



January 25, 2021

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
Attn: January 27, 2021 ACIP Meeting
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases
1600 Clifton Road NE MS-H24-8
Atlanta, GA 30329

Re: Docket No. CDC-2021-0002; Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices; Notice of Meeting; Establishment of a Public Docket; Request for Comments

Dear Advisory Committee Members,

We write on behalf of patients, families, and caregivers affected by blood cancers to ensure your awareness of the evolving data regarding the impact of COVID-19 on this vulnerable patient population. As the Committee continues its critical work, we urge that consideration be given to the importance of ensuring swift receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine among blood cancer patients.

Collectively, our organizations are dedicated to the needs of the more than 1.5 million people in the U.S. who are either living with, or are in remission from, leukemia, lymphoma, or myeloma. Over 150,000 Americans are diagnosed with blood cancers annually, accounting for nearly 10 percent of all new cancer diagnoses in the United States. Our organizations fund lifesaving blood cancer research, provide free information and support services, and advocate for public policies that address the needs of patients with blood cancer.

A recent peer-reviewed meta-analysis of 3,240 adult patients with hematologic malignancies published in December of 2020, showed the mortality rate was 34%¹ (mortality rates in the general population comparatively are 1.4% at age 65, 4.6% at age 75, and 15% at age 85)².

Additionally, newly emerging evidence indicates there is increased morbidity and mortality risks to blood cancer patients when they contract the virus. In comparison to the general population, they have:

- Higher mortality^{1, 2, 3, 4}
- Longer infections and more severe symptoms^{5, 6}
- Sustained period of viral shedding^{7, 8}

Another important concern is that the impaired immunity of those with hematologic malignancies leads to long term harboring of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which can accelerate the incidence of viral mutations and places everyone at risk.⁴

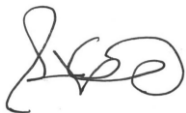
We encourage the committee to review this evidence⁹⁻¹⁸ and to stay abreast of additional data illuminating the impact of the virus on this highly vulnerable population as you continue to formulate recommendations guiding vaccine prioritization. We also offer our collective resources and expertise to support you in this important work.

Thank you for your swift attention to this matter. We recognize the significant challenges facing the Committee, and we are extremely grateful for your thoughtful efforts to guide the effective and equitable distribution of these important vaccinations.

Sincerely,



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Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer
CLL Society, Inc.



Gwen Nichols, MD
Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer
Leukemia & Lymphoma Society



Meghan Gutierrez
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Pete DeNardis
Board of Trustees Chair
International Waldenstrom's Macroglobulinemia Foundation

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