

# FOUR THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT VACCINE HESITANCY



- 01** | Vaccine hesitancy is driven by concerns about vaccine safety, low perception of risk associated with vaccine-preventable diseases, lack of trust in the medical community, religious objections and the influence of nonmedical sources.
  - **Discrimination**, describing real or hypothetical experiences of being bullied or excluded from places or activities — such as restaurants, schools and travel — for not complying with vaccine mandates or for obtaining a vaccine exemption.
- 02** | One in 4 Americans has chosen not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine despite the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines receiving full approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- 03** | In five vaccine-related hearings during the 2021 Texas legislative session, witnesses delivered 171 statements during more than 15 hours of testimony. Individuals who opposed COVID-19 vaccine mandates or vaccine mandates in general largely framed their testimony in relation to medical freedom, scientific data, or hypothetical or perceived discrimination based on immunization status. They invoked:
  - **Medical freedom**, including the right to bodily autonomy and to choose to accept or reject medical interventions, including vaccines, vaccine mandates and other public health measures, which they often described as government and/or public health overreach.
  - **Science**, using scientific data that was either unreferenced — and therefore unverifiable — or did not support their claims. Some witnesses challenged the authority of public health institutions, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- 04** | Vaccine misinformation can have profound negative effects on public health in Texas and erodes trust in science, medicine and the government. The public and policymakers should correct misinformation when they hear or see it to ensure that decisions are based on facts and evidence instead of myths and false information.

[Vaccine Hesitancy and Resistance in Texas: An Analysis of Testimony from the 2021 Texas State Legislative Session](#) (2022), authored by Kirstin R.W. Matthews and Rekha Lakshmanan, provides a detailed analysis of anti-vaccine testimony delivered during the 2021 Texas legislative session. The brief was presented during the [2022 Texas Vaccine Policy Symposium](#) at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy on October 14, 2022.

For more information on vaccines, visit the Vaccines Cause Adults page at: [bakerinstitute.org/vaccines-cause-adults](https://bakerinstitute.org/vaccines-cause-adults).

*Funding for the dissemination of research findings was generously provided by the Greenwall Foundation through a Bridging Bioethics Research & Policymaking grant. This is a joint collaboration between the Baker Institute Center for Health and Biosciences Vaccine Project and The Immunization Partnership.*

**VACCINES  
CAUSE  
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