



COVID-19 Clinical Advisory Task Force

November 21, 2021

Commissioner Howard A. Zucker, M.D., J.D.
New York State Department of Health
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12237

Dear Commissioner Zucker,

The Clinical Advisory Task Force met via WebEx at 3:30 PM on Friday, November 19, 2021 to discuss expanding current booster dose eligibility to all individuals aged 18 years or older who have completed a primary vaccination series with a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized or approved Covid-19 vaccine.

On Friday, November 19, 2021, the FDA amended the emergency use authorizations (EUA) for both the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines authorizing use of a single booster dose for all individuals 18 years of age and older after completion of primary vaccination with any FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine. Booster doses of the two mRNA vaccines had already been available to people 65 years or older and to those 18 years or older who are at elevated risk of severe COVID-19 disease due to underlying conditions, or of contracting COVID-19 due to factors such as place of work or institutional setting.

This issue of expanding booster dose eligibility was then addressed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on November 19, 2021, through its advisory committee, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). ACIP reviewed available data on waning immunity, the need for booster dosing, and the safety and effectiveness of booster dose administration of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna mRNA vaccines. The Task Force members monitored these proceedings and discussed them via conference call.

CDC's ACIP recommended the following:

1. Individuals aged 50 years or older and those aged 18 years or older and residing in a long-term care facility **should** receive a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna mRNA Covid-19 vaccine, at least six months following completion of a primary series COVID-19 vaccine; and
2. Individuals aged 18 to 49 years **may** receive a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna mRNA

Covid-19 vaccine, at least six months following completion of a primary series COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC Director then endorsed the ACIP expanded recommendations for booster shots.

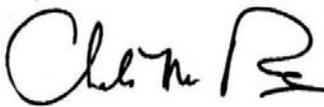
The Task Force commends the ACIP for the quality of the presentations, the airing of varied viewpoints, and the thoughtful independence of their advisory committee members. Discussion and debate of the recommendations during the proceeding highlighted the need for more data in many areas.

The Task Force endorses these recommendations from the CDC as they provide comprehensive coverage of booster shots for adults and expand opportunities to protect public health. The Task Force further notes that the definition of “fully vaccinated” remains unchanged and consists of either a single dose of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, a two-dose series of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine or a two-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

The proceedings and guidance described above put into relief several pressing issues that need to be addressed:

- Vaccinating those who are not yet fully vaccinated against COVID-19 remains the top public health priority to control the COVID-19 pandemic, reduce the burden on the healthcare system and save lives.
- Vaccination against seasonal influenza is an urgent need. Vaccinations against COVID-19 and influenza may be co-administered.
- Spread of COVID-19 and seasonal influenza can be reduced by behaviors including mask wearing, physical distancing and hand hygiene, in addition to vaccination. Deploying all available tools to reduce spread and severity of disease of COVID-19 and seasonal influenza requires a multi-pronged set of prevention strategies, including vaccination.
- While the current COVID-19 vaccines were not designed specifically for the Delta variant, they have proven to be remarkably effective against severe disease, hospitalization and death due to the Delta variant.
- No guidance has yet been provided for booster doses for people less than 18 years of age.

Respectfully,



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