



Statement issued to the National Vaccine Advisory Committee
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Thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished committee.

I am speaking to you today about Students Assist America, a coalition of 11 health education associations spearheaded by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.

I'm pleased to offer some help and additional hope around the COVID vaccination effort. Our coalition has access to institutions that are training one million future health care practitioners who will become our workforce.

I'll go back to something that Dr. Plotkin said earlier – that we have viable vaccine candidates for COVID because it was an all hands on deck commitment. We need to adopt that same all hands on deck approach for administering the COVID vaccine, especially when our current healthcare workforce is at its breaking point.

As you all know, medical, nursing, pharmacy and PA students already participate in flu vaccine efforts across the United States safely and with supervision. Students are a critical way to ensure access to vaccines particularly in rural and underserved communities. The same was true for H1N1 vaccination efforts. Students can also help with needs that were discussed today, including documentation, communications and tracking.

The problem is that these students are not part of Operation Warp Speed and are only mentioned in a handful of state vaccine distribution plans. We are missing a golden opportunity.

We ask the Committee to use its platform to encourage all 50 states to do three things.

1. Enter into agreements now with their health education institutions to enable faculty and students to help vaccinate for COVID, and importantly, waive liability for those institutions
2. Expand the definition of what types of students are eligible to vaccinate to include all health professions who are trained to give injections with supervision, and
3. Give students who are in clinical environments priority access to the COVID vaccine so they can continue their training without additional delay and safely vaccinate others

Involving students in the COVID vaccination effort is a proven way to get out of a public health crisis, it is cost-effective and these students offer support for practitioners who simply cannot bear this burden alone.

Please go to aacom.org/mobilize for more information and please reach out to Students Assist America so we can get these students engaged in the mass vaccination effort. All trained hands must be on deck for us to do this right.