

# 500,000 lost to COVID-19, but pandemic's end is now within reach

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**What's the news:** The United States has broken the tragic barrier of more than 500,000 Americans lost to the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is “half a million of our friends and family over this past year, our colleagues and our neighbors, people we cared for, and people who cared for us, lost in a fight that can feel never-ending,” said AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD, in a video issued to mark the dreadful occasion.

“We mourn these devastating losses, but we must not lose hope because today—even though we still face loss and tragedy—the road ahead finally looks brighter than the one we’ve been on. At this moment, millions are getting vaccinated and vaccine production is ramping up. Help is on the way.”

Two vaccines—one made by Pfizer-BioNTech and the other by Moderna—have been authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). President Joe Biden announced recently that the U.S. government has arranged for an additional 200 million more doses to be delivered by the companies before summer’s end, enabling the vaccination of every American adult.

Meanwhile, Johnson & Johnson has applied for an EUA for its single-shot COVID-19 vaccine. The FDA’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee will evaluate the company’s application Feb. 26.

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.

**Why it's important:** As necessary as it is to mourn the tremendous human toll of COVID-19, Dr. Bailey and other physicians say Americans must keep undertaking, together, the public health measures that will limit the coronavirus as vaccination gets us further down the road to herd immunity.

“We must continue to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities,” she said. “Make sure you get your COVID vaccination when it’s your turn. Let’s wear our masks, practice physical distancing and wash our hands to slow the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.”

Find out more with the AMA about the message to #MaskUp to stop the spread of COVID-19.

**Learn more:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is organizing a virtual national forum, Feb. 22–24, that will bring together practitioners from national, state, tribal, local and territorial levels who are engaged in vaccinating communities across the nation. Learn more or register.

The AMA has published a resource to answer COVID-19 vaccine FAQs for physicians, along with a resource to help physicians and practice staff answer patient inquiries about COVID-19 vaccinations.

Read more from the president’s chief medical adviser, Anthony Fauci, MD, about why coronavirus variants reveal COVID-19 vaccination as a global job.