

Rural America is a hotbed of anti-COVID vaccine sentiment

There are many factors that are associated with an individual's willingness to get the coronavirus vaccine including their age, level of education, and – notably – their political party identification. For example, the KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor finds that Republicans are much less likely to say they will get a coronavirus vaccine compared to their independent and Democratic counterparts. Yet, even when we control for these factors, individuals living in rural areas are still more likely to be vaccine hesitant.

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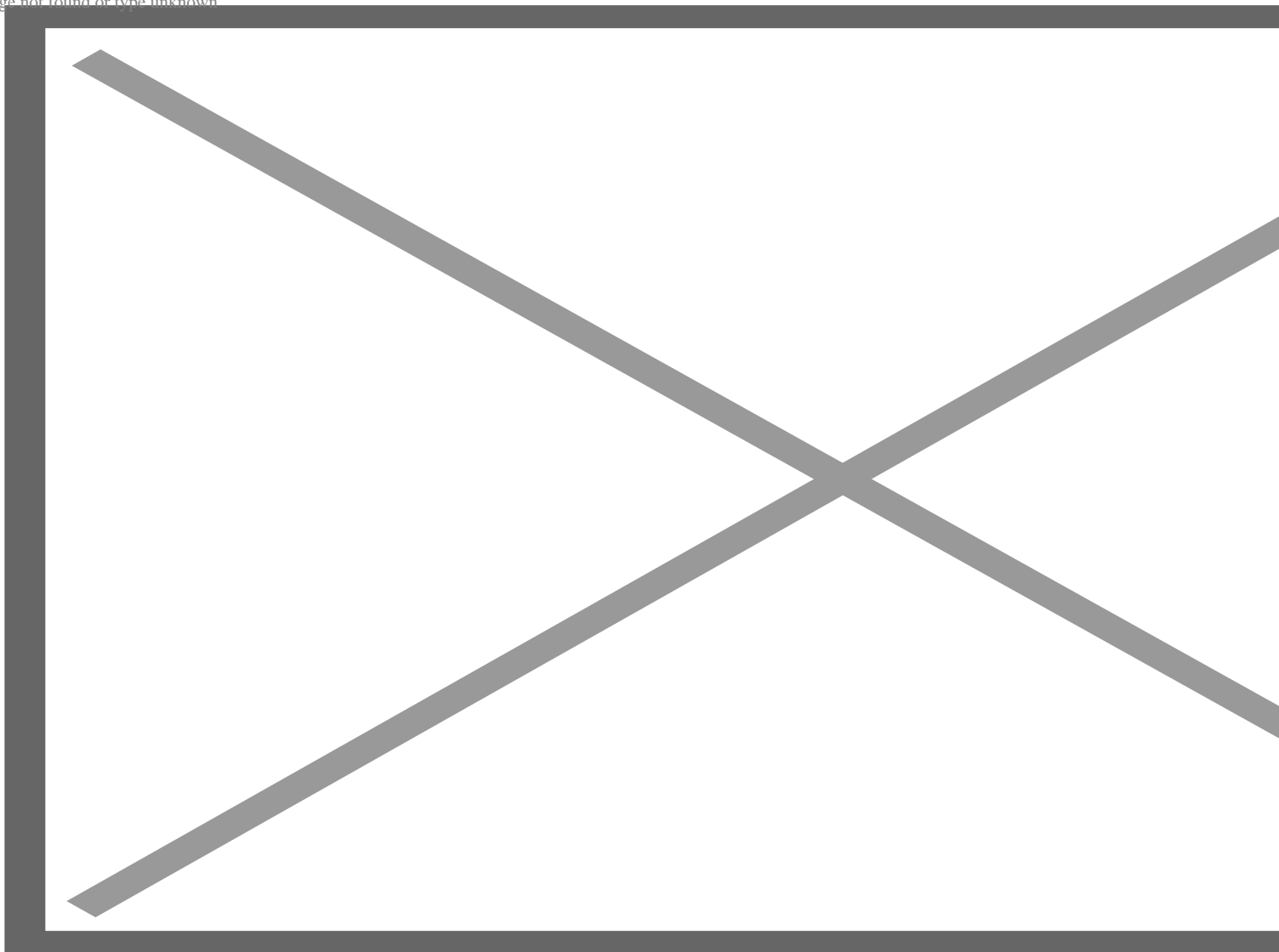
So if partisan identification and demographics don't completely explain the greater hesitancy, what else is driving attitudes about getting a vaccine among rural residents? While rural residents are just as likely as those living in urban and suburban communities to know someone who has tested positive or died from coronavirus, four in ten rural residents (39%) say they are not worried they or someone in their family will get sick from the coronavirus, compared to 23% of urban residents and three in ten suburban residents (30%).

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Vaccine hesitancy among rural residents is more than just partisanship and is strongly connected to their views of the severity of the coronavirus and the reasons for getting vaccinated. Effective messages need to be delivered by trusted messengers and take into account these strongly held beliefs in order to have successful vaccine uptake in rural America.

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