

## Nation's COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign

### **ALLOW AMERICA'S RETAIL PHARMACIES TO STEP UP AND VACCINATE AMERICA, DELIVERING ESSENTIAL HEALTH AND RETURNED PROSPERITY**

Trusted – Equitable – Experienced – Convenient

The health of our nation is intrinsically linked to the health of our economy, especially returning America's workforce back to work safely and re-opening schools. While the nation should not lose sight of its efforts to expand access to COVID-19 testing and treatment strategies, now is the time to aggressively ramp up the nation's COVID-19 vaccination initiative adeptly, equitably and safely.

Leveraging the existing retail pharmacy network - where 90% of Americans live within 5 miles of a store - can swiftly and efficiently accelerate the vaccination of priority populations. This critical action requires the federal government to turn on the existing, yet dormant *Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program* – a program designed to harness the existing, substantial capabilities and efficient operations of the pharmacy industry to proficiently, safely, and equitably vaccinate the American public with COVID-19 vaccines.

#### Why is the U.S. Struggling?

- The CDC/ACIP Revised Recommendation for *Phase 1b now represents a priority group of 250 million* Americans.
- Initially, the early prioritization phases of the CDC were expected to represent only small populations where phase 2 consisted of the majority of the US population. As such, the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program aligned with this initial recommendation, tagged to be turned on in Phase 2.
- Yet, while CDC/ACIP modified their Phase 1b recommendations to include 250 million Americans, the agency should act immediately to align the vaccinators (i.e., federal Pharmacy Partnership program).
- Accordingly, the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program must be immediately aligned to Phase 1b to correspond to the huge influx of Americans in the revised CDC/ACIP Phase 1b and beyond.

#### Why is this program so critical?

- **America's retail pharmacies can easily administer *100 million vaccine doses in 30 days*.**
- This is a conservative estimate, and chain pharmacies stand ready to answer this call and lean in more.
- This simple solution would exceed both the Trump's Administration's goal of 20 million shots, and the Incoming Biden-Harris Administration's promise of 100 million doses in 100 days.

#### What is required?

- The federal government turns on the federal pharmacy partnership program and provides vaccines to retail pharmacies for phase 1b and beyond.
- This solution only leverages the nation's 40,000 retail pharmacies with one (1) vaccinating pharmacist per store to reach this goal. See Appendix 1.
- This solution could easily be ramped up even further as stores deploy more vaccinators – pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy interns, nurses, clinic physicians, EMTs and others.



- Allow the chain pharmacy industry to step up to the plate and to return health and prosperity to America.

### Why will this solution work?

- Retail pharmacies have the experience, skillset, training, operational processes and know-how.
- We vaccinated Americans in the H1N1 pandemic. We also have been and will continue to be a critical asset in emergencies and natural disasters, setting up pharmacies in evacuation sites, providing tetanus and other vaccinations during hurricanes, and building and executing COVID drive thru testing clinics.
- We already vaccinate our communities every day, reaching millions of Americans per year.
- This vaccination experience includes ramping up for annual flu shots and, most importantly, surges like we experienced this year.
- In fact, the CDC reports that 1 in 3 adult influenza vaccines were provided at a community pharmacy during the 2018-2019 flu season.
- Recent polling indicates that 85% of Americans believe pharmacists should be allowed to provide a vaccine to protect against COVID-19 when developed. A CDC study found that including pharmacies in vaccine distribution during a pandemic can help the nation vaccinate 80% of the population 7 weeks faster.
- Nearly 90 percent of Americans live within 5 miles of pharmacy, and pharmacies are regularly open nights and weekends already providing easy access to routine vaccinations including in rural and underserved areas.

