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Why Wait? CDC'S ACIP Must Act Quickly To Make New Pneumicoccal Disease Vaccines Available For Older American

ACIP recommendations needed this summer to be in place ahead of 2021-22 flu/pneumonia season

WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, USA, June 30, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- (Washington, D.C.) Today, organizations representing thousands of older Americans came together to urge the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to move quickly to recommend newly approved vaccinations to combat pneumococcal disease for adults aged 50+ following a series of presentations at ACIP's June meeting.

Once a vaccine is approved by the Food and Drug Administration, it undergoes an approval process set in place by ACIP--a specialized sub-committee of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An ACIP recommendation is critical to widespread availability and insurance coverage of all vaccines.

In a letter to the leadership of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the groups highlighted CDC data presented at the meeting that showed a newly FDA approved vaccination will save lives, is cost effective and has the opportunity to impact existing health disparities.

The current schedule to vote to recommend the newly available vaccine is set for October, but advocates for older Americans say that's too long to wait and want to see that timeline expedited to ensure that the most effective vaccinations are available ahead of the 2021-22 flu and pneumonia season.

"These new vaccines offer much hope that more older adults can be protected against pneumococcal disease, but protection only happens when vaccines can be widely administered," said Bob Blancato, Executive Director, National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs. "As we emerge from the pandemic, where lung health has been such a focus, we need to arm older Americans with every available resource to protect themselves from diseases like pneumococcal. Why would we wait?"

Protection against pneumococcal disease is important every year, but more so this flu and pneumonia season as experts are predicting it to be more serious than 2020, now that social distancing and mask wearing is becoming less common.

Pneumococcal disease –like many others has various strains or serotypes—approximately 90. Current vaccines cover roughly 40 of those. But the new vaccines will increase the number of strains that are covered, thereby offering greater protection to those who are vaccinated.

The organizations (listed below) urge ACIP and CDC leadership to schedule an additional meeting to quickly move to vote to recommend the pneumococcal vaccine. Throughout the pandemic, ACIP members met monthly and in some cases several times in a month to prioritize and expedite COVID vaccine approvals. With the threat posed by pneumonia to older and at-risk Americans, it makes sense for ACIP to do the same with pneumococcal vaccines.

Supporting Organizations:
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs
National Council on Aging
National Alliance for Caregiving
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging
Caregiver Action Network
Vietnam Veterans of America
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement
Generations United

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