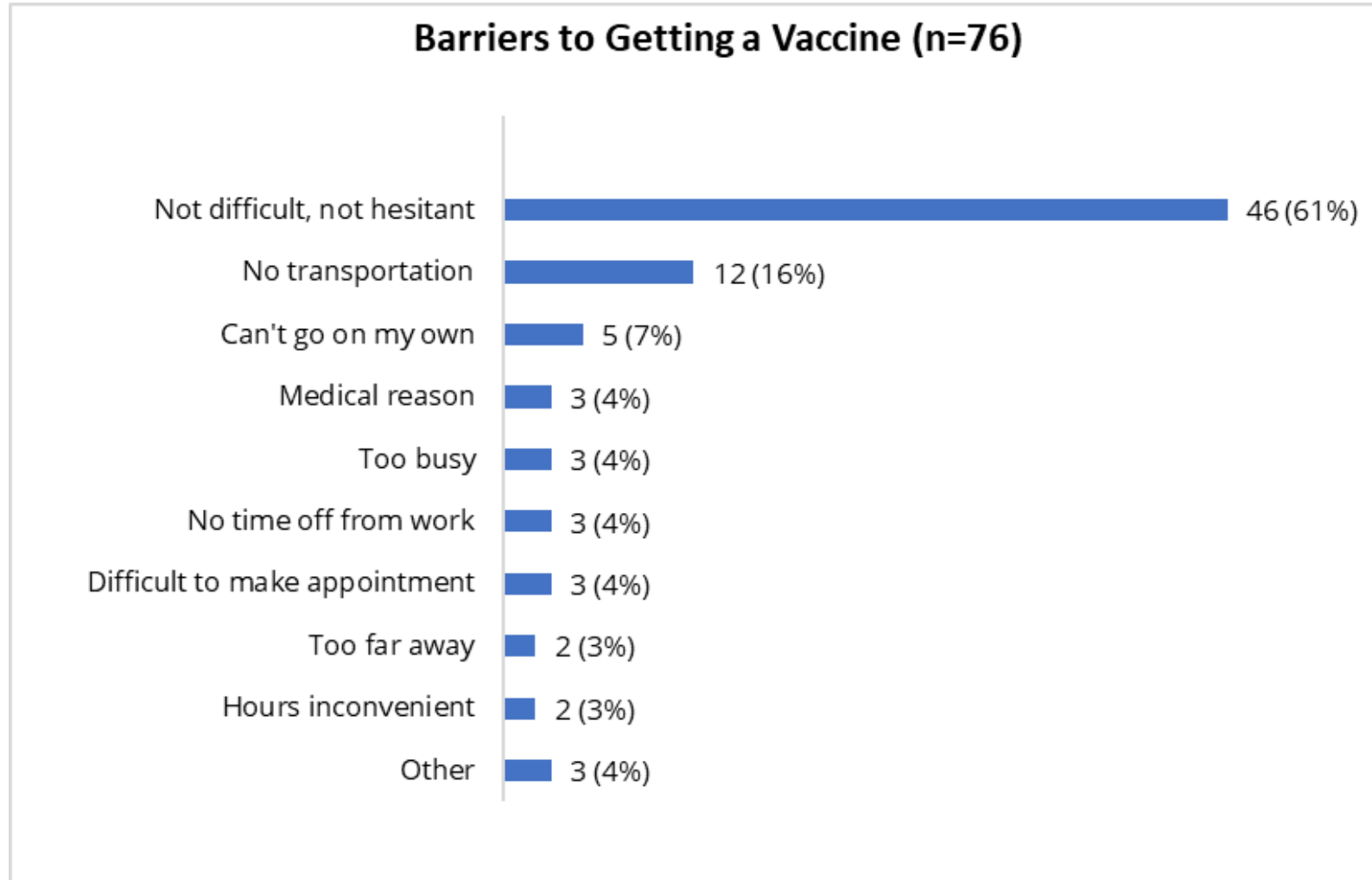


# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA Received a Vaccine?



# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

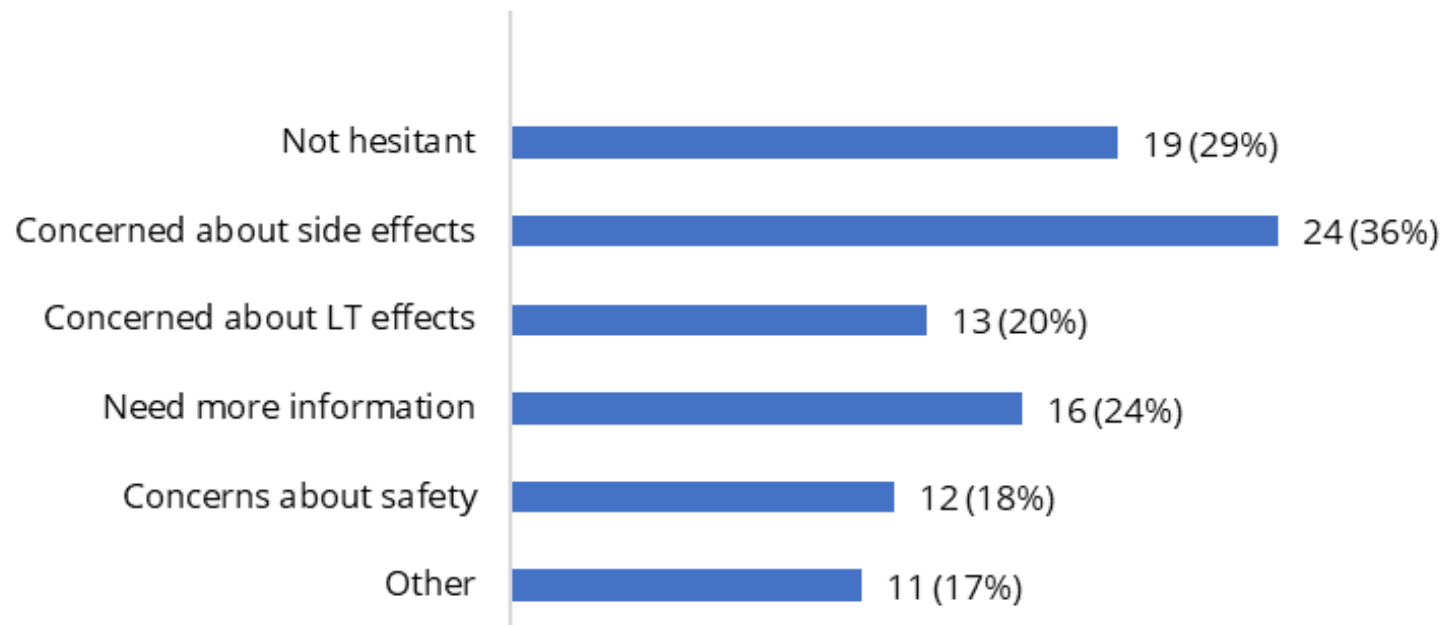
## Barriers to Getting Vaccinated



# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

## Hesitancy About Getting Vaccinated

**Hesitancy About Vaccine (n=66)**

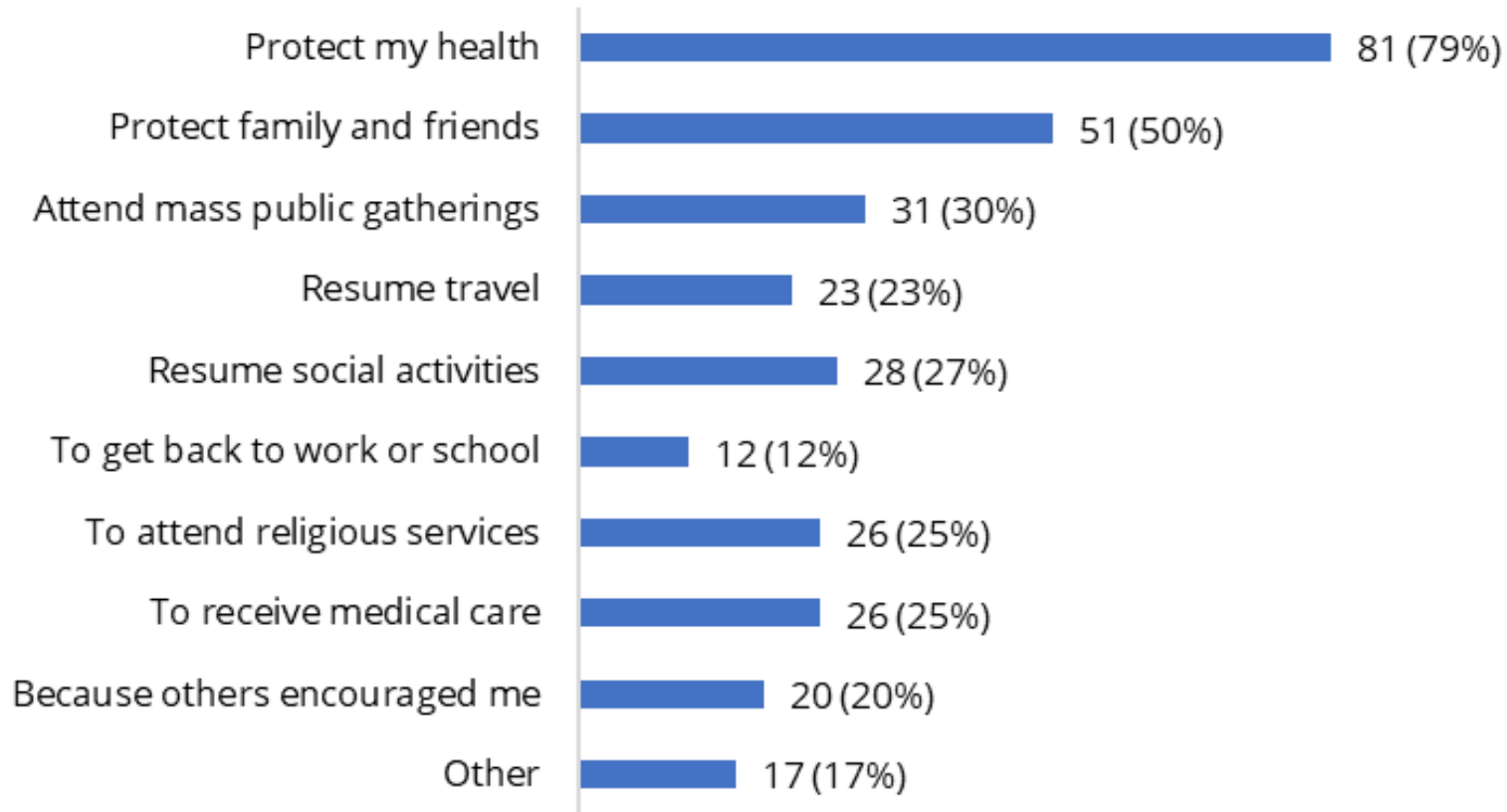


### Comments from Discussion:

- Afraid of Shots or Needles
- Fearful
- Those That Get Vaccinated Still Get COVID
- Vaccine was Developed Too Fast
- Side Effects

# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA Influencers for Vaccination