### Why Now?

- To best serve the American people, and 250 million within Phase 1b, we need to unleash the efficiency and skillset of retail pharmacies. The pharmacy sector has already made significant investment to prepare.
- Now is not the time to rely on state-by-state solutions for mass vaccination.
- Administrative burdens and unnecessary state-by-state variation should be removed to reap the benefits of efficiency.
- Rather than having states “transfer” vaccine to chain pharmacies, instead the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program should be turned on, allowing vaccine to flow directly from manufacturer to distributor to pharmacy at the discretion of the government.
- **Rather than wait until the Spring to vaccinate the public, the government should turn on the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program IMMEDIATELY so the nation can benefit from this public-private partnership.**

### Answering the Call: Like the Pharmaceutical Industry Who Developed Vaccines for the Nation;

#### It's Time for Retail Pharmacies to Administer Them Equitably, Safely and Efficiently!

- As pharmaceutical manufacturers continuously increase vaccine supply, the administration of the vaccines to Americans must correlate. Retail pharmacies are ready to answer this call!
- Americans want to receive vaccine in neighborhood locations they know and trust – let us help be part of the solution in the most efficient way possible.
- The government is responsible for defining vaccine eligibility, and retail pharmacies seek to carry out their prioritization and advance the health of the nation.

## Appendix 1: Calculations and Assumptions for Pharmacy Vaccination Capacity

### Simple Vaccination Solution: 100 million doses in 30 days:

- 100 million divided by 30 days = 3.3 million vaccinations per day
- 3.3 million vaccinations per day across 40,000 chain pharmacies = 83 vaccinations per day per pharmacy
- 83 vaccines per day given by 1 vaccinator over a 12-hour timeframe = 7 vaccinations per hour per store

### Why is this estimate conservative?

- Some chain pharmacies may utilize 2, 3, or 4 vaccinators over a 12-hour period rather than just 1 vaccinator within their stores.
- In fact, pharmacies as healthcare destinations may utilize pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, pharmacy interns, nurses, clinic physicians, or other healthcare professionals as necessary to meet demand.
- Also, if the government called on pharmacies to support efforts to stand up mass vaccination or drive-through clinics, even greater capacity could be offered by retail pharmacies.

### What assumptions are built into this model?

- **Supply:** The federal government will ensure all supplies, vaccination and anaphylaxis kits, PPE and other materials required to conduct vaccinations are provided to pharmacies in coordination with vaccine.
- **Demand:** Demand for vaccine outpaces supply – Americans want vaccine and are actively looking to receive it.
- **Vaccination Authority:** Any/all scope of practice barriers or restrictions have been resolved/addressed and PREP Act declarations/amendments remain intact.
- **Pharmacies:** 40,000 community pharmacies will continue participation in the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program,<sup>1</sup> which would be live/turned on at this point. The Federal Pharmacy Partnership includes pharmacy companies or networks of pharmacies representing 200 or more stores across traditional drug stores, mass merchants with pharmacies and grocery stores with pharmacies, including national chains, regional chains, and networks of regional/independent pharmacies. This analysis does not take into account the additional 20,000 other community pharmacies in the US that are not currently folded into the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program, but could be considered for future, expanded engagement.
- **Systems Readiness:** Pharmacies and the mass vaccination clinics they support will have all the capabilities to check patient eligibility, bill appropriate insurance entity for administration fee, report vaccination to state-based registry or federal alternative, report adverse events, and adhere to all other requirements as stated in the COVID-19 pharmacy agreement signed by those in the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program.
- **Vaccine Preparation:** Participating pharmacy stores/clinics will prepare vaccines in advance of open hours to increase rate of shots per hour.
- **Resources:** Assumes vaccine administration reimbursement will be at a rate to help ensure pharmacy costs are covered. Also assumes payers will allow vaccine administration to be processed through the pharmacy benefit to be processed using NCPDP standards. Further, assumes any mass vaccination clinics or special outdoor/offsite/mobile clinics that are led by pharmacy companies receive additional financial support from the federal government beyond the scope of administration fees for vaccines.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/11/12/trump-administration-partners-chain-independent-community-pharmacies-increase-access-future-covid-19-vaccines.html> (Note: Based on more recent conversations with the CDC, this program now covers 40,000 of the 60,000 community pharmacies in the US).