

Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of April 19, 2021

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U.S. to set up \$1.7B national network to identify, track coronavirus variants

The AP (4/16, Alonso-Zaldivar, Miller) reported, “The U.S. is setting up a \$1.7 billion national network to identify and track worrisome coronavirus mutations whose spread could trigger another pandemic wave, the Biden administration announced Friday.” White House officials have “unveiled a strategy that features three components: a major funding boost for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state health departments to ramp up coronavirus gene-mapping; the creation of six ‘centers of excellence’ partnerships with universities to conduct research and develop technologies for gene-based surveillance of pathogens, and building a data system to better share and analyze information on emerging disease threats, so knowledge can be turned into action.”

The Washington Post (4/16, Pager) reported that the funding “comes from the American Rescue Plan and will be allocated through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” In addition, “the new centers will operate as partnerships between state health departments and academic institutions, and could focus on developing surveillance tools to better track pathogens.”

All Americans at least 16-years-old are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccines

ABC News (4/19, Schumaker) reports all Americans at least 16-years-old in the U.S. are now eligible for COVID-19 vaccines, “meeting the April 19 deadline President Joe Biden had set for opening eligibility.” The last states to expand eligibility to everyone 16 and older were: Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

CBS News (4/19, Watson) reports the U.S. is now approaching President Biden’s “updated goal of providing 200 million shots by his 100th day in office, despite the federal government’s decision to

pause the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.”

Poll: Many say Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine pause should not affect a person’s decision to receive a vaccine

The Hill (4/20, Lonas) reports a majority of respondents to a de Beaumont survey said the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine pause should not affect a person’s decision to receive a vaccine, and 76% said it would not deter them from receiving a vaccine. In addition, 63% “said that people should continue to get Pfizer and Moderna shots despite Johnson & Johnson blood clot concerns, while” 37% “believe that people should slow down and wait for more information before getting the vaccine.”

Preliminary data indicate COVID vaccines are safe for pregnant women

The AP (4/21, Tanner) reports preliminary results published this week in the New England Journal of Medicine suggest the Moderna and Pfizer COVID vaccines are safe for pregnant women. The results “are based on reports from over 35,000 U.S. women” who received one of the shots. Their “rates of miscarriage, premature births and other complications were comparable to those observed in published reports on pregnant women before the pandemic.”

The New York Times (4/21, Anthes) says the CDC “has recommended that coronavirus vaccines be made available to pregnant women, though it also suggests that they consult with their doctors when making a decision about vaccination.”

COVID-19 tied to higher risk of death and chronic medical conditions in six months after infection, study indicates

The New York Times (4/22, Belluck) reports researchers found “the health effects of COVID-19 not only can stretch for months but appear to increase the risk of death and chronic medical conditions, even in people who were never sick enough to be hospitalized.” The findings were published in Nature.

Bloomberg (4/22, Gale) reports in the study, COVID-19 “survivors had a 59% increased risk of dying within six months after contracting the SARS-CoV-2 virus.” This “excess mortality translates into



about 8 extra deaths per 1,000 patients – worsening the pandemic’s hidden toll amid growing recognition that many patients require readmission, and some die, weeks after the viral infection abates.”

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