

SUBJECT TO RESOLUTION COMMITTEE REVIEW

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 408
(N-21)

Introduced by: New York

Subject: Ensuring Affordability and Equity in COVID-19 Vaccine Boosters

Referred to: Reference Committee D

1 Whereas, Development of COVID-19 vaccine was developed ~~in record time~~ in response to a
2 worldwide pandemic emergency; and
3
4 Whereas, The federal government funded development and purchase of COVID-19 vaccine for
5 no cost distribution to the states, allowing the ~~possibility of equity~~ in the administration of this
6 precious commodity; and
7
8 Whereas, Booster doses are likely to be needed to ~~maintain~~ the health and economy of our
9 country; and
10
11 Whereas, Such boosters must be ~~equitably available to all willing~~ recipients in the states around
12 our country to maintain herd immunity; ~~therefore be it~~
13
14 RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association support the public purchase and cost-free
15 distribution of COVID-19 ~~booster vaccine~~ doses. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 10/11/21

AUTHORS STATEMENT OF PRIORITY

This resolution is critically important to ensure the health of America. The COVID-19 booster has been debated and has been authorized by the CDC and FDA for those with compromised immune systems and those age 65 and older. Indications are that immune response from previous vaccinations does not last well in all patients and booster shots will be required. Many patients have already begun to receive their Covid booster shots. Physicians and the organizations which represent us have a responsibility to ensure that booster shots are available to those needing it, and indeed with time to all Americans. The AMA must take a position supporting the availability of booster shots without cost to those needing and/or wanting them.

RELEVANT AMA POLICY**COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout to Emergency Departments and Urgent Care Facilities D-440.918**

Our AMA will work with other relevant organizations and stakeholders to lobby the current Administration for the distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations to our nation's emergency departments and urgent care facilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Citation: Res. 228, A-21

Financing of Adult Vaccines: Recommendations for Action H-440.860

1. Our AMA supports the concepts to improve adult immunization as advanced in the Infectious Diseases Society of America's 2007 document "Actions to Strengthen Adult and Adolescent Immunization Coverage in the United States," and support the recommendations as advanced by the National Vaccine Advisory Committee's 2008 white paper on pediatric vaccine financing.
2. Our AMA will advocate for the following actions to address the inadequate financing of adult vaccination in the United States:

Provider-related

- a. Develop a data-driven rationale for improved vaccine administration fees.
- b. Identify and explore new methods of providing financial relief for adult immunization providers through, for example, vaccine company replacement systems/deferred payment/funding for physician inventories, buyback for unused inventory, and patient assistance programs.
- c. Encourage and facilitate adult immunization at all appropriate points of patient contact; e.g., hospitals, visitors to long-term care facilities, etc.
- d. Encourage counseling of adults on the importance of immunization by creating a mechanism through which immunization counseling alone can be reimbursed, even when a vaccine is not given.

Federal-related

- a. Increase federal resources for adult immunization to: (i) Improve Section 317 funding so that the program can meet its purpose of improving adult immunizations; (ii) Provide universal coverage for adult vaccines and minimally, uninsured adults should be covered; (iii) Fund an adequate universal reimbursement rate for all federal and state immunization programs.
- b. Optimize use of existing federal resources by, for example: (i) Vaccinating eligible adolescents before they turn 19 years of age to capitalize on VFC funding; (ii) Capitalizing on public health preparedness funding.
- c. Ease federally imposed immunization burdens by, for example: (i) Providing coverage for Medicare-eligible individuals for all vaccines, including new vaccines, under Medicare Part B; (ii) Creating web-based billing mechanisms for physicians to assess coverage of the patient in real time and handle the claim, eliminating out-of-pocket expenses for the patient; (iii) Simplifying the reimbursement process to eliminate payment-related barriers to immunization.
- d. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services should raise vaccine administration fees annually, synchronous with the increasing cost of providing vaccinations.

State-related

- a. State Medicaid programs should increase state resources for funding vaccines by, for example: (i) Raising and funding the maximum Medicaid reimbursement rate for vaccine administration fees; (ii) Establishing and requiring payment of a minimum reimbursement rate for administration fees; (iii) Increasing state contributions to vaccination costs; and (iv) Exploring the possibility of mandating immunization coverage by third party payers.
- b. Strengthen support for adult vaccination and appropriate budgets accordingly.

Insurance-related

1. Provide assistance to providers in creating efficiencies in vaccine management by: (i) Providing model vaccine coverage contracts for purchasers of health insurance; (ii) Creating simplified rules for eligibility verification, billing, and reimbursement; (iii) Providing vouchers to

patients to clarify eligibility and coverage for patients and providers; and (iv) Eliminating provider/public confusion over insurance payment of vaccines by universally covering all Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-recommended vaccines.

- b. Increase resources for funding vaccines by providing first-dollar coverage for immunizations.
- c. Improve accountability by adopting performance measurements.
- d. Work with businesses that purchase private insurance to include all ACIP-recommended immunizations as part of the health plan.
- e. Provide incentives to encourage providers to begin immunizing by, for example: (i) Including start up costs (freezer, back up alarms/power supply, reminder-recall systems, etc.) in the formula for reimbursing the provision of immunizations; (ii) Simplifying payment to and encouraging immunization by nontraditional providers; (iii) Facilitating coverage of vaccines administered in complementary locations (e.g., relatives visiting a resident of a long-term care facility).

Manufacturer-related

Market stability for adult vaccines is essential. Thus: (i) Solutions to the adult vaccine financing problem should not deter research and development of new vaccines; (ii) Solutions should consider the maintenance of vibrant public and private sector adult vaccine markets; (iii) Liability protection for manufacturers should be assured by including Vaccine Injury Compensation Program coverage for all ACIP-recommended adult vaccines; (iv) Educational outreach to both providers and the public is needed to improve acceptance of adult immunization.

- 3. Our AMA will conduct a survey of small- and middle-sized medical practices, hospitals, and other medical facilities to identify the impact on the adult vaccine supply (including influenza vaccine) that results from the large contracts between vaccine manufacturers/distributors and large non-government purchasers, such as national retail health clinics, other medical practices, and group purchasing programs, with particular attention to patient outcomes for clinical preventive services and chronic disease management.

Citation: CSAPH Rep. 4, I-08; Reaffirmation I-10; Reaffirmation: I-12; Reaffirmation I-14; Reaffirmed: CMS Rep. 3, I-20

An Urgent Initiative to Support COVID-19 Vaccination and Information Programs D-440.921

Our AMA will institute a program to promote the integrity of a COVID-19 vaccination information program by: (1) educating physicians on speaking with patients about COVID-19 infection and vaccination, bearing in mind the historical context of “experimentation” with vaccines and other medication in communities of color, and providing physicians with culturally appropriate patient education materials; (2) educating the public about up-to-date, evidence-based information regarding COVID-19 and associated infections as well as the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, by countering misinformation and building public confidence; (3) forming a coalition of health care and public health organizations inclusive of those respected in communities of color committed to developing and implementing a joint public education program promoting the facts about, promoting the need for, and encouraging the acceptance of COVID-19 vaccination; (4) supporting ongoing monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines to ensure that the evidence continues to support safe and effective use of vaccines among recommended populations; and (5) educating physicians and other healthcare professionals on means to disseminate accurate information and methods to combat medical misinformation online.

Citation: Res. 408, I-20; Reaffirmed: Res. 228, A-21 Reaffirmed: Res. 421, A-21