



The District's COVID Vaccination Process

Presentation to the Committee On Health



Introduction and Background



Introduction and Background

- ❑ Good Morning Chairperson Gray and members of the Council. My name is Wayne Turnage and I serve as Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services and the Director of the Department of Health Care Finance

- ❑ Pleasure to be here this morning to discuss the District's vaccination efforts for COVID

- ❑ Joined by –
 - Jay Melder, Assistant City Administrator in charge of government operations

 - Patrick Ashley, Senior Deputy Director at the Department of Health (DC Health), who spearheads the agency's health emergency preparedness and response efforts

Grateful For Biden Administration Commitment To Increase Vaccine Supply

- ❑ Vaccine supply is a critical issue for all states and the District of Columbia
- ❑ Accordingly, I want to offer thanks to President Biden for his Administration's commitment to increasing the District's vaccine allotment by 15% for the next three weeks
- ❑ To echo Mayor Bowser's comments, we recognize this announcement as a promising indicator of the new Administration's commitment to increasing the supply of the COVID-19 vaccine
- ❑ We applaud this effort and will continue to advocate for more doses moving forward

National COVID Data Speaks To The Persistent And Growing Threat Of This Virus



❖ We are in the midst of a significant battle to control the pernicious spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

❖ Despite the national launch of the two vaccines approved by the Federal Drug Administration for emergency use in the United States, in January, the nation averaged roughly 200,000 new infections per day.

❖ January was also the deadliest month for COVID–19 since the beginning of the pandemic, with nearly 100,000 people dying from the disease.

❖ In the District, roughly five percent of the population has been identified as infected since the first reported infection in March 2020, causing more than 900 deaths.

❖ Estimates of persons with unreported infections over the span of the pandemic indicate the number of cumulative cases in the city may well be above 100,000.





