

02-10

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Vaccine Supply and Distribution

Policy

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) urges the federal government to implement policies and plans to strengthen the nation's medical supply chain. This includes ensuring the availability of vaccines and ancillary supplies critical to maintaining and improving immunization rates and enhancing pandemic preparedness and response. NACCHO also emphasizes the importance of supporting local health departments and recognizing their critical role in both distributing supplies and administering vaccines within their communities.

NACCHO urges the federal government to:

- Strengthen domestic vaccine manufacturing and supply chains by identifying vulnerabilities and collaborating with pharmaceutical companies.
- Ensure a reliable supply of essential vaccines and incentivize manufacturers through advance market commitments.
- Establish agreements with international partners for reciprocal supply support in emergencies.
- Use predictive analytics to forecast supply needs based on epidemiological trends and address differences and challenges in vaccine access.
- Encourage transparency and timely communications between the federal, state, and local health officials, including full disclosure regarding vaccine production, supply, and distribution.
- Promote operational flexibility so local health departments can make decisions that best meet the needs of their diverse communities.
- Facilitate information exchange between the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to enhance vaccine recommendations and ensure timely access.
- Expand emergency use authorization (EUA) protocols while ensuring vaccine safety and efficacy.
- Source from trusted suppliers to ensure the safety and availability of ancillary supplies such as needles, syringes, PPE, etc.
- Develop interoperable systems among government agencies, manufacturers and distributors to mitigate supply chain interruptions caused by miscommunication, natural



disasters, or other unforeseen events. Ensure local health departments have access to these systems.

NACCHO also urges the federal government to develop a comprehensive set of federal policies to:

- Minimize and prevent vaccine shortages through a standard evaluation of vaccine manufacturing interruptions.
- Increase the supply of vaccines through federal investments in both vaccines and ancillary supplies, along with manufacturer incentives.
- Prevent and correct geographic disparities in vaccine distribution.
- Ensure priority access to vaccines for high-risk populations during shortages.
- Explore programs to improve vaccine access for uninsured and underinsured adults, thereby strengthening community health protection.

Additionally, NACCHO calls for continued federal support to bolster local health departments' capacity to:

- Monitor vaccine ordering and distribution at the local level, including through access to relevant data systems.
- Ensure data-driven vaccine access among all populations and intervene when necessary to ensure effective distribution to impacted populations, particularly during shortages or supply disruptions.
- Promote vaccine acceptance and optimize uptake to prevent pockets of under-immunization.
- Support innovative vaccine distribution strategies to improve access.
- Provide technical assistance to healthcare providers regarding vaccine storage and handling and ensure access to essential cold chain equipment such as appropriate refrigerators and freezers, thermometers, and coolers.

Justification

The use of vaccines has significantly improved the health of individuals and communities in the United States by reducing the incidence and impact of serious infectious diseases, many of which have epidemic potential.¹ In 2024, CDC reported that among children born between 1994 and 2023, routine childhood vaccinations have, and will have, prevented over 500 million instances of disease, over 30 million hospitalizations, and over one million deaths.²

Shortages of childhood and adult vaccines negatively impact these efforts and have occurred consistently over the past few decades.³ DTaP, MMR, hepatitis A, varicella, influenza, and COVID-19 vaccines have all experienced supply issues.^{4,5} Multiple factors can cause vaccine shortages including the price per dose, production problems, reduction in the number of vaccine manufacturers, increased number of recommended vaccines, increased costs to purchase vaccines, and an unexpected, overwhelming demand for certain vaccines.^{4,6} Prevention of supply problems to ensure timely and uninterrupted access to vaccines is a critical component in the fight to prevent the resurgence of debilitating diseases such as measles, pertussis, and polio, as well as the annual threat of influenza.⁷



References

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Record of Action

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