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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

iCare support expands COVID health education campaign to include transit ads

Milwaukee, August 17, 2021 – Helping boost COVID-19 vaccine confidence and trust in neighborhoods most impacted by the pandemic, Independent Care Health Plan (iCare) has funded bus advertising at a cost of \$40,000 to encourage COVID vaccination in neighborhoods that have shown lagging COVID vaccination rates. The “Authentic Voices” transit ads are expected to generate 8 to 10 million impressions from August through September 2021.



The Authentic Voices campaign was launched in April by Milwaukee's Vaccine Integrated Communications Outreach and Mobilization (VICOM) group to increase vaccine acceptance and has been deployed through billboards, radio, print, television, social media and [collateral](#) distributed by community based organizations and mobilizers. iCare's funding expands the campaign to now include bus wrap advertising including the following routes:

- 12 – Teutonia/Hampton
- 19 – MLK to S13th/S20th
- 21 – North Avenue
- 22 – Center Street
- 30 – Sherman Park
- 57 – Walnut to Appleton
- 60 – Burleigh
- 80 – 6th Street
- The Redline – Capitol Drive

The Authentic Voices campaign features real Milwaukeeans, who proudly share their decision to be vaccinated against COVID-19. It can be viewed at www.healthymke.com.

“Milwaukee is iCare's home,” said iCare CEO/President Tony Mollica. “iCare and Humana want to proactively improve the health of the communities we serve. Often that starts with awareness. Transit advertising makes perfect sense because it allows for repeated exposure to positive COVID vaccine messaging delivered in the neighborhoods with the greatest need.”

Milwaukee's Black and Hispanic communities carry the highest COVID disease burden and have lower vaccination rates than the general population. According to the [Milwaukee County COVID-19 Dashboard](#), as of 7/29/2021, the following compares individuals receiving one or more vaccine dose.

- White @ 54%
- Hispanic @ 41%
- Black @ 30%

“Opinion research shows that for those who have not yet been vaccinated, but are in the ‘moveable middle,’ hearing from trusted messengers and community influencers is the most important factor in building vaccine confidence,” said Clare Reardon, Organizational Advancement, Milwaukee Health Care Partnership and VICOM co-chair. “The Authentic Voices bus wraps will help reinforce the images and stories of community influencers and will be a tremendous complement to the door-to-door vaccine education currently underway with community mobilizers and the Milwaukee Health Department. We are very grateful for *iCare’s* investment.”

National opinion research shows that many unvaccinated American adults are still open to vaccine ‘waiting to see,’ or just indifferent. The transit ads and the Authentic Voices campaign in general intend to overcome mistrust and diminish indifference among this crucial population.

About Independent Care Health Plan (*iCare*)

iCare provides managed care coverage for over 40,000 people throughout Wisconsin, most of whom have low incomes or are disabled. *iCare* has been securing the wellness of people with complex conditions for over two decades. *iCare* is a wholly-owned subsidiary of [Humana](#). For more information about *iCare*, visit www.iCareHealthPlan.org, or call 800-777-4376 (TTY 1-800-947-3529).

About VICOM

The Vaccine Integrated Communications, Outreach and Mobilization (VICOM) group is a cross-sector collaboration of communications, health care, public health and philanthropic organizations in support of Milwaukee’s COVID-19 response. The VICOM group promotes COVID vaccine information and education with a focus on outreach communications strategies for vulnerable populations. It facilitated the creation of healthyMKE.com as a comprehensive resource for COVID-19 information and other health resources, and has attracted more than \$900,000 in in-kind, corporate and philanthropic funding for the “Authentic Voices” COVID vaccine campaign.

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For high-resolution photos, contact Kirk Heminger at kheminger@icarehealthplan.org

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