## Increasing COVID-19 vaccine uptake among adults in South Africa: Findings from 4 rural health districts in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga

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South Africa (SA) launched its national COVID-19 vaccine rollout in February 2021. While early uptake was good, concerns emerged regarding vaccine hesitancy, including in the four health districts supported by BroadReach Health Development (Gert Sibande, Nkangala, King Cetshwayo, and uGu districts). In December 2021, in all four districts, vaccination coverage was just over 2%, while the country average was 30%.

BroadReach Health Development, supported by PEPFAR through USAID, worked in collaboration with the SA Department of Health to scale-up COVID-19 vaccination rates from January to April 2022.



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## Methods

- Implementation of COVID-19 vaccine demand creation activities, expanded vaccine access through facility- and community, and focused rollout amongst people living with HIV and TB.
- Demand creation activities included collaborating with other national partners, influencers, and stakeholders by providing personalised and tailored vaccine messaging for local populations in local languages.
- In facilities, linkage officers promoted vaccine uptake by providing information and counselling on vaccines and linking interested people to nurses for vaccine administration.
- Community uptake was facilitated by providing information and counselling on vaccines including addressing vaccine myths and concerns. Key access-related barriers were removed by offering vaccines within communities.
- Integrated HIV, TB services and COVID-19 vaccination through contacting People Living with HIV and/or TB and providing them their additional information and services on the higher risk of severe disease that warranted vaccinations.









377 (3.4 %)

**Positive tests Referred for HIV Care** 

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We found that focusing on demand creation, offering one-on-one individualised service, providing information in local language, expanding services to include both facility- and communitybased vaccine delivery, resulted in increased COVID-19 vaccine uptake amongst people in rural South Africa.