Presentation Outline

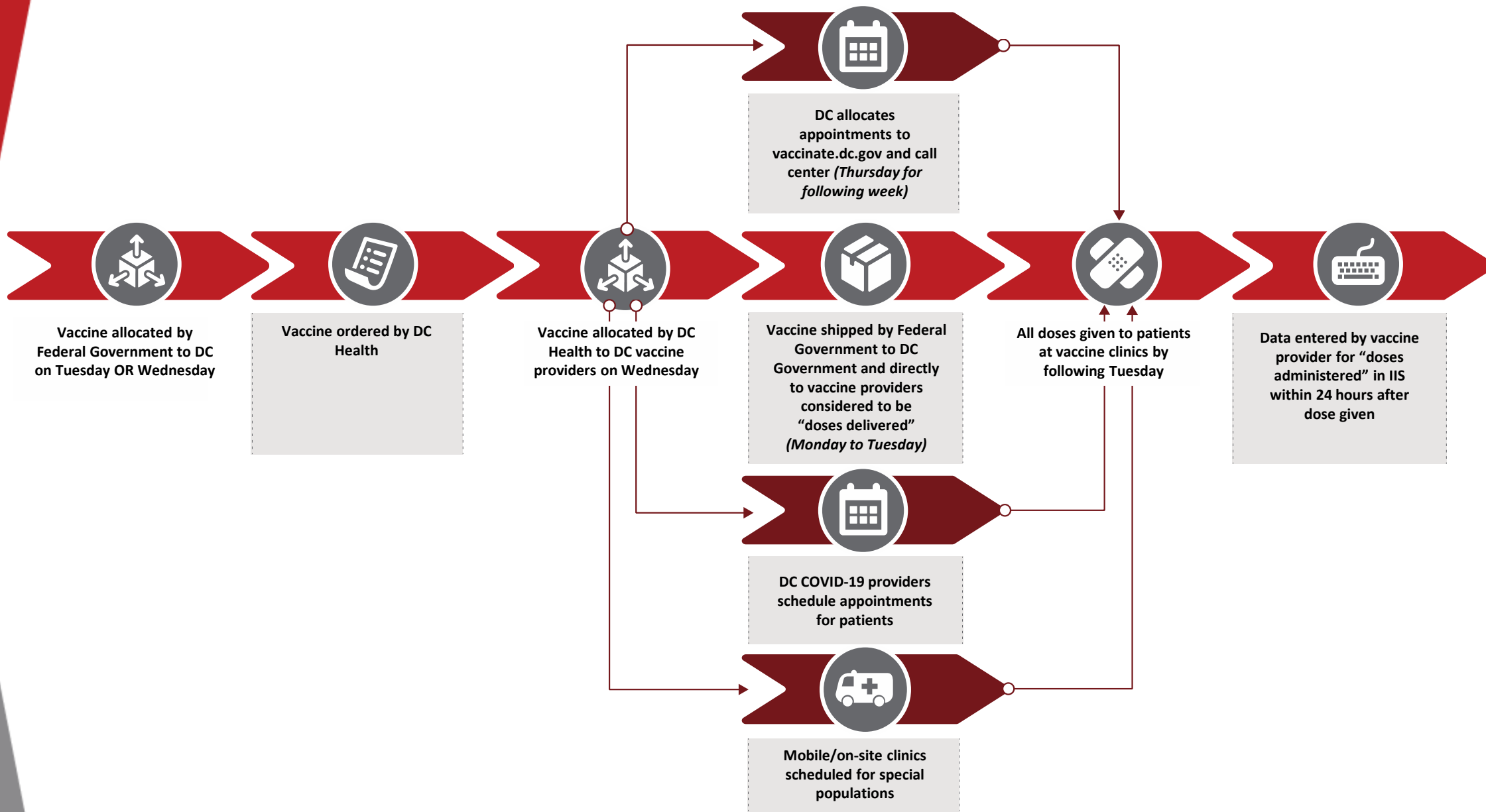
- DC's Early Performance in Ensuring Efficiency and Equity in Vaccine Distribution**
- DC Health's Efforts To Address Vaccine Hesitancy in Communities of Color
- Addressing Technology Challenges With [Vaccinate.dc.gov](https://vaccinate.dc.gov)
- The Challenge and Impact of Federal Vaccine Supply Issues

DC Health's First Objective In Vaccine Administration Is To Achieve Efficiency

- ❑ Directly put, vaccine efficiency is the degree to which dosages received from the federal government are timely injected into the arms of DC residents

