



## JOINT POLICY WORK GROUP

Virtual Meeting Summary

Thursday, December 3, 2020, 3 – 4:30 pm EDT

### Chairs:

Director Pete Landon (GHSAC) and Director Andrew Phelps (NEMA)

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### Agenda

- **CDC Brief on Coronavirus Response**
- **National Guard Support for Vaccination Distribution**
- **National Associations' COVID Vaccine Leadership Council**

Co-Chairs Director Landon and Director Phelps welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting.

*CDC Brief on Coronavirus Response, Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, CDC*

In reviewing the multiple components to vaccine implementation, the pace will be rapid. This will be through:

Prioritizing populations: ACIP has already voted on Phase 1a recommendations. The advisory board looks to distribute recommendations for the other parts of the sequence in the first phase (to involve essential workers and then adults with high-risk medical conditions and those adults age 65 or older). Throughout the entire sequence, expect for stages in priority to overlap.

Allocation and Distribution: The allocation is flexible in adjusting as the volume of vaccine doses increases that will fold into the distribution of the vaccines. The largest number of doses are expected in the spring and summer of 2021. At this time, Pfizer is utilizing a direct shipping plan whereas Moderna will utilize McKesson as their distributor.

Vaccine Administration: Education is focused on vaccine administrators to ensure a safe process. Tools such as V-safe, a new CDC smartphone-based monitoring program, has been developed to assist. It is an opt-in program that will use text messaging and web surveys as they check on vaccine recipients after vaccination. This will be helpful in reporting side effects. For those that may undergo severe symptoms, the connection will trigger a follow up call from the CDC. In addition, these such services help to remind recipients to take their second dose.

Communication and guidance: As less people express hesitancy, the time to continue to drive the message is now. The *Vaccinate with Confidence* campaign is in full force with social media and communication toolkits to ensure everyone receives a vaccine. In addition, CDC is fully focused on healthcare professionals with guidance and recommendations. As more people are educated on the

regulatory considerations and realize that the vaccine is safe and trusted, the easier the communication will be for vaccination. Vaccine communication toolkits will be available soon. Resources can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/>

Dr. Messonnier encouraged participants that if they are not aware of their state's plan, now is the time to connect with their partners and engage. She also very kindly reminded that we are all stretched thin, especially our public health and hospitals, and that we all need to have a little patience and understanding with each other for this response to be a success, even when there will be bumps in the road. The light at the end of the tunnel is near, we must continue to persevere. *[Presentation provided; please do not distribute outside of group.]*

*National Guard Support for Vaccination Distribution, Mary Catherine Ott, Legislative Director, National Governors Association (NGA)*

BLUF: The White House memo released on the extension moments before the meeting ended: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/memorandum-extension-governors-use-national-guard-respond-covid-19-facilitate-economic-recovery/>

Director Ott explained the nuisances needed in an extension letter so that a state is on the list for the ask of extending the National Guard's support for the COVID-19 response. This movement was progressing so rapidly that most states had already submitted their extension request by the time of this meeting; and were encouraged to utilize a blanket letter designed by NGA in May to use as evidence for the extension ask. Specifically, the request was to utilize the Guard resources and services for vaccination distribution. Today, there are 21,000 National Guard deployed helping 50 states for the COVID-19 response.

In addition, in foresight, it is not clear that the Department of Defense will vaccinate deployed guard as they go to their assignments. Also, the Biden-Harris administration transition team are researching FEMA providing a 100% cost share for the wrap around services towards the vaccination distribution.

*National Associations' COVID Vaccine Leadership Council, Jim Blumenstock, Senior Vice President, Response & Recovery, ASTHO*

The Leadership Council on COVID-19 Vaccination Planning and Campaign is a collaborative effort co-chaired by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). The group formed about a decade ago as a significant force multiplier to leverage the utilization of pharmacy and pharmacists when it came to design a framework on how chain and community drugstores administer MCM and antiviral medications. Overtime, this group has matured and flourished and is now very active in the collaboration and coordination as Operation Warp Speed (OWS) includes pharmacies within the distribution and administration of a COVID-19 vaccine.

The coalition's work complements the efforts of the CDC, HHS, and OWS, and supports efforts at the state level. The purpose of the stakeholders is to provide an overall situational awareness as they strategize, discuss, exchange, and work toward solving some of the challenges organizational members will be and are facing in implementing the COVID-19 vaccination playbook at the state level. The member organizations are listed below. Through this purpose, the group looks to create a cohesive and collaborative national approach to vaccine prioritization, distribution, and administration. Identify strategies for full and equitable partner engagement, and coordination to maximize vaccine access and uptake. The group will also identify and implement vaccination of targeted populations. It is encouraged

to reach out to Mr. Blumenstock if you are looking for a resource to assist your state in these focus efforts.

