

As the NB. 1.8.1 strain of COVID—known for causing what people describe as “swallowing glass” [1]—spreads globally, I am asking ACIP to support widespread and unhindered vaccination for all Americans. COVID infections continue to kill and disable countless Americans, scientific evidence clearly indicates we need universal access to updated COVID vaccines to protect against constantly mutating variants. Research also shows updated vaccines are necessary every six months (at a minimum, as efficacy wanes after three months), and should be recommended for everyone who can receive them, regardless of age or pregnancy.

Restricting access to these vaccinations neglects ACIP’s responsibility to protect everyone from COVID infections that frequently lead to severe health outcomes or Long COVID. Given that there is the potential to update the vaccines to better match perpetually emerging variants, updates to all vaccine types are needed, and ensuring access to all options made by all three manufacturers (Pfizer, Moderna, and Novavax) is essential.

Any recommendations that regard who or when access is available to these vaccines are barriers for vulnerable people and discourage high risk people from getting needed vaccine boosters.

ACIP must not only ensure the viral variants are addressed by the COVID vaccine, but also provide recommendations that anticipate the next dominant strain in the next six months. This requires that ACIP ensure manufacturers match the variant with future variants.

ACIP must support equitable and affordable access to updated vaccines and address access limitations due to financial and demographic constraints by advocating for programs such as the now defunct CDC bridge program that ensured no-cost access to vaccines. [2]

I request ACIP listen to the needs of the public and base their decisions on peer-reviewed, previously researched medical science. Remember that the decisions ACIP makes will determine the long-term outcomes of our public welfare. Denying and restricting vaccination for communicable disease will result in preventable deaths of children, seniors, pregnant women, and others. Healthy children will develop disabilities for literally no reason. Diseases

know no boundaries, and if we do not have vaccine provided herd immunity, no one is safe from disability and early, preventable death. Not even billionaires. Not even you.

We count on ACIP to protect not just our nation, but because of global travel, the entire world's population. Please remember that and do the right thing. Do not restrict vaccine access for anyone else.

References:

1. Peter Warren, Evan MacDonald. Nimbus COVID 'razor blade throat' reportedly like swallowing glass. What to know. *Houston Chronicle*. June 18, 2025
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/bridge/index.html>