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Survey of U.S. Jewish Community Finds Pro-Vaccine Attitudes Exceed the Overall U.S. Population But Chasidic Community Shows Significant Anti-Vaccine Attitudes and Less Compliance

Nishma Research has released findings from its new survey: "Ten Months Later – Where Do We Stand? The U.S. Jewish Community's Views on Coronavirus and COVID-19 Vaccines." The survey was conducted January 4-13, 2021. Based on responses from 1,426 American Jews, it presents findings across the Modern Orthodox, Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox, comprised of Yeshivish and Chasidic groups) and the Non-Orthodox communities.

Coronavirus as a Threat – The Modern Orthodox, Yeshivish and Non-Orthodox all see coronavirus as a major threat to their community and are diligent about wearing face masks. The Chasidic community is notably less concerned (40% see it as a major threat) and less compliant with preventive measures (48% are diligent about wearing face masks).

Where Do People Get Their Coronavirus/COVID Information? – The top sources overall are medical professionals and newspapers, as well as the Internet and TV. But many people rely on social media (WhatsApp is very popular in the Haredi community), and the reasons people give for anti-vaccine sentiment show some of the common misinformation themes that are "out there" these days.

Are People Comfortable with the Vaccine? – Most people have confidence in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine (95% of Modern Orthodox and Non-Orthodox, and 85% of the Yeshivish), but views among the Chasidic group are less positive (70%).

Do People Plan to Get the Vaccine? – The CDC announced in recent days (in reaction to the emergence of a more transmissible virus mutation) that it views 80% as the level needed to achieve herd immunity. Compared to that level, the Non-Orthodox (95%) and Modern Orthodox (93%) seem to be in good shape, and the Yeshivish (78%) are in range of achieving that. These groups are all ahead of the U.S. public overall (69%, as per the Kaiser Family Foundation last month). But the Chasidic group lags badly at 57%.

This survey probes the reasons why people are pro-vaccine and anti-vaccine. As Mark Trencher, Nishma president and director of the study, noted: "We sponsored and conducted this as a service to the community, and our goal was to listen to what people are saying. In particular, if we understand why some people are hesitant to get the vaccine, we can help to address this societal issue."

The survey report as well as many hundreds of verbatim responses, in which people share their thoughts relating to the vaccine, are available at the Nishma Research website. Trencher added, "we recommend review of the verbatim responses, as they present a valuable qualitative addition to the statistical data. You really get a sense of people's thoughts and concerns about the important issues facing them these days."