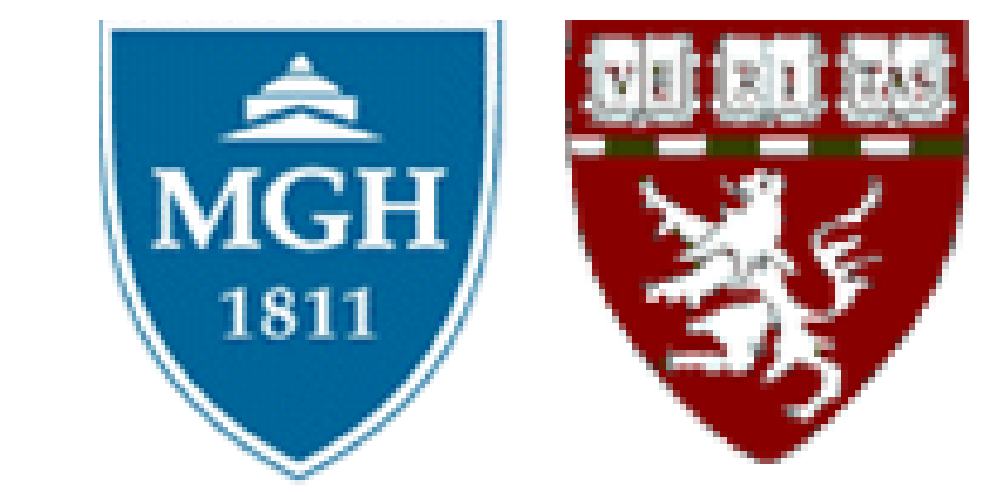


# Leveraging psychiatric providers and settings to maximize vaccinations in patients with serious mental illness

## Background



- Patients with serious mental illness have:
  - Increased risk of hospitalization and mortality from respiratory infections, including COVID19, influenza, and pneumonia (1,2)
  - Low vaccination rates partly due to low health literacy, attitudinal hesitancy, and practical barriers (2,3)
- Psychiatric clinics, where patients are seen frequently and longitudinally, provide an ideal venue for a multipronged approach.
  - Psychiatric providers are best positioned to promote the healthy behavior of vaccination given their expertise in **motivational interviewing** and **nudging** (3)
  - Mobile Vaccine Clinics in psychiatric settings can remove practical barriers to accessing vaccines

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Dec 2020  
**COVID19 Vaccine Rollout**

Jan 2021~

### Intervention 1: Engaging psychiatric providers

- **In-service education** and resources to psychiatric providers at a North Suffolk community mental health center in Boston, MA to enhance COVID19 vaccine knowledge, to identify vaccine hesitant patients, and to resolve patients' vaccine ambivalence via motivational interviewing and nudging.
- **Vaccination Monitoring Tool** in electronic medical records to help providers discuss and track COVID19 vaccination intention, hesitancy, and uptake at each outpatient visit.
- **Med-Psych Integration Clinical Rounds** monthly to review the progress as a clinic

June 30, 2021

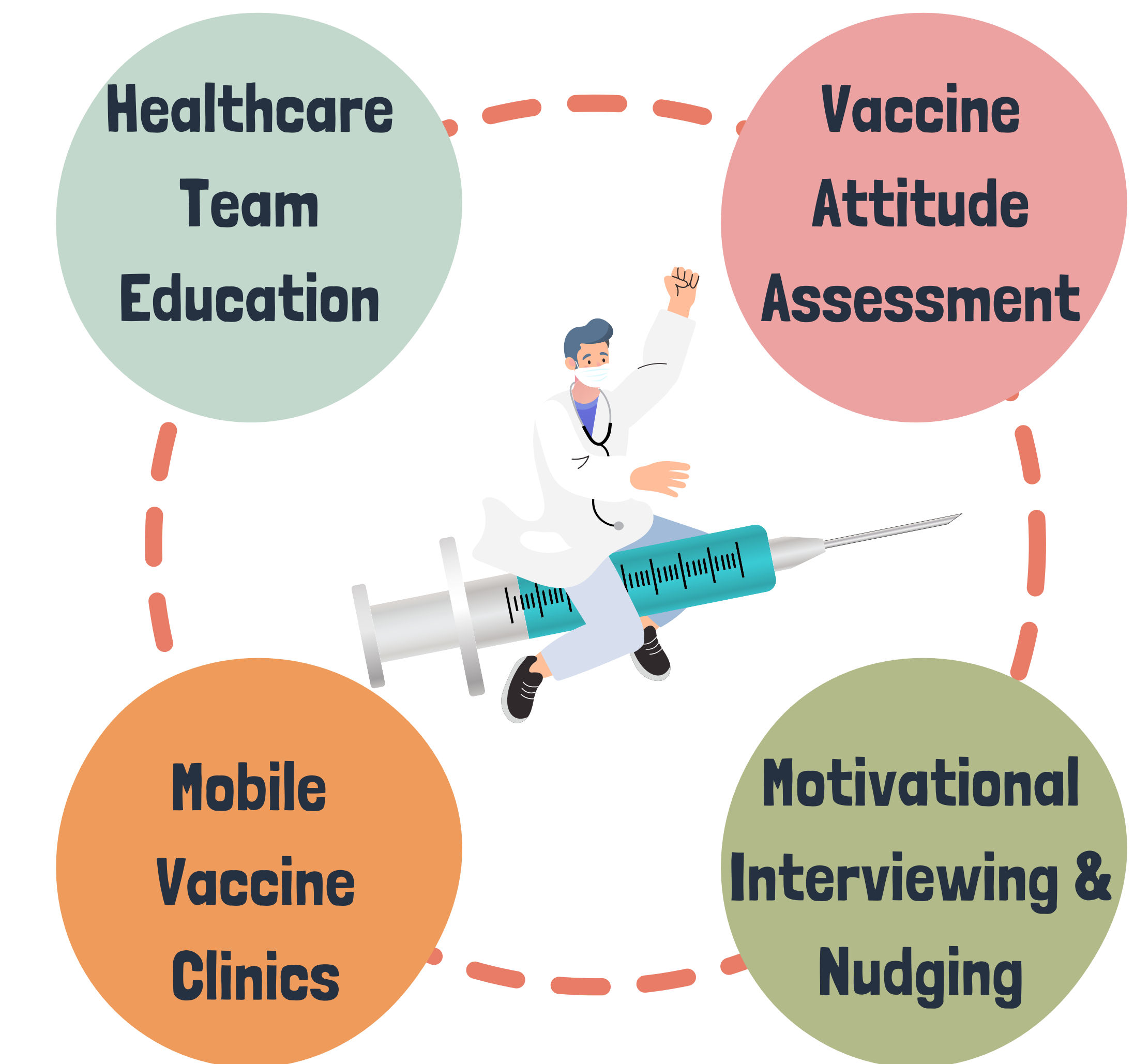
### Intervention 1 results:

