

COVID-19 TOWN HALL Q&A – February 10, 2021

QUESTION TOPIC INDEX <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions for the Town Hall Guest • Health of the Public and Science • Advocacy and Government Relations 	
Thank you for joining our informative discussion with Bechara Choucair, MD, White House vaccinations coordinator.	
QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
QUESTIONS FOR THE TOWN HALL GUEST	
Can you explain the Biden administration's national COVID-19 vaccine strategy?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the seven-minute mark in the video replay .
When can we expect more COVID-19 vaccines to be available?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 10-minute mark in the video replay .
Can you tell us more about the effort to find more locations for people to get vaccinated?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 15-minute mark in the video replay .
What is the strategy of using retail pharmacies for COVID-19 vaccines? Are vaccine allocations going to retail pharmacies ahead of those allocated to states? How can family physicians best coordinate and/or collaborate with pharmacies?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 32-minute mark in the video replay .
Can you tell us about the new program for federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and how family doctors can play a role in supporting this program?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 35-minute mark in the video replay .
What steps is the Biden administration taking to ensure the national strategy for COVID-19 vaccines is equitable in distribution and helps reduce health care disparities?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 38-minute mark in the video replay .
What role do you anticipate family physicians playing in the national COVID-19 vaccine strategy in the short and long term?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 43-minute mark in the video replay .
What is most surprising and most concerning about the COVID-19 vaccination rollout data?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 46-minute mark in the video replay .

What data is most helpful to optimize access to, and administration of, the COVID-19 vaccines?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 50-minute mark in the video replay .
Will the Biden administration be working and collaborating differently with states and, if so, how?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 52-minute mark in the video replay .
How will new, emerging vaccines on a different platform change the COVID-19 vaccine strategy? Do you have any thoughts specifically about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 54-minute mark in the video replay .
Can you tell us about the rate of success for those receiving the second dose of the messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccines and how to best improve those rates?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 55-minute mark in the video replay .
Will there be continuing public and private partnerships for vaccine development? How can we encourage innovative development for future vaccines?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 57-minute mark in the video replay .
Family physicians provide vaccines for patients across the life span. There is concern about the lagging vaccination rates, especially in children. What suggestions do you have to improve those rates?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 58-minute mark in the video replay .
If there was not an ongoing pandemic, what would be your top vaccine priorities?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 59-minute mark in the video replay .
How has your experience as a family physician and a public health official informed your current role?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 60-minute mark in the video replay .
HEALTH OF THE PUBLIC AND SCIENCE	
Are there vaccine companies researching and developing newer versions of vaccines to counter COVID-19 variants?	Yes. There are ongoing studies by manufacturers to determine efficacy against the variants .
What can we do to make sure family physicians are recognized as a significant provider of vaccinations?	The AAFP is advocating for COVID-19 vaccines to be dispersed to primary care practices for distribution . We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign .

<p>What is the evidence to support the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) recent statement that individuals who have completed their COVID-19 vaccination series no longer have to quarantine after exposure? How can family physicians incorporate this guidance into issuance of return-to-work letters (i.e., verifying vaccination timing)?</p>	<p>At this time, vaccinated persons should continue to follow current guidance to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, staying at least six feet away from others, avoiding crowds, avoiding poorly ventilated spaces, covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands often, following CDC travel guidance, and following any applicable workplace or school guidance, including guidance related to personal protective equipment use or COVID-19 testing. However, vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are fully vaccinated (i.e., greater than or equal to two weeks after receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or greater than or equal to two weeks after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) • Are within three months after receipt of the last dose in the series • Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure <p>Persons who do not meet all three of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.</p> <p>Although the risk of COVID-19 transmission from vaccinated persons to others is still uncertain, vaccination has been demonstrated to prevent symptomatic COVID-19. Symptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission is thought to have a greater role in transmission than purely asymptomatic transmission. Additionally, individual and societal benefits of avoiding unnecessary quarantine may outweigh the potential, but unknown, risks of transmission. The recommendation to waive quarantine for people with vaccine-derived immunity aligns with quarantine recommendations for those with natural immunity, which eases implementation.</p>
<p>What is the Biden administration's plan for family physician practices to give COVID-19 vaccines?</p>	<p>The AAFP is working with the Biden administration to advocate for our strategic priorities, including vaccine distribution and other ways to improve health care.</p>
<p>Why are states allowed to choose who will receive the vaccine?</p>	<p>According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, distribution of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-authorized vaccines begin 24 hours after its emergency use authorization. The first</p>