**Influencers for Vaccination (n=102)**



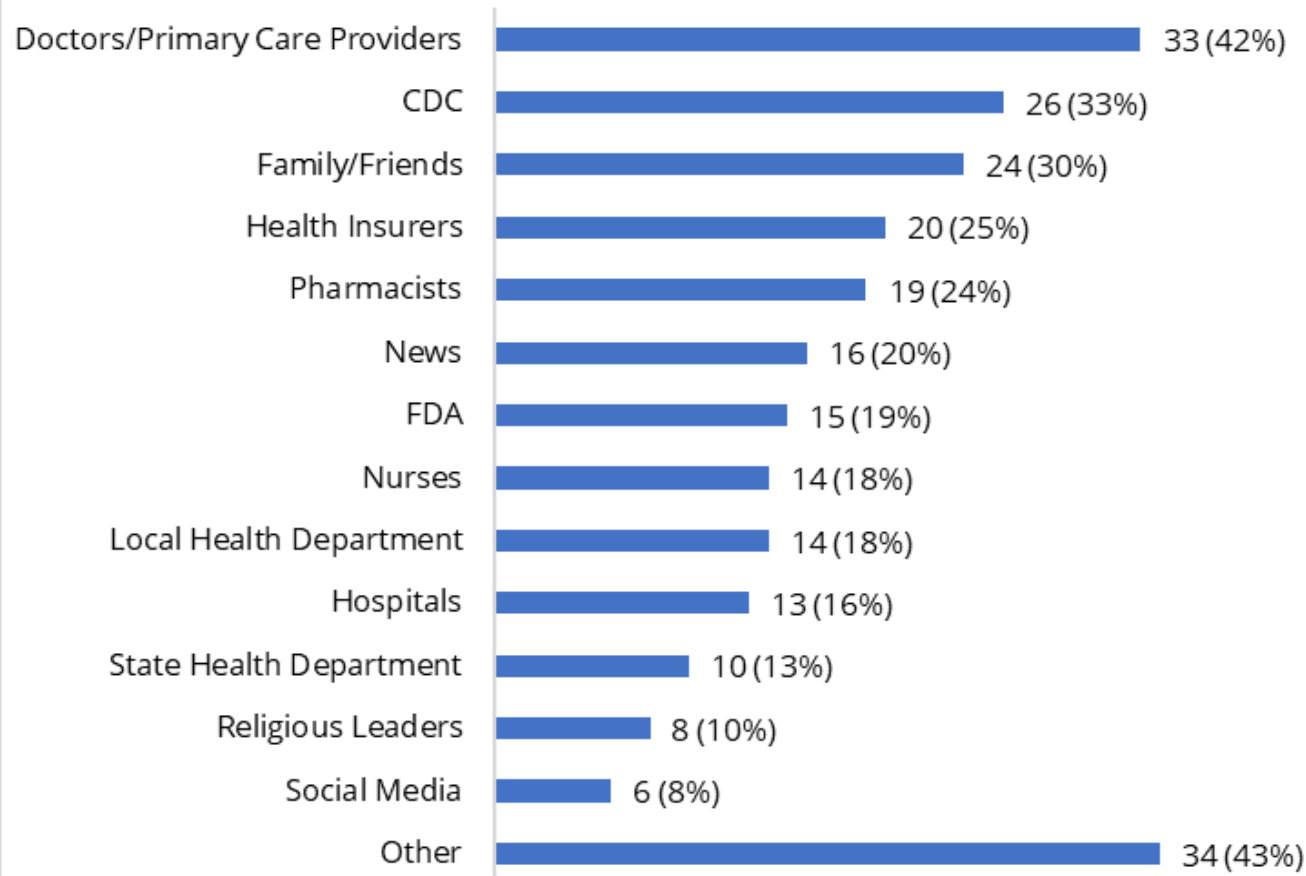
## Comments from Discussion:

- Lost Loved Ones
- Have Chronic Condition
- Seen Many People Die
- Protect My Family



# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA Trusted Sources for Vaccination Information

**Trusted Sources for Information (n=79)**



## Comments from Discussion:

- Many Spoke About Trusting Their Doctors the Most

# 3-Part Series of Listening Sessions With MDHA

## Advice for Further Engaging the Community



- Engage more physicians and health care professionals to share information – they are the most trusted sources of information
- Make it medical, not political
- More verbal communications vs. forcing people to read
- Face to face conversations
- More background about the vaccine
- Engage with the community in sessions like this

# Recap of NFL Alumni Impact and Results Over Last 15 Months



**22**  
NFL PLAYERS  
ENGAGED

**100**  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS

**20**  
COMMUNITY  
EVENTS

**26.6M**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
IMPRESSIONS

**49.1M**  
PAID DIGITAL  
IMPRESSIONS

**4.8M**  
RADIO  
IMPRESSIONS

**92**  
MEDIA HITS

**281M**  
EARNED MEDIA  
IMPRESSIONS

**3,200**  
IN-PERSON  
INTERACTIONS

**300**  
SURVEYS  
COMPLETED

**6**  
TOWN HALLS  
AND LISTENING  
SESSIONS

**> 580**  
COVID-19 SHOTS

# Key Take-Aways for Engaging the Community



- Know Your Audience
- Customize Your Approach Based on Your Target Audience
  - Key Messages
  - Location of Events
  - Community Partners
  - Choice of Media Partners (Paid and Earned)
  - Spokespersons
- Engage Trusted Community Partners
- Meet People Where They Are, Listen, Be Authentic
- Be Relentless in Measuring Impact....And Make Improvements Based on What You Learn

# Thank you!

Janet Marchibroda  
Executive Director, GEAR UP, Tennessee!  
and Other NFL Alumni Campaigns  
(under contract)  
NFL Alumni Association  
[janet.marchibroda@nflalumni.org](mailto:janet.marchibroda@nflalumni.org)

Al Smith  
President, NFL Alumni Tennessee Chapter  
Vice-Chairman, NFL Alumni Board  
NFL Alumni Association  
[al.smith@nflalumni.org](mailto:al.smith@nflalumni.org)