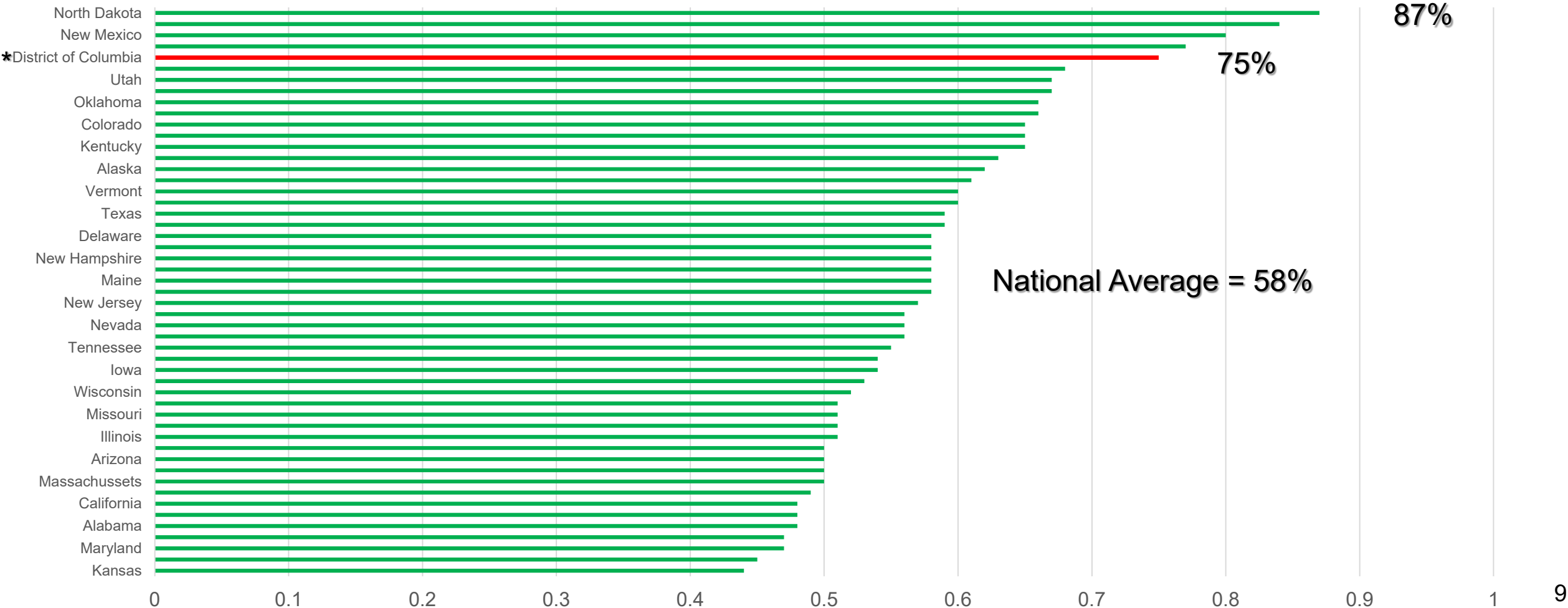
- ❑ Four key terms –
 1. **Total Doses Distributed:** Number of doses going from the federal government to the states.
 2. **Total Doses Administered:** Number of doses injected in the arms of residents by the states.
 3. **Total Doses Scheduled For Administration:** The number of doses encumbered by scheduled appointments that have yet to be executed.
 4. **Total Doses Awaiting Appointment:** The total number of doses that have been delivered from the federal government but are neither administered nor scheduled.

DC Health's Vaccination Distribution Process



The District of Columbia Ranks 5th In The Nation In Vaccine Administration Efficiency

(Data are as of January 26, 2021)

