Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of Jan. 3, 2022


CDC considers testing recommendation as part of shorter COVID-19 quarantine protocol for asymptomatic infections

The Washington Post (1/2, Stein) reports NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci “said Sunday that U.S. health officials are considering recommending that Americans get tested for the coronavirus before going back to work under the shortened isolation protocol they recently introduced.” During an interview, “Fauci acknowledged the backlash over the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reducing the recommended isolation period after a positive coronavirus test from 10 days to five,” and “said officials may soon add a testing component at the end of the five-day period.”

The AP (1/2, Yen, Madhani) reports Fauci said, “There has been some concern about why we don’t ask people at that five-day period to get tested. ... Looking at it again, there may be an option in that, that testing could be a part of that, and I think we’re going to be hearing more about that in the next day or so from the CDC.”

FDA authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster shots for adolescents aged 12 to 15

The Washington Post (1/3, A1, McGinley) reports that on Monday, the Food and Drug Administration “authorized booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for 12- to 15-year-olds, part of a broader effort to expand protection as schools, airlines and businesses struggle with massive disruptions caused by a surging Omicron variant.” In addition, the regulator “shortened to five months the time required between the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and a booster shot.”
Furthermore, Bloomberg (1/3, Annett, Griffin) reports that “the FDA also said that immune-compromised children age 5 to 11 could receive a third primary-series Pfizer shot at least 28 days following their initial two-dose immunization.” The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices “is scheduled to meet on Wednesday” regarding the authorization.

**U.S. reports more than 1M new COVID-19 infections**

The Wall Street Journal (1/4, Hoyle, Subscription Publication) reports the U.S. reported more than one million new COVID-19 cases on Monday as states cleared backlogs due to the holiday weekend. According to a Wall Street Journal analysis of data from Johns Hopkins University, the reports drove the seven-day average for daily cases to 480,273.

Bloomberg (1/4, Hong) reports the Omicron coronavirus variant, “combined with delayed reporting by local governments over the holidays, led to a single-day record for new cases for any country in the world.”

**CDC recommends Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster shot for adolescents aged 12 to 17**

The Washington Post (1/5, A1, Sun, Shepherd) reports, “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended Wednesday that children 12- to 17-years-old should get a Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine booster, expanding protection to adolescents and teens as surging Omicron infections threaten to disrupt schools and workplaces across the country.” CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky “said that data show that boosters ‘help broaden and strengthen protection against Omicron and other variants’—reiterating health officials’ message that vaccines, as well as boosters, reduce severe disease against an explosively spreading variant that has hospitalized children, as well as adults.”

The AP (1/5, Neergaard, Stobbe) reports the “decision means about 5 million of the younger teens who had their last shot in the spring are eligible for a booster right away.”

**Former Biden health advisers urge administration to adopt new domestic pandemic strategy**
The New York Times (1/6, A1, Stolberg) reports six former health advisers to President Biden “have gone public with” a “critique—and a plea to be heard” regarding the administration’s COVID-19 response. In three opinion pieces published in JAMA on Thursday, “they called for Mr. Biden to adopt an entirely new domestic pandemic strategy geared to the ‘new normal’ of living with the virus indefinitely, not to wiping it out.” The former advisers “shared the articles with White House officials before they were published, but it was unclear whether the administration would adopt any of their suggestions.” The Times adds, “In the three articles—one proposing a new national plan, the others suggesting improvements to testing, surveillance, vaccines and therapeutics—the authors also make more specific suggestions.”

The Hill (1/6, Weixel) reports, “The authors made clear that COVID-19 is not endemic yet, and that the U.S. is far from that point.” However, “they said the administration needs to clearly communicate the current goals and strategies, instead of shifting from one crisis to another.”

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