



Patient Advocacy Organizations' Consensus Principles on Vaccines

Our organizations represent millions of patients with serious illnesses, many of whom have health conditions that compromise their immune systems or otherwise put them at greater risk for severe illness from vaccine-preventable diseases. This makes them particularly vulnerable to viruses and invested in future innovations and scientific breakthroughs to prevent and treat illness. Therefore, we urge lawmakers pursuing vaccine-related public policies to ensure that those efforts align with the following. Doing so will ensure that any such policymaking will both reaffirm the vast public health benefits of vaccinations and combat the misinformation contributing to a recent uptick in vaccine-preventable disease.

Approved vaccines are safe and effective

Vaccines are the safest and most effective way to prevent the spread of some infectious diseases and control the severe illness and hospitalizations associated with them. High vaccination rates protect everyone in a community, including children. Currently, the United States has the safest vaccine supply in its history.ⁱ A vast majority of Americans are vaccinated, and millions of children and adults safely receive vaccines each year. Vaccines undergo rigorous testing before Food and Drug Administration approval and continuous monitoring to ensure safety and effectiveness. Vaccine recommendations and schedules that guide patients and health care providers must be developed by organizations and bodies with established, relevant expertise, rooted in an evidence-based, scientifically independent process.

Vaccines protect patients in our communities

When people are vaccinated, they protect themselves and their community. When enough people in the community are vaccinated against a disease, it is harder for the disease to spread. Community immunity is especially important for protecting people with serious illnesses, including children, who may have weakened immune systems, may be unable to be vaccinated, have a condition that puts them at greater risk for severe illness, or for whom a vaccine may be less effective. This can be particularly true for patients with blood cancers (such as leukemia or lymphoma) as well as patients getting chemotherapy, long courses of corticosteroids, certain types of immunotherapies, or a stem cell or bone marrow transplant. Strong community immunity protects people with serious illnesses, allowing them to safely attend healthcare appointments and other activities. Conversely, erosion of vaccine requirements undermine vaccine uptake and put vulnerable populations at risk.

Vaccines are disease prevention

Each year, vaccines prevent severe illnesses that are costly to both our healthcare system and patients' health. During the 2024-25 respiratory season, influenza vaccination prevented up to 360,000 hospitalizations and 39,000 deaths associated with influenza.ⁱⁱ Vaccines are also an essential part of cancer prevention. Vaccination for the human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV) can prevent cancers caused by these viruses.

Vaccines are at the forefront of scientific research

In addition to vaccines to prevent diseases, there has been great progress made in developing vaccines that treat cancer, including vaccines used to treat advanced prostate cancer and advanced melanoma, a type of skin cancer. Cancer treatment vaccines trigger the immune system to mount an attack against cancer cells in the body. Research using mRNA to identify potential prevention and therapeutic options has shown strong promise in clinical trials. Misinformation and legislative proposals to ban the use of mRNA raises concerns that progress in this field may be inhibited and potential breakthroughs may not reach people with cancer.

State policies can reduce barriers and increase vaccine uptake

Our organizations support policies that ensure the widest possible vaccination rates consistent with evidence-based guidelines. States should advance proposals that protect the ability of employers and organizations to establish vaccine policies that meet the needs of their constituents, protect insurance coverage of and eliminate out-of-pocket costs for recommended vaccines, and expand the ability of pharmacists to administer vaccines to both children and adults. We urge states to reject policies that obstruct access to vaccines or that tie the hands of businesses, health care facilities, schools and local governments to react to future public health emergencies or implement important public health and safety requirements.

ⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-children/about/index.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/whats-new/2025-2026-influenza-activity.html>