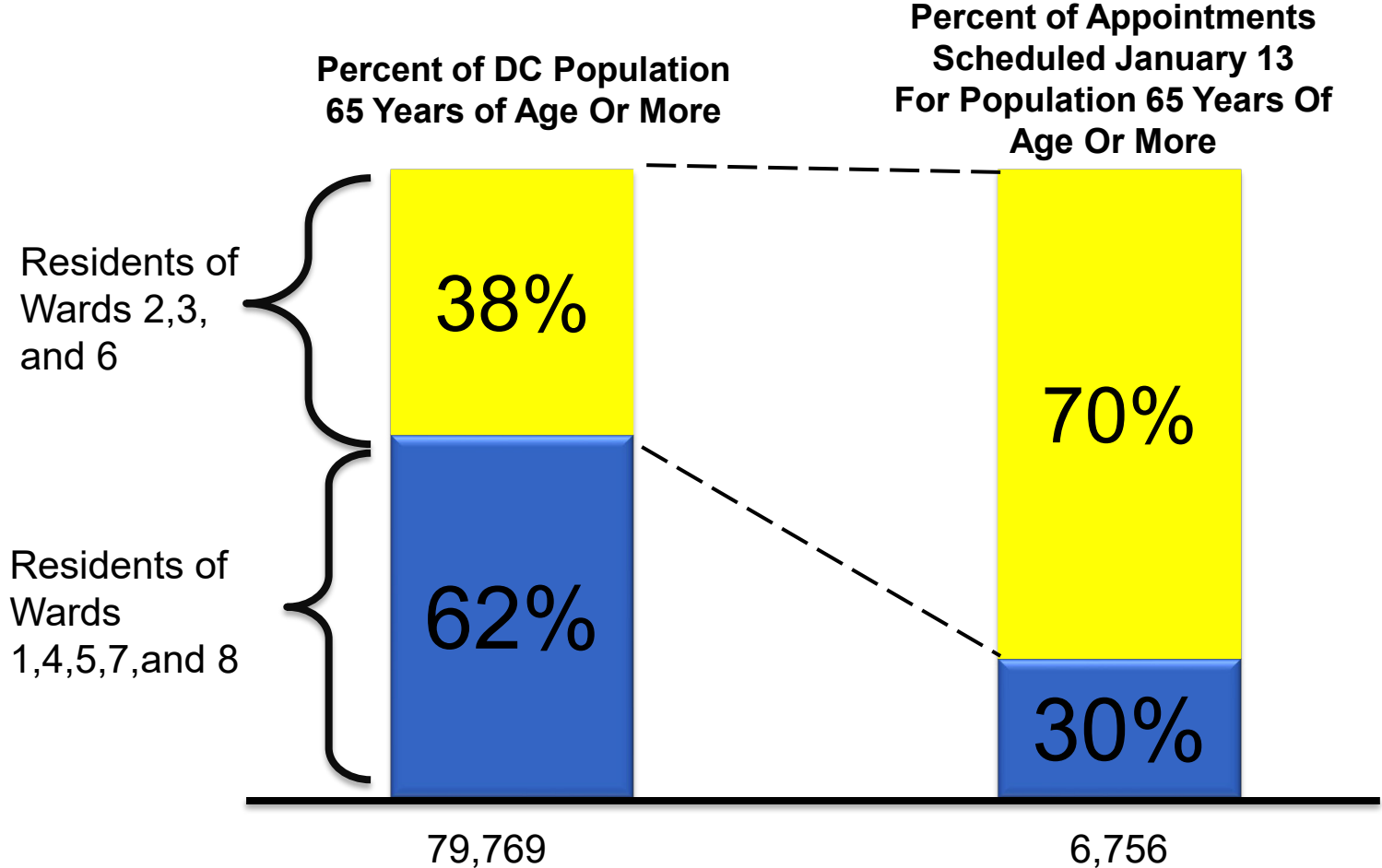


*District data as of January 23, 2021

DC Health's Second Objective In Vaccine Administration Is To Achieve Equity

- ❑ Federal guidelines for vaccination are based upon prioritizing access to the vaccine for persons who have the highest risk for infection and death
- ❑ Hence, DC Health gave first priority for the vaccine in Phase 1a to health care workers and first responders—many of whom work in the District but do not live here
- ❑ Executing this plan produced no visible signs of inequity, except that which might be a function of eligible persons electing not to be vaccinated
- ❑ However, once the District entered Phase 1b, which included both essential workers and the next line of persons considered to be most at-risk—those age 65 years old and over—troubling access issues began to emerge

The District's Expansion To Phase 1b Created Significant Inequities In Vaccine Access Through The Web Portal And Call Center



Source: District population estimate from 2010 United States Census Bureau, ACS updated from for 2013-2017, using 2010 data
Vaccine appointment data provided by DC Health

