

October 22, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

As the nation continues to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the federal government, in coordination with state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as public health, primary care physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers on the front lines, prepare for the allocation, distribution, and administration of new COVID-19 pandemic vaccines.

While continued emphasis on testing and contact tracing are essential, we believe that deployment of a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is the ultimate key to fully re-opening the American economy. We expect this vaccination program will be the greatest public health effort of our generation, and we greatly appreciate your leadership now to prepare the nation for this response.

As part of Operation Warp Speed, the government has been laying the groundwork for months to distribute and administer a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it meets FDA's gold standard. The plan relies on the strength of existing public health preparedness and response and immunization program infrastructure in the United States. While our immunization infrastructure is built on a solid foundation, gaps in capacity and capability across public health and health care systems must be addressed to ensure that our nation is prepared to succeed in a timely, comprehensive, and equitable vaccination campaign.

Infrastructure investments must be made today to further strengthen, enhance, and scale up the ability of public health, primary care physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers in the community who provide immunizations to meet demand for a future COVID-19 vaccine. This important work requires resources for planning, prioritization, expanding the public health workforce, and close collaboration between public health and existing primary care physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers within the immunization neighborhood.

Concurrently, electronic health record vendors and immunization information systems (IIS) must have the resources necessary to quickly update and prepare these essential data reporting systems. Other essential factors that must be supported are onboarding and orientation of new primary care

physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers to administer and report vaccines in settings, such as long-term care facilities, as needed and to supplement immunization providers.

It is critical there be a heightened focus on addressing vaccination hesitancy concerns and increasing public confidence in the safety and efficacy of vaccines as a potentially lifesaving medical countermeasure. Funding for beneficiary engagement and patient and provider communications will be needed to build our ongoing education and outreach efforts around the new COVID-19 vaccine, as well as promote the need to continue the stay up to date with immunizations recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), including vaccinations for flu, pneumococcal disease, shingles, and hepatitis.

Support for public health, primary care physicians, pharmacists, and other health care providers in the community is needed now to implement plans for managing the volume of procurement, storage, and distribution of ancillary supplies that will be needed for a successful pandemic vaccination effort, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), syringes, and alcohol wipes. One can expect that there will be an unprecedented demand for vaccine across the country and across all segments of the population, and there will be intense pressure on already fragile and overworked health care and public health systems.

In order to support the multitude of activities now underway to achieve a successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign, our organizations urge Congress to provide over \$8 billion in funding for CDC-wide activities, prioritizing the following:

- *\$3 billion in funding to administer the COVID-19 vaccine through the governmental public health system, primary care physicians, pharmacists and other health care provider workforce.*
- *\$1.2 billion for cold chain supply*
- *\$1 billion for State and Local vaccination infrastructure*
- *\$1 billion to stand up additional vaccination sites*
- *\$700 million for the national immunization survey*
- *\$500 million for immunization information systems (IIS) data modernization.*
- *\$500 million for Emergency Use Authorization regulation and oversight*
- *\$500 million for targeting hard to reach populations*

Additionally, we urge an additional \$500 million for the current flu season underway and ask for an enhanced Medicaid Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) for vaccine counseling and administration.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these recommendations and look forward to working with you to prepare the nation for the next phase in this fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Adult Vaccine Access Coalition (AVAC)

Alliance for Aging Research

American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Immunization Registry Association
American Lung Association
American Society for Microbiology
Association of Immunization Managers (AIM)
American Pharmacists Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Microbiology
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Immunization Managers
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)
Families Fighting Flu
GSK
Hep B United
Hepatitis B Foundation
Immunization Action Coalition
Infectious Diseases Society of America
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
March of Dimes
Medicago
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)
National Minority Quality Forum
National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
Novavax
Sepsis Alliance

Seqirus USA, Inc.

Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine

STChealth LLC

The Gerontological Society of America

Trust For America's Health

Vaccinate Your Family