



Briva Health's COVID-19 Community Coordinator Program

Briva Health (Briva) is a COVID-19 Community Coordinator (CCC) in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). CCC's are community-based organizations that connect Minnesota's diverse communities to COVID-19 testing and resources. MDH recognizes that "...it is essential to draw on community strengths and trusted community networks to respond effectively to COVID-19 and to longstanding health inequities made worse by the pandemic." As a trusted community-based organization with a diverse staff which represents the communities they serve, Briva is well positioned to connect Minnesota communities most impacted by the pandemic to vital testing information and COVID-19 related resources. Briva is also tasked with working with MDH to identify cultural and systemic barriers that may prevent communities facing health inequities from accessing the resources they need, and advocating for solutions to those barriers.

Access to COVID-19 Resources is Limited Among Communities of Color

COVID-19 exacerbates existing social, economic, and health inequities in Minnesota; according to the Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm, this is in part due to systemic factors such as structural racism. In addition to experiencing some of the highest COVID-19 disparities, communities of color also face multiple barriers and unequal access to critical and much needed resources during this pandemic. Some barriers include lack of access to rapidly changing information, technology, and language barriers. These barriers make it difficult for certain community members, in particular communities of color, as well as immigrant and refugee communities, to get the resources they need to meet their basic needs and stay healthy.

Briva Health Connects Minnesotans Affected By COVID-19 To Vital Resources

Briva connects hard to reach communities impacted by COVID-19 to resources across the state via the following:

- **The Briva COVID-19 Hotline-1833-566-6662:** COVID-19 hotline specialists staff the hotline seven days a week, 9AM to 5PM. Community members are assisted with their needs and connected to essential resources and other social services available in their county. Briva's staff are multi-lingual and assist Minnesotans in their native languages. At the hotline, community members receive assistance with:

Basic Needs:

- Information on food programs and application assistance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Application assistance with housing and rental assistance
- Employment resources
- Application assistance with cash and child care support programs
- Information on legal assistance

Testing Locations and Health Care:

- Answer general questions related to COVID-19, case investigation and contact tracing
- Where to get tested for COVID-19--including free community sites and home test kits--and which testing sites offer services in various languages
- Health care and mental health resources
 - MNsure application assistance through Briva Health Care Navigation Program
 - Information on mental health resources
- Resources for people in isolation due to COVID-19
 - Briva COVID-19 hotline specialists connect COVID-19 patients in isolation to their respective county to access available county resources- this may include housing assistance, food delivery, and assistance with paying other personal bills



- **COVID-19-Resource Distribution:** Briva distributes important COVID-19 resources kits that help community members protect themselves, including hand sanitizer and masks. Briva is in the process of distributing more than 12,000 masks and 6,000 bottles of hand sanitizer by working with community partners, distributing resources at locations frequented by community members, and by handing them out at Briva offices. Briva is also partnering with Hennepin County to distribute 250 laptops to those impacted by COVID-19 and needing a laptop to help them connect to online services, such as telehealth, job applications, housing assistance applications, and schooling for kids. Assisting community members to overcome this technology barrier is key to reducing disparities.
- **Boosting capacity at community Testing centers:** Briva is helping MDH staff community testing centers on a weekly basis to help boost testing centers' capacity to serve the needs of the community. At the testing centers, Briva staff help with registration, logistical coordination, and translation, among other tasks.
- **Advocacy for communities facing barriers:** Briva continues to advocate on behalf of hard to reach communities served through its CCC program. Briva staff are leading discussions with MDH and other stakeholders to identify potential solutions to barriers faced by communities impacted by COVID-19.



"I was referred to Briva through a friend. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I lost my employment and was unsure how I was going to afford my rent and utilities. Very kind staff members worked with me to ensure I received the housing and utility assistance I needed to get through this time."

Briva's Unique Approach to Public Health

Briva's staff is representative of the diverse communities they work with, and because of this they are able to provide culturally responsive services, including offering services in multiple languages. Briva can authentically connect to diverse communities in ways that would be difficult for large government institutions to do.

Additionally, Briva is a well-established and trusted organization in the community. Annually, more than twenty-five thousand Minnesotans are served through Briva's Healthcare Navigation Program. Thus, many communities facing health disparities utilize Briva for their health insurance needs. Briva leverages this platform to engage community members around pandemic-related needs such as testing and housing.

COVID-19 Vaccine Education

As the COVID-19 vaccines are rolled out and become available to additional groups of people, Briva will add vaccine education to the list of COVID-19 related services they offer to their communities. There is a high level of vaccine hesitancy in certain communities, and Briva will lead conversations and messaging around vaccines in these communities. Briva staff are ready to talk to community members about the science behind the safety of the vaccine and to help stop the spread of vaccine-related misinformation. Helping communities overcome vaccine hesitancy will be vitally important for communities to defeat this pandemic. Briva will also work with MDH and other partners to facilitate vaccine delivery to community members.

"I am unemployed due to COVID-19. I needed help with paying rent. The service I received from (Briva Health) is 100 percent amazing. They help me with many different requests for my housing needs. They are great advocates for me while they spoke with community resources on my behalf. I really appreciate their help with everything."

