



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Readout of HHS Secretary Azar's Remarks to the Department's Vaccine Consultation Panel

Today, HHS Secretary Azar joined the department's Vaccine Consultation Panel (VCP) for discussion of the ongoing work to deliver COVID-19 vaccines across the country. The VCP is comprised of over 40 external organizations representing a wide swath of sectors crucial to the successful launch of a vaccine, including a range of healthcare providers, seniors, patients, minorities, academia, foundations, and business. The group was assembled last summer to exchange information and insights with leaders at the Department and Operation Warp Speed as part of vaccine development and distribution planning. The VCP, organized by the Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs, held 11 virtual information sessions with OWS, FDA, NIH, and CDC leaders and today Secretary Azar emphasized the importance of having their diverse perspectives and expertise in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, thanking them for the valuable input provided to HHS leadership over the last year. He noted the important role they have had in educating physicians, nurses, pharmacists, seniors, and many others over the months on the vaccine development process and in working on specific challenges along the way, like promoting minority participation in vaccine clinical trials. The VCP is yet another example of public/private collaboration, a foundational aspect of the government's response to the pandemic.

During the meeting, Secretary Azar provided an overview of the next phase of OWS's vaccination plan announced earlier this week. The next phase includes new guidance from CDC to states and jurisdictions encouraging them to expand vaccination to those 65 years and older, and those 64 years and younger who have a comorbid condition; opening up new channels for vaccination including activating the federal pharmacy partnership and over 13,000 federally supported community health center delivery sites to provide

vaccinations, and \$3 billion in new funds from CDC to assist states with vaccination-related activities; and changes to the allocations process announced earlier this week. These steps will ensure that vaccine doses are being administered as rapidly as possible and Americans are receiving important protection against COVID-19.

Secretary Azar remarked on the current acceleration of vaccinations in states and jurisdictions around the country, with approximately 900,000 reported vaccinations each day over the past two days. He also reaffirmed his commitment to an orderly transition of power, with HHS hosting over 300 meetings with the Biden team, and shared his appreciation for partnerships like VCP as part of the department's commitment to not only COVID-19 vaccination but combating vaccine hesitancy in general.

HHS COVID-19 Vaccine Consultation Panel Participants

1. American Hospital Association
2. America's Essential Hospitals
3. National Association of Community Health Centers
4. American Health Care Association
5. Leading Age
6. National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization
7. American Medical Association
8. National Hispanic Medical Association
9. National Indian Health Board
10. National Medical Association
11. American Academy of Family Physicians
12. American Academy of Pediatrics
13. American Academy of Physician Assistants
14. American Association of Nurse Practitioners
15. National Association of School Nurses
16. National Black Nurses Association
17. American Pharmacists Association
18. National Community Pharmacists Association
19. AARP
20. Association of American Cancer Institutes
21. American Public Health Association
22. Infectious Disease Society of America
23. Dr. Crystal Watson, Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security
24. Milken Institute, FasterCures
25. Rockefeller Foundation
26. Dr. David Satcher, Satcher Health Leadership Institute, Morehouse School of Medicine
27. Dr. Bruce Gellin, Sabin Vaccine Institute
28. Dr. Mark McClellan, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy
29. Dr. Michael Osterholm, Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy at the University of Minnesota
30. Senator Bill Frist

31. Senator Tom Daschle
32. Kay Cole James, The Heritage Foundation
33. National Association of Chain Drug Stores
34. CVS
35. AdvaMed
36. Healthcare Leadership Council
37. National Association of Manufacturers
38. America's Health Insurance Plans
39. American Clinical Laboratory Association

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