

University of Miami Mailman Center NextGen Students Join the Vaccine Confidence Grant Project

This past April, the Mailman Center for Child Development was awarded an



AUCD grant to encourage responsiveness to the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities to increase vaccine confidence. Collaboration amongst network partners to engage in continued conversation around issues is the primary goal, as well the creation of materials and resources to disseminate information about vaccines and the vaccination process. Two trainees have been imperative to the team's success and

are featured here:

Hello, my name is Grace Dima and I'm a first year Next-Gen Medical Student, and I'm Reese Triana, a first year MPH student. We are both current LEND Trainees and a part of an important CDC-AUCD Vaccine Confidence grant. We are very pleased to share with you our roles in this exciting grant here at The Mailman Center.

Grace: As a medical student in the new Next-Gen curriculum, I had the opportunity to choose a Scholarly Concentration in an area of my interest. I chose the Child Health, Development & Leadership Pathway and wanted to focus my summer experience on investigating the potential of using social media to promote positive public health messages. The LEND program gave me the opportunity to explore this idea in a meaningful way through the CDC-AUCD grant. I am investigating the use of social media influencers to promote vaccine confidence among people with disabilities. By collaborating with influencers who have disabilities, we hope to share informative messages about the COVID-19 vaccine that resonate with people with disabilities and increase vaccine confidence.

Reese: As an MPH student I was tasked with searching the literature to find if there were any conceptual models that reflected vaccine confidence within the disability community. Much to the group's dismay there weren't any. So, we went ahead and started to make our own. This model will illustrate that vaccine confidence is a behavior influenced by a range of factors, such as knowledge or past experiences. Vaccine confidence is also the result of broader influences and should always be looked at in the historical, political, and socio-cultural context in which vaccination occurs. Serious concerns have been raised about how persons with disabilities will access the vaccinations. The disability movement has legitimate questions about the prioritization of persons with disabilities and their support networks to vaccinations. Other concerning

areas are accessibility of vaccination processes, related information and venues, and provision of vaccines based on free and informed consent of all persons with disabilities.