



Students Assist America

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Students Assist America Companion Bill Introduced in U.S. House of Representatives to Permanently Allow Students to Vaccinate

The SAVE Act permits health professions students to administer vaccines with supervision during future public health emergencies

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Bethesda, MD) – [Students Assist America](#) (SAA), an interprofessional initiative of 12 associations spearheaded by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), has been mobilizing students for more than a year and a half to assist healthcare workers as they respond to COVID-19. Today, SAA applauds U.S. Representatives Tom O’Halloran (D-AZ), David McKinley (R-WV), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and David Joyce (R-OH) for introducing the House companion to the *Student Assisted Vaccination Effort (SAVE) Act*—bipartisan legislation that codifies existing emergency provisions and makes permanent the ability of health professions students to vaccinate during federally declared public health emergencies.

“As the pandemic persists, driven largely by the Delta variant, and as booster shots begin to be authorized for certain groups, we truly need an all-hands-on-deck approach to vaccinate our communities and keep us healthy and safe, now and in the future,” says AACOM President and CEO Robert A. Cain, DO. “We thank Representatives O’Halloran, McKinley, Roybal-Allard and Joyce for introducing this vital bill in the House, and reiterate our appreciation for Senators Kelly and Collins, who are [leading this effort in the Senate](#).”

The *SAVE Act* builds off the AACOM-sponsored amendment to the *Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act COVID-19 Declaration* [announced by the White House](#) on March 12, and permanently authorizes more than one million skilled medical, nursing, pharmacy, dental, veterinary, PA, optometry and other health professions students to administer COVID-19 vaccines with supervision.

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

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American Association of Colleges of Nursing

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy **AACP**

AAMC
Tomorrow's Doctors, Tomorrow's Cures[®]

AAVMC
Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

ASAHP
ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS ADVANCING HEALTH PROFESSIONS

ADEA | THE VOICE OF DENTAL EDUCATION

APSA
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

ASCO
ASSOCIATION of SCHOOLS and COLLEGES of OPTOMETRY

ASPPH
ASSOCIATION of SCHOOLS & PROGRAMS of PUBLIC HEALTH

CSWE

COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

PAEA
PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

“At the beginning of this year, safe, effective, free vaccines helped us finally turn the corner on this deadly pandemic and begin a return to more normal life. However, many families struggled initially to get vaccinated in their communities, citing low availability of appointments, long wait times and far drives to mass vaccination sites,” said O’Halleran. “Today, I’m proud to lead this bipartisan group in introducing legislation that expands vaccine distribution privileges to those qualified to administer them—our hardworking medical students, registered nurses, pharmacists and more—to ensure that vaccine availability remains widespread and accessible.”

“The pandemic reminded us of the important role front line health workers play in our system,” said McKinley. “The *SAVE Act* will allow students in health fields to contribute to the health and well-being of their communities. They have played an important role in our response to COVID and the campaign to get more Americans vaccinated, and they should play a similar roll in addressing future public health challenges.”

“As Co-Chair of both the Congressional Public Health Caucus and the Congressional Nursing Caucus, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this commonsense legislation that would ensure there will always be an adequate supply of qualified individuals to administer vaccinations during public health emergencies,” said Rep. Roybal-Allard. “The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us the many challenges our nation faces when we need rapid dispensation of vaccines. By making the *PREP Act* amendment permanent and allowing medical, nursing and other healthcare profession students to administer life-saving vaccinations, we will improve the speed and efficiency with which our country responds to future public health crises.”

“This pandemic made it painfully clear that any delay in distributing safe and effective vaccines in our communities costs lives,” said Rep. Joyce, Co-Chair of the Congressional Nursing Caucus. “I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing this important, bipartisan legislation to ensure that the United States has the ability to quickly engage all qualified hands to vaccinate Americans in any future public health emergency. To protect the American people and our way of life, we need our nurses, pharmacists, medical students and other brave healthcare professionals on the front lines both now and in the future.”

“AACN applauds the introduction of the *SAVE Act* in the House of Representatives and recognizes the important role nursing and other health profession students play in sustaining our nation’s health,” said Dr. Deborah Trautman, President and CEO of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. “Since the earliest days of the pandemic, nursing schools, faculty and students were educating the public and serving as testers, trackers and tracers. More recently they have assisted with vaccination efforts. The *SAVE Act* will enhance the nation’s ability to quickly mobilize students to ensure an efficient and effective response to future public health emergencies.”

“Putting my education, training and skills into practice during this pandemic has been not only an invaluable learning experience, but also a meaningful way to make a difference for my community,” said MacKenzie North, a second-year medical student at Marian University College of Osteopathic Medicine. “As we are facing more unknowns and uncertainties with our second COVID-19 winter on the horizon, knowing that I’m playing a role to help mitigate the pandemic with the best tool we have—the vaccine—is extremely reassuring and rewarding.”

About SAA

[Students Assist America](#) (SAA) is an interprofessional initiative of 12 associations spearheaded by the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Through SAA, future physicians, physician

assistants, nurses, social workers, veterinarians, dentists and dental hygienists, public health experts, optometrists, pharmacists, psychologists and allied health professionals have joined together as an interdisciplinary safety net to ensure that the weight of the COVID-19 emergency does not crush the U.S. healthcare system and put Americans at further risk. The collaborative is now exploring how students can help address other public health needs related to the pandemic that include wellness and resilience in the face of the country's collective trauma.

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