



Position Statement from the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)

Re: In Support of Maintaining a Universal COVID-19 Vaccine Policy for All Individuals Aged 6 Months and Older

As a leading voice in the advancement of health equity and the representation of Hispanic nurses nationwide, the National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN) strongly supports the continued recommendation of a universal COVID-19 vaccine policy for all individuals aged 6 months and older. We urge the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to maintain and reinforce this universal policy as a cornerstone of primary prevention and public health equity.

Rationale and Evidence-Based Support

Over the past three years, racial and ethnic minorities in the United States have experienced significantly higher rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and mortality than their white counterparts. Early in the pandemic, Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American individuals faced disproportionately high rates of hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) admissions. For example, the COVID-19 hospitalization rate among Latino individuals was four times greater than that of white patients. Alarming, as of August 2021, Latinos had a COVID-19 mortality rate 9.2 times that of white patients.

Despite the rollout of vaccines beginning in late 2020 and the expansion of booster availability through 2023, disparities in vaccine access and uptake remain. As of July 2022, Black individuals continued to have the lowest vaccination rates nationally. These disparities are rooted in a complex interplay of factors including:

- **Widespread misinformation** regarding vaccine safety and effectiveness;
- **Historical injustices** leading to mistrust in the healthcare system;
- **Barriers in eligibility awareness**, administrative processes, and insurance concerns;
- **Disproportionate access to vaccines** in wealthier, predominantly white neighborhoods;
- **Lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate information** for Black and Latino communities.

In Los Angeles County, for example, early vaccine hesitancy was highest among Black and Latino populations and those with annual incomes below \$20,000. Furthermore, pediatric and older adult populations—particularly in under-resourced communities—remain among the most vulnerable due to lower immunity and preexisting conditions.

Public Health and Equity Imperatives

The decision to vaccinate is personal; however, the consequences of that decision extend far beyond the individual. The ongoing risks of acute illness, long COVID, and associated healthcare costs are collective burdens that strain families, communities, and health systems. In this context, a universal vaccine recommendation supports our shared commitment to public health, cost-effective prevention, and the ethical obligation to protect the most vulnerable among us.

Vaccination, as a strategy of **primary prevention**, aligns with the foundational goal of healthcare: to prevent disease rather than merely treat its consequences. To retreat from a universal vaccination policy now would be to ignore the lessons of the pandemic and risk deepening the health inequities that persist across our nation.

Conclusion

NAHN urges ACIP to maintain the universal recommendation for COVID-19 vaccination for all individuals aged 6 months and older. To do otherwise would jeopardize the progress made in mitigating COVID-19 and disproportionately endanger communities already historically underserved by our healthcare system.

We call on ACIP to reaffirm its commitment to equity, prevention, and public health by ensuring that COVID-19 vaccines remain universally recommended, accessible, and prioritized for all, especially those in communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Respectfully submitted,

National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)

May 22, 2025

About the National Association of Hispanic Nurses

Since 1975, NAHN has been the nation's leading professional society for Latino nurses. With a growing membership of more than 40 local chapters, NAHN represents the voices of over 220,000 Latino nurses throughout the United States. NAHN is devoted to promoting safe, quality health care delivery to Latino communities and recognizing excellence among Latino nurses. To learn more, visit www.nahnnet.org.

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