- Pilot sample:
  - 193 clozapine-treated patients, 97% with schizophrenia spectrum disorder
  - Ages 19-81, M = 46.4 years
- COVID19 vaccination rate in our cohort was **84.5%**, higher than the Massachusetts rate at the time (estimated to be between **62.5%** and **77%**) (4)
- While attitudinal hesitancy seemed to decrease over visits, practical barriers (scheduling, transportation, remembering appointments) commonly remained

Jan 2022~

### Dissemination of intervention 1 to other neighboring clinics

- Replicated the in-service education and vaccination monitoring tool intervention at the MGH Psychosis Clinic not only to encourage **COVID19** vaccines, but also **influenza** and **pneumococcal** vaccines
- Creation of an EPIC Smart Phrase for the vaccination monitoring tool

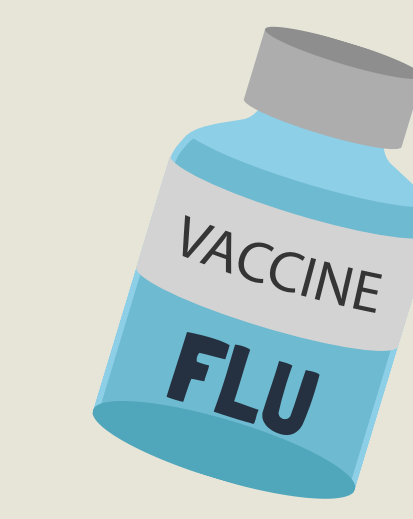
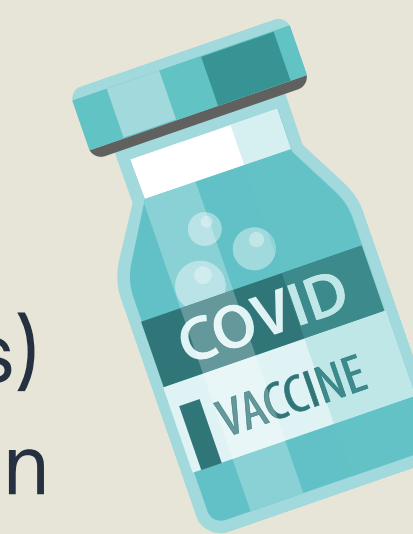


Aug 2021~

### Intervention 2: Mobile Vaccine Clinics



- Collaborated with local pharmacies to set up mobile vaccine clinics across many **psychiatric settings** (outpatient clinics, shelters, group homes) within the North Suffolk Mental Health Organization
- **COVID19, influenza, pneumococcal, and shingles** vaccines were provided to **patients** and **health care workers**
- Participants in the outpatient clinics filled out a post-vaccination questionnaire about their experience
- Pharmacy was reimbursed by insurance and federal programs for vaccines



Dec 31, 2021

### Intervention 2 results: Further increased the vaccination rates

- In our **pilot cohort**, setting up mobile vaccine clinics **increased** the COVID19 vaccination rate to **93%**, with many patients receiving the **influenza** vaccine simultaneously
- Nearly all of the 69 participants who filled out a short questionnaire reported it was easy accessing vaccines, with most preferring mobile vaccine clinics for future vaccinations.
- Mobile vaccine clinics are scalable, financially sustainable, and cost-effective

efficient  
 great  
 nice  
 super  
 polite  
 professional  
 helpful  
 easy  
 thank  
 process  
 shot

## Conclusions

- Mental health care providers can address vaccine hesitancy of patients and encourage vaccinations during outpatient visits
- When providers can directly refer patients to a mobile vaccine clinic, this immediate follow through can help address practical barriers
- Mobile Vaccine Clinics in mental health settings in collaboration with local pharmacies are a feasible and financially sustainable model for increasing vaccination
- Future efforts should continue to leverage psychiatric providers and settings to address vaccine-preventable illnesses (ie. influenza and pneumococcal)

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