Members of the Council:

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (co-chair)  
American Pharmacists Association (co-chair)  
America's Health Insurance Plans  
American Association of Colleges and Pharmacy  
American Immunization Registry Association  
American Medical Association  
American Society for Consultant Pharmacists  
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists  
Association of Immunization Managers  
Big Cities Health Coalition  
Health Industry Distributors Association  
Healthcare Distribution Alliance  
Healthcare Ready  
Immunization Action Coalition  
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations  
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy  
National Association of Chain Drug Stores  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Community Pharmacists Association  
National Governors Association  
National Indian Health Board  
The Food Industry Association

**Speaker Bios** (in alphabetical order of last name).

**James “Jim” S. Blumenstock**  
**Senior Vice President, Pandemic Response and Recovery**  
**Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)**



Jim is responsible for the coordination and oversight of all ASTHO COVID-19 pandemic related activities, including recovery and community resilience phases, ensuring an aggressive and sustained strategic and integrated whole-of-ASTHO response to this historic public health incident. Prior to this appointment in August 2020, he was the Chief Program Officer for Health Security for almost 15 years. His portfolio included the program areas of infectious diseases, immunization services, environmental health, and emergency preparedness and response. Jim also serves as a member of the Association’s Executive Leadership Team responsible for enterprise-wide strategic planning, administrative services, member support, and public health advocacy.

Prior to his arrival at ASTHO on November 1, 2005, Jim was the Deputy Commissioner of Health for the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services where he retired after almost 32 years of career public health service in various capacities. As the Deputy Commissioner, he had executive oversight responsibilities for a department branch of over 650 staff, an operating budget of approximately \$125 million, which was comprised of the Division of Public Health and Environmental Laboratories; Division of Epidemiology, Occupational and Environmental Health; Division of Local Health Practice and Regional Systems Development; Division of Health Emergency Preparedness and Response, and the Office of Animal Welfare. During his tenure, Jim also served as the Department’s lead Incident Commander and represented the Department on a number of boards, councils and commissions including the NJ Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force.

Jim is the proud recipient of the ASTHO 2004 Noble J. Swearingen Award for excellence in public health administration and the Dennis J. Sullivan award, the highest honor bestowed by the NJ Public Health Association for dedicated and outstanding service and contribution to the cause of public health. He is also a scholar of the UNC Public Health Leadership Institute, completed the Harvard National Preparedness Leadership Initiative and the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security’s Executive Leaders Program, currently holds a faculty appointment to the Georgetown University School of Medicine’s Department of Family Medicine, and held an elected office serving his community for 12 years.

**Mary Catherine Ott**  
**Legislative Director, Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee**  
**National Governors Association (NGA)**

Mary Catherine Ott is responsible for directing the development and implementation of governors' strategic priorities through the HSPS committee. The committee focuses on a broad range of issues including homeland security, the National Guard and homeland defense, cyber security, criminal justice and public safety and veterans affairs. Ott also oversees Council of Governors activities for NGA.



Before joining NGA in 2017, Ott worked in the National Guard Bureau's Office of Legislative Liaison as the Senior Legislative Analyst. At NGB, Ott supported senior Guard leaders in preparing for Congressional testimony, helped to develop strategic priorities and engagement, analyzed legislation pertaining to National Guard matters, and was the lead for coordinating Department of Defense legislative activities within the Bureau. Ott also served as Senior Legislative Affairs Manager for Air National Guard and Cyber Security at the National Guard Association and was a Legislative Aide in the U.S. Senate.

Ott holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Providence College in Rhode Island. Mary Catherine is originally from Missouri.

**Nancy Messonnier, MD**  
**Director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD)**  
**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**



Nancy Messonnier, MD, is the Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD) and is currently leading CDC's efforts on COVID-19 vaccine. In late 2019, Dr. Messonnier directed NCIRD to activate a center-based response to an unknown respiratory disease in China that later transitioned to a full agency response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the COVID-19 response, Dr. Messonnier is leading the effort to support the COVID-19 vaccine program in the areas of distribution, administration, implementation, safety, and access for hard-to-reach populations with the goal of ensuring that a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is available to every American who wants one.

Since becoming Director of NCIRD in 2016, Dr. Messonnier has been a champion for the prevention of disease, disability, and death through immunization and control of respiratory and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Dr. Messonnier spearheaded CDC's Vaccinate with Confidence initiative which works with national organizations to strengthen public trust in vaccines and prevent vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks by advancing three key priorities: *Protect Communities, Empower Families, and Stop Myths*. The initiative includes activities aimed at reaching communities with low flu vaccination rates or high likelihood of COVID complications such as African American and Hispanic communities.

Dr. Messonnier began her public health career in 1995 as an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer in what is now the Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases (DDID) and has held a number of leadership posts across CDC. She served as acting Director for the Center for Preparedness and Response (CPR) for four months in 2019, Deputy Director of NCIRD from October 2014-March 2016, and led the Meningitis and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Branch in NCIRD's Division of Bacterial Diseases from 2007-2012.

Dr. Messonnier has extensive experience in prevention and control of bacterial meningitis and, among other accomplishments, played a pivotal role in the successful public-private partnership to develop and implement a low cost vaccine to prevent epidemic meningococcal meningitis in Africa. More than 150 million people in the African Meningitis Belt have been vaccinated with MenAfriVac since 2010, with remarkable impact. Dr. Messonnier has also been a leader in CDC's preparedness and response to anthrax, including during the 2001 intentional anthrax release and in evaluating simplified schedules for use of licensed anthrax vaccine.

Dr. Messonnier has written more than 140 articles and chapters and has received numerous awards. She received her BA from the University of Pennsylvania and MD from the University of Chicago School of Medicine and completed internal medicine residency training at the University of Pennsylvania.