



Today I'm able to get a vaccine that my ancestors weren't ... we've come a long way. Getting the vaccine helped me make that connection.

Stella Whitney-West
NorthPoint CEO



NorthPoint's CEO, Stella Whitney-West, and her cousin, Carmita McGlory, a clinical social worker at NorthPoint holding a photo of their family from the early 1900s.

Protecting the Health of Our Community

Trusting Science for Today's Generation & Tomorrow's

The 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It's estimated that 500 million people (one-third of the world's population) were infected and at least

50 million people worldwide died including 675,000 in the United States. There was no vaccine to protect against the influenza infection or antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections.

NorthPoint's CEO, Stella Whitney-West, and her cousin, Carmita McGlory, a clinical social worker at NorthPoint recall the stories that have been handed down in their family over the years about the 1918 flu epidemic and how devastating it was. "When we were getting our vaccines in January," Stella says, "I remembered the history, that we had lost family members to the great flu pandemic. I got emotional when I was getting the shot. Here we have a vaccine to prevent you from getting COVID-19, whereas there was no vaccine available 100 years ago. We lost three family members back then, including our great-grandmother. Today I'm able to get a vaccine that my ancestors weren't," she says. "We've come a long way. Getting the vaccine helped me make that connection."



**Stella Whitney-West ...
Trusting Science**

NorthPoint's Vaccination Effort

As of early June, NorthPoint has provided COVID-19 vaccinations to approximately 15,000 people in the community, but there is still much work to be done. "Within the African American community, there's still a disparity," Stella says. "Fifty percent of our patients are African American but only 27% of the vaccines are getting into the arms of African Americans."

"It's the same with the Latino population," Carmita says. "Our Latino/Latinx population is 29-30%, but their vaccination rate is 21%. The Asian community has done a great job. They are really getting the word out in their community, turning out in a higher representation, and getting vaccinated at a higher rate."

What accounts for those disparities? "There's just an overall lack of trust," Stella says, "because of historical and current racism and examples where Black people were used for, unbeknownst to them, medical experimentation." There's also a good deal of misinformation out there that plays on people's fears. "People think that the vaccine was developed really fast, and they're not sure they can trust it," Stella says. "We cannot let this community let this go. This is a matter of life and death."

It's important that the Black community understand it has played a positive role in the development of the COVID-19 vaccines. "An African American woman, Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, is one of the scientists that developed the Moderna vaccine," Stella says. "And Black people were represented in the clinical trials. That's key, because if you want to make sure a large number of people are going to take the vaccine they need to be included in the trials to make sure there are no adverse effects for people of different ethnicities. It's also been demonstrated safe for children and they are able to take it."

Over 85% of NorthPoint's staff are vaccinated. "As one of the most diverse agencies in the County, that level of leadership is important," says Carmita. "It makes a difference when people see people they know. We have staff that look like our community who are available to talk to them."

Part of the Solution

NorthPoint recently partnered with Minnesota Attorney General, Keith Ellison, to host a vaccine clinic June 5. "He called me and asked what he could do to help," Stella says. "His whole team was vaccinated here at NorthPoint. It was a rallying point for the Black community to say, hey, we got our vaccine. We want you to get yours."

NorthPoint is also co-sponsoring town halls to bring in trusted messengers, leaders in the community, and a family where the whole family had COVID-19. They will talk about their experience and the devastating impact it had on their family. The town halls are designed to provide our communities with the best information possible and to hear from others in the community about their own stories.

Protecting One Another

"When I think about our family story," Stella says, "it's about letting people know that when they take that vaccine they are also protecting future generations. This virus is so deadly, it can literally wipe out a whole family or a generation. I think about what I do relative to my grandchildren," she says. "I want to make sure I'm around because grandmas are important. We're passing on history and love and support. When you're a grandparent or a parent there are things you might do to take a risk, but that could impact my child or grandchild and future generations. We have a responsibility to protect each other."

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