

How churches and community groups are responding to vaccine hesitancy among Black Americans

[West Baltimore resident Reverend Derrick] DeWitt is a field marshal in the local war against poverty, disease and hunger.

“My church is located in a food desert. Seventy-four square blocks of Sandtown,” DeWitt told Ted Koppel of “[CBS Sunday Morning](#).” “We have about 109 establishments that sell alcohol. But we don’t have one single supermarket.”

Five thousand families a month are getting food at the First Mount Calvary Baptist Church. Convincing those same people to get vaccinated against COVID is more complicated. Blame some of that on the trash circulating on the internet.

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Preliminary government data show a stark disparity among races getting the vaccines: more than 60% of vaccinations have been going to White people, less than 9% to Hispanics and less than 6% to Blacks.

“I don’t think we’re going to be successful unless we figure out a way to bring the vaccine to the people,” DeWitt said. “We’re seeing 5,000 people a month come through our church to get food ... If we can vaccinate during a food drive, if we enlist the faith-based community as partners in the vaccination process, I think that it would go a long way to making sure that people get the vaccine.”

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