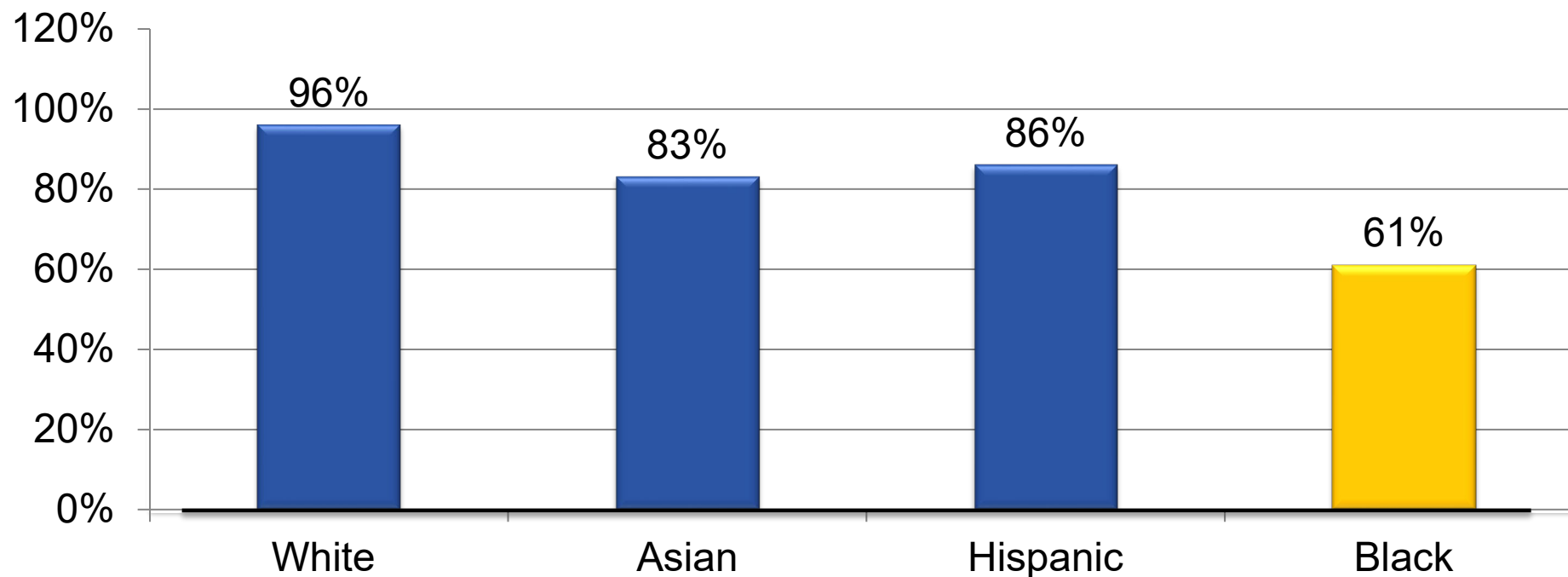
Differences In Vaccination Appointments Were Most Stark Between Ward 3 and Wards 7 and 8

- ❑ More detailed evidence of the equity problems associated with the early implementation of the vaccine program –
 - Demand for vaccine was so high city-wide by seniors that all of the 6,756 appointments released the week of January 11th were filled in 6 hours via the online portal and call center
 - Most -- 2,465 appointments -- were claimed by elderly residents in Ward 3 compared to only 94 appointments by persons who are 65 and older and living in Ward 8

- ❑ A myriad of factors are driving these stark differences in vaccine scheduling and penetration levels across communities
 - Difficulty negotiating certain components of the automated registration has been a common complaint
 - Resident self-selection is undoubtedly one key
 - Minority communities, especially African Americans, have expressed a stubborn resistance to the vaccination program

Compared To Their White Counterparts, Black DC Residents Are 36 Percent Less Likely to Seek Vaccination — Representing Roughly 4 in 10 Persons Who Are Disinclined To Receive The Shots

