

# NANASP, OTHER ADVOCACY GROUPS CALL FOR ACTION BY CDC

*TO ELIMINATE UNNECESSARY CONFUSION, BARRIERS TO NEW PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES FOR OLDER AMERICANS*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, February 18, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Leaders of organizations representing tens of millions of older Americans have called on leaders at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to act quickly to clarify a recently published pneumococcal vaccine recommendation that they say is unclear and could leave a significant portion of this population unnecessarily vulnerable to a vaccine preventable disease.

As detailed in a letter to Melinda Wharton, MD, MPH, the CDC's Associate Director, Vaccine Policy and Clinical Partnerships, two new and improved vaccines for pneumococcal disease were approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in summer 2021. The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) just made public their recommendations on administration of the vaccines in late January. However, the advocates point out that the recommendation is incomplete, as it only addresses persons with no or unknown pneumococcal vaccination history.

"Older Americans and especially those with pre-existing conditions are incredibly susceptible to pneumonia and related complications," said Bob Blancato, Executive Director, [National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs](#). "The introduction of new vaccines that combat additional strains of the disease was welcome news for those of us working with this population. However, the delayed timeline in getting these vaccines to the public, and now with a confusing and incomplete recommendation is frustrating at best and putting the lives of those who could be better protected at unnecessary risk."

"Even during the discussions in ACIP's meetings on the pneumococcal vaccines, it was clear that they knew they had more work to do to clarify who should be given these vaccines and when," said Brian Hujdich, Executive Director, HealthHIV. "However, that work is not complete and there hasn't been a firm indication of when that might be. Leaving decisions about protection from a deadly disease, especially for older adults and immunocompromised individuals, incomplete and open-ended is unfair and disconcerting."

"As we're finally getting patients back to the doctor's office and working to ensure they are up to date on recommended vaccines, unclear recommendations will leave older Americans more

vulnerable to pneumonia. Given the tragic consequences of COVID-19 for seniors, the CDC and ACIP must act quickly to remedy this situation,” said Sue Peschin, President and CEO, Alliance for Aging Research.

“We know that existing health disparities already mean that too many Americans are lacking protection against diseases like pneumonia,” said Yanira Cruz, President and CEO, National Hispanic Council on Aging. “Why at a time when we are urging vaccination across the board would leaders at the CDC endorse a recommendation that makes that mission more complicated for healthcare providers?”

The organizations are calling for a meeting with Dr. Wharton to address the issue, and for ACIP to quickly complete all remaining evaluations and promptly reissue guidance to clarify which pneumococcal vaccinations older and immunocompromised adults need to be fully protected against the disease.

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