

## COVID-19 Vaccination Prioritization

As the only organization representing all State and Territorial Chronic Disease Directors and their staff, NACDD works to reduce the impact of chronic diseases on the population by advocating for prevention policies and programs. Chronic Disease Units are uniquely expert in their understanding of the chronic disease burden in their communities and are making important contributions to the COVID-19 response. As COVID-19 vaccines become more widely available, we support State and Territorial Health Departments' commitment to protecting public health and safety and protecting vulnerable populations.

### Recommendations for Prioritizing People with Preexisting Chronic Diseases

NACDD supports recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that prioritize healthcare workers and safeguard these brave women and men against COVID-19. Keeping our healthcare workers safe and healthy also ensures that critical prevention work, including the identification and management of chronic disease, continues during the pandemic.



NACDD also supports efforts to prioritize people with high-risk medical conditions. People with advanced cardiovascular disease, cancer, and unmanaged diabetes are at a significantly higher risk for severe COVID-19-associated disease as well as at a higher risk of dying from COVID-19. NACDD believes that these and other chronic conditions should qualify people for inclusion in Phase 1c of ACIP's preliminary categories. Alternatively, we would recommend a Phase 1d. that includes people with other preexisting chronic diseases that CDC has identified may be associated with a higher risk for severe COVID-19 disease and death.

### Recommendations for Maintaining Health Equity Lens

NACDD also commends the ACIP for its commitment to promoting justice and health equity as it moves forward with their recommendations. This focus will allow vaccine distribution to address populations who have been disproportionately affected by the virus, specifically Black people, Native Americans, and Latinxs.

People who are Black, Native American, and Latinx already face higher rates of severe chronic disease and preventable mortality. Additionally, many of these communities have limited access to and poorer healthcare as well as lower socioeconomic status, making their ability to receive treatment for severe COVID-19 disease less likely.

To help address these double disparities and disproportionate burden of COVID-19 mortality on these communities, NACDD recommends that the Committee also prioritize Black people, Native Americans, and Latinx with severe chronic disease in the distribution process.

## Recommendations for Ensuring Adequate Funding for States

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"As states face tough decisions around limited quantities of COVID-19 vaccines, NACDD calls on ACIP and the states to prioritize people with chronic diseases. We would also encourage a continued focus on health equity by prioritizing Black, Native American, and Latinx communities who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19."

—John W. Robitscher, MPH  
NACDD CEO

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States ultimately will be responsible for making the decisions about vaccine allocation and coordinating distribution efforts. NACDD is concerned that Congress has not allocated money to the states for this effort. Without adequate funding, states will face significant distribution challenges, especially reaching vulnerable populations. This will seriously jeopardize states' ability to achieve the justice and health equity goals outlined by ACIP.



## Additional NACDD Resources on COVID-19 and Chronic Disease

NACDD offers several additional resources to support Chronic Disease Units and policymakers in meeting the needs of communities with chronic disease during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some of our most cited resources.

- [COVID-19 and Chronic Disease Resource Center](#) (updated regularly)
- [Chronic Disease and COVID-19](#) white paper ([in Spanish](#))
- [Chronic Disease, COVID-19, and Health Equity](#) white paper
- [COVID-19 and Implications for Cancer Screenings](#) briefing
- [COVID-19 and Diabetes](#) fact sheet
- [COVID-19 Resources List](#) for communities of color and special populations
- [Chronic Disease Directors Weigh In: COVID-19 Response](#) survey results

For more information or to view other tools for policymakers, please visit [chronicdisease.org](https://chronicdisease.org).