



Statement issued to the National Vaccine Advisory Committee
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Thank you for allowing Students Assist America to address this advisory committee once again. We are a collaborative of 11 associations whose members are collectively training nearly one million future health professionals. When I spoke to you in December about Students Assist America and offered student support for the COVID vaccination effort, states were just entering the beginning stages of their vaccine distribution effort. Much has changed in that short time.

Just two months later, we now have two authorized vaccines being administered, and other viable candidates appear to be on the way. We have also seen increases in the number of Governors tapping trained students to help administer vaccines with supervision in their states. These are both positive steps, but they are nowhere near consistently applied across the country.

We are witnessing what a fragmented, patchwork approach to vaccination creates – inconsistent, inequitable and unpredictable access to vaccines. And equally troubling, vaccine doses have gone to waste because of lack of planning and the workforce needed to ensure they get to everyone who wants one.

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Today I draw your attention to the letter that the 11 associations in Students Assist America submitted to HHS last week. We have asked for a PREP Act declaration to permit all students in the health professions who are trained to give intramuscular injections with supervision to do so.

Students Assist America has access to more than 830,000 students who are already trained to give IM injections, or who can easily translate their method of injection to the deltoid muscle of the arm. Our academic institutions can also reach almost 150,000 additional students who stand ready to help with the other aspects of a mass vaccination effort that are non-clinical, but essential to an efficient rollout. You've discussed today the importance of consistent communications strategies around the safety and life-saving benefits of COVID vaccines, and students can be essential to getting these messages out to the public.

The United States has implemented this approach for flu vaccinations for decades, and deployed students during the H1N1 effort more recently. We need a national, unified protocol for students to help during this unprecedented pandemic response.

Our nation is at war. We must give this army of student volunteers the opportunity to fight for their country.