Percent Of District Residents, By Race, Who Plan To Receive The COVID Vaccine



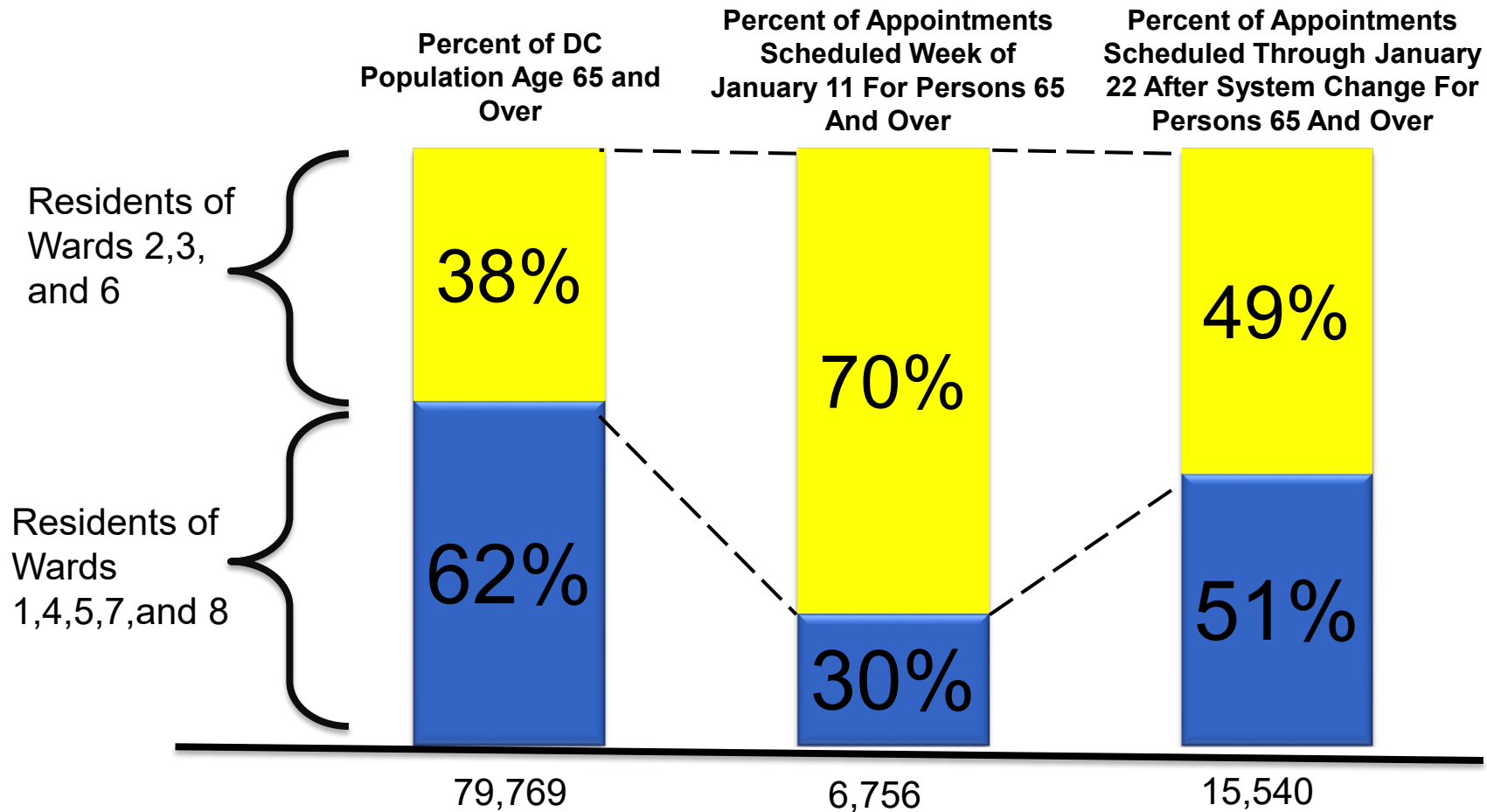
Source: DC Health Survey of residents' vaccine preference.