	<p>deliveries of COVID-19 vaccines began December 14, 2020. State and local health departments have the best information about when, where, and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine in your area.</p>
<p>How can we improve equitable distribution and access to the COVID-19 vaccines?</p>	<p>The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.</p> <p>We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign.</p>
<p>With supply shortages and evolving evidence regarding the duration of effective immunity from infection, will there be an option for individuals with a history of a positive COVID-19 infection to provide proof of immunity as an alternative to vaccination?</p>	<p>The duration of immunity is still unknown. According to the CDC, “data from clinical trials indicate that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines can safely be given to persons with evidence of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection. Vaccination should be offered to persons regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 infection. Viral testing to assess for acute SARS-CoV-2 infection or serologic testing to assess for prior infection for the purposes of vaccine decision-making is not recommended. Vaccination of persons with known current SARS-CoV-2 infection should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) and criteria have been met for them to discontinue isolation. This recommendation applies to persons who experience SARS-CoV-2 infection before receiving any vaccine doses as well as those who experience SARS-CoV-2 infection after the first dose but before receipt of the second dose. While there is no recommended minimum interval between infection and vaccination, current evidence suggests that the risk of SARS-CoV-2 reinfection is low in the months after initial infection but may increase with time due to waning immunity. Thus, while vaccine supply remains limited, persons with recent documented acute SARS-CoV-2 infection may choose to temporarily delay vaccination, if desired, recognizing that the risk of reinfection, and therefore the need for vaccination, might increase with time following initial infection.”</p>
<p>We all get other vaccines distributed by suppliers, such as McKesson. They do it fast and efficiently. Why are we not using those distribution chains to provide COVID-19 vaccines to physicians to provide their patients?</p>	<p>The distribution process is determined by each state, tribe, and territory. They develop their own plans for deciding the order of groups to be vaccinated.</p> <p>Find your state/jurisdiction plan here.</p>

<p>While I don't want to write a chronic condition authorization letter for every patient, it is frustrating to see so many people jump the vaccine line or travel across state lines for the vaccine. Are there any solutions that don't involve physicians writing chronic condition authorization letters?</p>	<p>The process for verification or attestation for eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine varies greatly by state and jurisdiction. Members are encouraged to contact their state for guidance or to advocate for solutions to current barriers/issues.</p>
<p>Pennsylvania seems to be moving toward mass vaccination sites, which does not address vulnerable communities with significant barriers or vaccine hesitancy. How can we better advocate to get the COVID-19 vaccine into our communities?</p>	<p>The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.</p> <p>We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign.</p>
<p>There have been major issues with getting patients registered online, traveling to vaccination sites, and language barriers. What is the Biden administration's plans to address issues that highlight growing disparities and inequities in access to the COVID-19 vaccine?</p>	<p>This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 38-minute mark in the video replay.</p>
<p>When can we expect vaccines to be delivered to primary care offices?</p>	<p>The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.</p> <p>We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign.</p>
<p>Are family physicians going to receive vaccines to give to our vulnerable, elderly, and minority populations?</p>	<p>The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.</p> <p>We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign.</p>
<p>What is the AAFP's stance on getting COVID-19 vaccines to family physician practices so we can vaccinate our patients who really need them?</p>	<p>The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.</p> <p>We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign.</p> <p>Recent letters include Leveraging Primary Care Physicians to Accelerate COVID-19 Vaccination and a letter to the House Committee on Energy and</p>

	Commerce urging collaboration with primary care practices on vaccine distribution .
Any there plans to distribute the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine primarily to primary care clinics if or when it is approved?	Information about this question is not available at this time.
How is it being assessed that the pharmacies receiving vaccines are providing them to patients with the greatest need?	This question was answered live during the town hall session. Please see response at the 38-minute mark in the video replay .
How are pharmacies going to observe patients who have been vaccinated for the 15-30 minutes after their shot and treat any reactions and/or anaphylaxis? Shouldn't physician's practices be administering vaccines, as we are better equipped for those type of reactions and emergencies?	Information about this question is not available at this time. As noted above, the AAFP is advocating for vaccine distribution to primary care offices.
Are the FQHCs required to follow the state's criteria or will they have their own criteria for vaccination?	FQHCs participating in this program will continue to follow state priority guidelines in administering the vaccine and be required to store, handle, and administer vaccine according to stated requirements, and meet necessary reporting requirements.
There are family physicians who are independent physicians who want to help. How can we assist with vaccination efforts?	The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans. We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign .
Family physicians are trained to improve disparities in health care. How can pharmacies and supercenters compete with this training?	The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans. We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related Speak Out campaign .
Is there any new information on the obstetrician-gynecologist in Florida who died of acute immune thrombocytopenia after getting his COVID-19 vaccine?	This case is still under investigation, so we can't provide an answer.
ADVOCACY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS	
How is the AAFP advocating for family physicians to receive more COVID-19 vaccines for distribution?	The AAFP is encouraging equitable allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine and the inclusion of family physicians in distribution plans.

We are asking AAFP members to echo this message at the state level by participating in a vaccine-related [Speak Out campaign](#).

Recent letters include [Leveraging Primary Care Physicians to Accelerate COVID-19 Vaccination](#) and a letter to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce [urging collaboration with primary care practices on vaccine distribution](#).