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130 Organizations, Cancer Centers, and Other Institutions Send Letter to Biden Urging Priority Access to a COVID-19 Vaccine for Cancer Patients and Survivors

Cancer puts individuals at high risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, 130 organizations, cancer centers, and other institutions sent a letter to President Joseph R. Biden, key members of his administration, and leading public health officials at state health departments to underscore the importance of prioritizing patients with active cancer and survivors of cancer when administering the lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines. The broad spectrum of cosignatories to this letter represent laboratory, translational, and clinical researchers; other health care professionals; millions of patients with cancer and survivors of cancer; and patient advocates from across the United States.

Recent research has shown that patients with cancer are at increased risk of severe illness and death if they are infected with the virus. Moreover, patients with cancer often receive frequent in-person care, which increases their risk of exposure to the virus. Certain survivors of cancer also have a higher probability of infection and COVID-19-related death compared to the general population.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognizes that cancer places individuals at higher risk for severe COVID-19, many states are broadening and simplifying the groups eligible for COVID-19 vaccination to speed up distribution of the vaccines. The letter notes that while widespread, rapid vaccination is a worthy goal, the currently limited supply of vaccines means that many who are at high risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19, including patients with active cancer and survivors of cancer, may continue to wait for many months if they are not provided with priority access.

The letter, initiated by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), urges the Biden administration and public health officials at the state level to prioritize patients with cancer and survivors of cancer in statewide vaccination plans. [Read the full letter.](#)

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