Docket No. 2021-0098

October 14, 2021

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
Centers for Disease Control

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Healthy Men, Inc (HMI) a not-for-profit organization that supports adoption of male-friendly approaches to health care and wellness services for boys and men. We are writing to provide feedback on the discussions and deliberations that the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will consider during the October 2021 meeting regarding recommendations for pneumonia vaccines.

HMI staunchly supporter of vaccinations against infectious diseases and view them as important, safe, and extremely valuable in preventing disease. Over the past few months, we have been alarmed by the dramatic change in the public’s attitudes and views about vaccinations. Until 2020, vaccines were widely accepted by the vast majority of Americans. But, in the era of COVID-19, vaccines have become increasingly politicized and have, sadly, become the subject of intense scrutiny and, in many cases, skepticism.

A growing segment of our population is moving from vaccine-hesitancy to vaccine hostility. And we believe that this pushback will have an extremely detrimental effect on both the promotion and acceptance of vaccines, which in turn, will severely harm the overall public health of our communities. There’s no question that vaccine skepticism and hostility are, in large part, fueled by misinformation (much of which is intentionally spread). However, those problems are aggravated by the complex and often contradictory messaging coming from official sources, which leads to confusion and speculation, and is ripe for manipulation by individuals who wish to spread misinformation about the uselessness and even danger of vaccines.

In addition, with the ever-growing number of important vaccinations that patients are hearing about and asking clinicians about keeping protocols and messaging as straightforward and simple as possible is fundamentally important for clinicians to be able to keep the information straight and to explain it and discuss it with patients. Complex protocols and multi-tiered vaccination approaches make an already complex and nuanced persuasive conversation more complicated than it needs to be.

In addition, limiting the options for vaccination will help decrease the potential for the wrong product to be administered. As more and more healthcare outlets become engaged in providing vaccinations there have been an unfortunate small number of incidents reported of the wrong type of vaccine being selected and administered these incidents which are very dramatically reported in the media add another layer of
concern for an already overwhelmed public and erode confidence in the vaccination process. Keeping it simple helps avoid these problems.

HMI urges the ACIP to move quickly and decisively to make the new 20-valent pneumococcal vaccines available as quickly as possible and to make one recommendation to keep the process simple and safe (KISS It).

We sincerely appreciate the hard work and the challenging new territory the committee must consider in today’s environment—and we share your goal: to improve and save lives. On behalf of the boys, men, and their loved ones that Healthy Men, Inc. advocate for, we thank you for your efforts.

Respectfully,

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Vice-President
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