

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building, Room 509F  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Re: Development and Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccinations

Dear Secretary Azar,

On behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA), I am writing regarding the development, mass production, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and nursing's role in those efforts. ANA holds a responsibility to the nursing profession and their patients to provide preliminary and timely guidance to nurses and nursing leaders on managing prioritization of vaccine distribution, counseling of patients, and administering COVID-19 vaccines themselves; therefore, it is imperative that ANA and nurse experts more broadly are involved in these discussions. To this end, we would welcome the opportunity to participate in an HHS Task Force, Advisory Board, or appropriate stakeholder group to support the Administration in this important effort.

Before focusing on vaccine deployment and distribution, it is essential that you first consider the current availability of necessary equipment for efficient vaccine deployment and address the potential for shortages of equipment necessary for mass production and vaccine administration. It goes without saying that absent the necessary equipment needed for production and administration, any vaccine is useless in meeting the intended goals. ANA recommends that the administration use its authority under the Defense Production Act to prioritize the manufacture of such equipment now in order to be ready for rapid and efficient deployment.

Nurses at all levels of practice are involved in widespread immunization administration. Nurses educate and counsel patients regarding immunizations, administer vaccinations to all age groups, and prescribe vaccinations at the advanced practice level in many states. Nurses stand to play a vital role in protecting the nation's health and communicating information about the safety and efficacy of any COVID-19 vaccine. Americans have ranked nursing as the most trusted profession in the country for 18 years in a row. If the goal of deploying a COVID-19 vaccine is to be successfully met, nurses must be engaged in the decision-making process to develop guidelines in order to communicate preliminary information in a transparent manner, using first-hand knowledge.

Finally, given the significantly increased vulnerabilities of communities of color and essential employees (including frontline healthcare workers), ANA asks that you consider equitable and appropriate distribution of any vaccine. Given the persistent limitations in supply of vital

personal protective equipment, protection through vaccination provides a safeguard when other protective measures are in short supply. Equitable and appropriate vaccine prioritization will ensure the most vulnerable populations are protected and allow frontline healthcare workers to continue protecting our nation's health and responding to the pandemic.

ANA looks forward to engaging and working with the administration on the critical issue of COVID-19 vaccinations. For further discussion, please contact Brooke Trainum, Assistant Director, Policy and Regulatory Advocacy, at (301) 628-5027 or [brooke.trainum@ana.org](mailto:brooke.trainum@ana.org).

Sincerely,



Debbie Hatmaker, PhD, RN, FAAN  
Acting Chief Executive Officer

cc: Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN, ANA President  
Loressa Cole, DNP, MBA, RN, NEA-BC, FACHE, ANA Chief Executive Officer