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**Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Launches
COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence Initiative to #VaccinateByADA**

SILVER SPRING, Md. – Just in time for Mother’s Day, the [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](http://www.aucd.org) is launching a new public health initiative, *COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Confidence for People with Disabilities*, engaging 23-AUCD network centers strategically located across the country to reach local disability communities, reduce access barriers, and promote vaccine confidence. The goal is to vaccinate all eligible people with disabilities by the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26th.

“This work builds upon our innovative efforts throughout the COVID-19 crisis to support vaccination efforts for individuals with disabilities, their families, and direct support professionals. It is critical that we promote accessibility at all steps of the vaccination process to ensure all people with disabilities can access a vaccine,” says John Tschida, AUCD’s executive director.

The initiative launches this week with a focus on building vaccine confidence in the disability community through family conversations in the weeks between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day. Network centers will share information on the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine in community meetings, newsletters, social media campaigns, short videos, and other local outreach efforts.

“Family members are important influencers in the lives of people who have a disability,” says Dr. Adriane Griffen, AUCD’s senior director of public health and leadership. “Providing the tools and resources to support those family conversations around vaccines will get us one step closer to our #VaccinateByADA goal.”

COVID-19 impacts all communities – including the over 61 million Americans who have disabilities. Approximately 1 in 4 Americans has a disability, yet current vaccination efforts do not consistently include them. Twelve AUCD centers will develop model outreach strategies that can be replicated by others across the country over the next several months. An additional 11 AUCD centers are conducting rapid outreach efforts over the next few weeks leading up to the ADA Anniversary to promote accessible vaccines and boost confidence. Accessible resources will be developed and shared by the Human Development Institute at University of Kentucky and the Green Mountain Self Advocates. AUCD will facilitate Town Halls for partners to problem-solve with local Disability Inclusion Coach support over the next several months as younger age groups become eligible for vaccination.

[AUCD](http://www.aucd.org) is a national, nonprofit network of university-based centers and programs in every state and territory working to advance policy and practice for people living with disabilities and their families. AUCD’s [National Center on Disability in Public Health](http://www.nationalcenterdph.org) works with partners to address health disparities for people who have a disability. *COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Confidence for People with Disabilities* is made possible through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Learn more at: <https://nationalcenterdph.org/vaccineconfidence/>.