



2/5/2021

February 2021

Dear I-CARE users:

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) continues to work with stakeholders to improve the data collection process for COVID-19 vaccination distribution. As you know, IDPH is utilizing the Illinois Comprehensive Automated Immunization Registry Exchange (I-CARE), a web-based immunization record sharing application developed by IDPH. Data collected through the I-CARE system is critical to not only inform vaccine administration but also to ensure the COVID-19 vaccine is getting into the arms of Illinois' most vulnerable populations.

Specific demographic variables, such as race and ethnicity, are critical to supporting this effort. **Effective Monday, February 8th**, the race and ethnicity data fields in I-CARE will become mandatory data fields. If you have already been entering these data fields, please continue to do so. If not, we encourage organizations to ensure those data fields are added to current intake forms and that there are processes in place to communicate the importance of completing this information with patients during the COVID-19 vaccine registration process.

The two data fields and response options are provided here:

Race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African-American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Other race, White, Unknown

Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, Unknown

IMPORTANT STEPS (that require prompt action):

- Communicate with your patient population that this field is a requirement of the registration process and reaffirm that this information is confidential and is used (in aggregate) to help ensure vaccine is getting to our most vulnerable populations.
- Add Race and Ethnicity data fields to COVID-19 vaccination registration forms using the response options listed above (if applicable)
- Upload and/or enter the race and ethnicity data field into I-CARE for every patient receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Records with missing data: If a patient refuses to provide race and/or ethnicity data please indicate "unknown" in the respective data field(s).
- You will notice the RACE data field includes "Hispanic or Latino" as a response option and this may be a slight departure from how you are used to recording/reporting ethnicity data. The intent behind this is to better capture the LatinX population that does not identify with a specific race and minimize the "other race" response where possible. For example, a person who has ancestry

from Mexico may not identify their race as white, black, Asian, etc. and would otherwise self-classify as “other Race” in the Race field and “Hispanic or Latino” in the ethnicity field. In those cases, we ask the patient and/or organization to indicate “Hispanic or Latino” in the race field as well as ethnicity field.

- At this time the race and ethnicity data field requirement does not apply to records that are uploaded through the HL7 interface option. However, HL7 standards specify if the EMR or sending system collects race and ethnicity. Those fields should be sent to I-CARE.

*Reminder: Always ask the race and ethnicity questions directly and never assume race and ethnicity of an individual.

For additional information regarding I-CARE, please visit: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/immunization/icare>