Significant Changes Were Made To The Vaccine Appointment Process In Response To Observed Inequities

- ❑ During week six of the program's implementation -- a week after scheduling was opened to residents over 65 – the algorithm was changed to give priority access to persons in Wards 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8
 - Early access - 24 hours before appointments were made available city-wide.
 - Priority ZIP codes pinpointed those neighborhoods with the highest burden of COVID-19 incidence and death
 - In some areas, the priority ZIP codes are rough proxies for the racial differences in vaccine preference that exists across the city
 - All appointments were filled in less than one hour

- ❑ The remaining appointments were released the next day city-wide

The Changes Made To The Registration And Scheduling System Greatly Mitigated Previous Equity Issues



Notwithstanding These Changes, Appointments Remain Even Across Wards

❑ Distribution of appointments by Ward -

- Ward 3 at 24%
- Ward 4 at 20%
- Ward 2 at 13%
- Ward 6 at 12%
- Ward 1 at 11%
- Ward 5 at 10%
- Ward 7 at 6%
- Ward 8 at 3%

❑ Other factors driving the observed differences undoubtedly include -

- Larger number of elderly DC residents in Wards 3 and 4
- Lower number of health care workers to deliver vaccinations east of the river
- Large percentages of African Americans in Wards 7 and 8 who have expressed concern about receiving the vaccination



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DC Health Has Initiated A Number Of Strategies Designed To Reduce Concern About The Vaccine In Communities Of Color

- ❑ A multi-pronged approach is needed to improve confidence about the safety of the vaccine in communities of color. Key strategies to improve vaccine penetration rate in minority communities include –
 - Outreach to the medical societies requesting that they send information on COVID-19 resources for providers to their members
 - Direct outreach to licensed physicians requesting that these providers counsel their patients on the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccination
 - DC Health partnered with DC Hospital Association, DC Primary Care Association, and the District of Columbia Department of Insurance Securities and Banking to provide vaccine counseling through membership
 - Launched a number of social marketing campaigns print, radio, and social media forums designed to “meet people where they are” on vaccine acceptance
 - Multi-lingual talking points distributed to assist with community outreach to this specific group

DC Health Has Initiated A Number Of Strategies Designed To Reduce Concern About The Vaccine In Communities Of Color

(continued)

❑ Examples of talking points and other uses of media

- A “Why I’m getting vaccinated” video campaign was launched that asked District health care and frontline workers to record and submit personal videos using a script template provided by DC Health.
- A Senior Social Influencer video campaign was launched and includes Mrs. Cora Masters Barry, former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, former Mayor Sharon Pratt, former Councilmember Carol Schwartz, and current Councilmembers Anita Bonds, Vince Gray, and Chairman Phil Mendelson. While the videos were originally released on social media, they can be seen on Channel 16 and through Comcast.
- A radio spot, targeting District residents 65 and over is currently playing on Radio One stations throughout the city.
- Mailers have also gone out to residents living in the priority ZIP code areas and included specific information on how to schedule a vaccine appointment through the city’s website or any of the District’s health systems or health centers.



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Technology Changes Are Coming To Vaccinate.dc.gov And Call Center

- ❑ DC Health is in the process of developing a new technology platform to power the next phases of the vaccination program.
- ❑ Much of the feedback from the Council and the general public about how the process and the technology can be improved to enhance access to vaccine registration and appointment schedule can and will be configured into the future system.
- ❑ Meanwhile, DC Health and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer continue to make improvements to the current portal, which will still be in use for the next several weeks.
- ❑ We believe these upgrades will improve the user experience for the call center and online portal.

Technology Changes Are Coming To Vaccinate.dc.gov And Call Center

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- ❑ The new system will allow for a separation of the registration and appointment scheduling process
 - ❑ While DC Health does not support the concept of a “waitlist”, the Director understands the community’s interest in separating the vaccine registration process from the vaccine appointment scheduling process
 - ❑ In short, it is anticipated that this new approach will permit DC Health to set rules for appointment scheduling based on the following criteria and in the order shown –
 1. Phase of eligibility
 2. Priority ZIP code/census tract, and
 3. Date of registration
 - ❑ As this will not be a “waitlist” system, DC Health encourages residents to only register when their respective eligibility group is scheduled to be vaccinated.



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Until The District's Supply Of Vaccine Is Increased, District Residents Will Continue To Face Delays In Securing Access

Trend In The District's Vaccine Supply From December 13, 2020 to January 10, 2021

