Project Title: Communicating about COVID-19 Testing to Underrepresented Populations.
Collaborators: Center of Excellence in Regulatory Science and Innovation (CERSI) and The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

In late October 2020, in combination with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the PATIENTS Program set out to talk to six underrepresented populations to understand their attitudes around testing for COVID-19 and if they would share their data in national databases.

This project gave the FDA rich information about the thoughts and attitudes about COVID-19 testing in African American, Hispanic, older adults, adults with chronic conditions, adults with varying health knowledge and adults who did not have symptoms but live with someone who has or had COVID-19.

These six populations were recruited by a team of three recruiters. Over about eight weeks, two community partners and the PATIENTS Program’s senior engagement specialist worked with the community to take part in the project.
About 95 people were engaged, 76 were scheduled to take part, with a total of 63 final participants.

Community members took part in face-to-face focus group talks of up to five people using Zoom in a 90-minute interview session. Keeping the groups small gave each person taking part enough time to share their thoughts and opinions openly. Each group was asked questions about COVID-19 testing in general, if they wanted to be tested, and how they felt about adding their data to national databases. The face-to-face discussion group format using Zoom gave a chance to safely interact and give more information about each person’s comments during a pandemic.
Communicating about COVID-19 Testing to Underrepresented Populations (continued)

After months of hearing information communicated to the public via media outlets and respected medical sources, this project gave the community a chance to actively express their voices, their fears, and concerns, perceived benefits and barriers about COVID-19 testing and their diverse thoughts on sharing of their data.

Through the dynamic discussion from this project, the FDA and other researchers will be better able to create specific tailored communication tools and will be well-informed on how to focus their outreach efforts to the African American, Hispanic, older adults, adults with chronic conditions, adults with varying health knowledge and adults who did not have symptoms but live with someone who has or had COVID-19 populations.

We thank our community partners and all of those who took part in this project.
Communicating about COVID-19 Testing to Underrepresented Populations (continued)

In addition, Dr. Daniel Mullins and Dr. Jasmine Cooper, both of the PATIENTS Program along with Dr. Michelle Tarver, acting deputy director of the Office of Strategic Partnerships and Technology Innovation at the FDA presented to the university community at large as part of the university’s "Timely Topics" forum. The presentation spoke to the importance of their collaborative work for the West Baltimore community as well as the nation.

To view the presentation, please click here to access the link. The passcode needed to view the presentation is UMSOP1841*