

I am writing this comment in support of universal access to all COVID vaccines.

Two decades ago, when I was in my sophomore year of high school, I got sick with a minor cough. It went away in a few days, but I was left with unrelenting fatigue and wide-ranging systemic symptoms. Eventually I was forced to drop out of high school, despite being a straight-A student before falling ill. Many years later I now have diagnoses for my post-viral illnesses, but there are no cures. I have never been able to work or go to school full time. Now I can't work at all.

The research shows that COVID can cause many disabling post-viral illnesses like mine. We also know these conditions affect children as much as adults, including healthy children like I was. But vaccines can help reduce the chance of post-viral health conditions. We must allow (and encourage) ALL kids to get vaccinated to reduce the risk of becoming sick and disabled from repeated COVID infections. They deserve protection.

I'll never know what virus caused my permanent disabilities. But we know COVID is causing devastating chronic illness in kids now, and we know how to help prevent it, or at least reduce the risk. Please.