

Don't deny COVID-19 vaccine on account of pregnancy

FEB 9, 2021

Kevin B. O'Reilly

News Editor

What's the news: News reports that some women seeking COVID-19 vaccination have been denied on account of pregnancy are “concerning,” says a statement from the AMA and more than 20 societies representing physicians, nurses and other health professionals.

“Pregnant individuals who otherwise meet the criteria for COVID-19 vaccines should not be denied the opportunity to be vaccinated, should they choose to do so. Although a conversation with a clinician may be helpful for patients to aid in their decision-making, it should not be required prior to vaccination,” says the statement, issued by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Nurse-Midwives, and Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, and joined by the AMA and other organizations.

“Providing pregnant individuals with the opportunity to be vaccinated can be critical to allowing them to protect themselves, particularly if their occupation puts them at increased risk of contracting the virus or if they have underlying and comorbid conditions,” says the statement.

“When pregnant individuals are excluded from the opportunity to decide whether to be vaccinated, it not only violates their bodily autonomy, it also puts them at risk of severe outcomes and death related to COVID-19 illness. Excluding this critical population at increased risk of severe illness and death related to COVID-19 is unethical.”

Why it's important: About 330,000 of the nation's health workers—first in line for the precious supply of COVID-19 vaccines—are pregnant.

An analysis of about 400,000 women 15–44 years old with symptomatic COVID-19 found that serious outcomes such as intensive care unit admission, ventilation, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation and death were more likely in the women who were pregnant than in those who weren't.

The study, “Update: Characteristics of Symptomatic Women of Reproductive Age with Laboratory-Confirmed SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Pregnancy Status—United States, January 22–October 3,



2020,” was published Nov. 6, 2020, in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Learn more: The AMA recognizes the critical importance of scientific integrity, transparency and public trust in the fight to contain the global spread of COVID-19 and plan for the authorization, distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines. Stay updated with the AMA on COVID-19 and vaccine development.