

# Hyattsville barber shop to become national model to boost vaccination rates

## Prince George's barbershop national model for COVID-19 vaccine program

One barber in Hyattsville is going from giving customers fades to also giving them facts about the COVID-19 vaccine in an effort to boost vaccination rates among communities of color.

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (FOX 5 DC)** - For years, barber Mike Brown has given fades and shape ups to clients who have become family at The Shop Hair Spa in Hyattsville, but now he's giving out facts about the COVID-19 vaccine in what is eyed by the Biden administration as a national model to boost vaccination rates among communities of color.

Brown got involved in the Health Advocates In-Reach and Research Campaign (HAIR), a partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Health, a decade ago.

### [READ MORE: NIH has identified promising oral drug to treat COVID-19](#)

From his chair, he's started conversations with clients about health problems prevalent in the Black community, including initially colorectal cancer, which took Brown's dad.

"I was all on board because it took my dad away from me. My dad raised me. It was just me and my dad," Brown said.

Now the focus is on the COVID-19 vaccine and combatting hesitancy with people customers trust.

"Now is the hard job of answering the question people have and that's what we've done. We've taken the time to answer their questions without disrespecting them. We've taken the time to treat them with dignity and respect," said Dr. Stephen Thomas, professor at the UMD School of Public Health and developer of the HAIR program.

### [READ MORE: CVS launches sweepstakes to encourage COVID-19 vaccination, offering cruises, Super Bowl VIP tickets](#)

Brown said he's spoken to many clients about the vaccine. Some have shared misinformation or did not know why they said they wouldn't take the shot. But it's his job to provide the facts.

"As they continue to come they gotta get in my chair because they're my customers, so every week you come you're gonna hear a little bit more until we get to where we need to be," said Brown.

The White House announced Wednesday that it would support a national program like what's happening at the Hyattsville shop to boost vaccination rates in hard-to-reach communities and help meet President Biden's goal of vaccinating 70 percent of adults by July 4th.

### [READ MORE: Pregnant Maryland mother contracts COVID-19, delivers miracle baby](#)

Eventually, 1,000 barbershops and hair salons are expected to join the program called Shots at the Shop, which will train stylists to give people facts about the vaccines and may even include vaccination clinics at the shops.

The program is a partnership between the University of Maryland's Maryland Center for Health Equity, the Black Coalition Against COVID and beauty brand SheaMoisture, which will provide a \$1,000 stipend to each shop involved.

**[Download the FOX 5 DC News App for Local Breaking News and Weather](#)**

The Shop Hair Spa hosted a vaccine clinic last month which those involved in the program heralded as a success. 35 people got the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.