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COVID-19 update: Rerouting federal funding, latest vaccine findings and use

Week of June 5 - June 11, 2022

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<https://www.chartis.com/insights/covid-19-update-rerouting-federal-funding-latest-vaccine-findings-and-use>

New Developments This Week:

- The Biden Administration announced on Wednesday that federal COVID-19 funds meant for coronavirus tests and protective equipment will need to be repurposed to procure more antiviral pills and vaccines, after so far failing to persuade Congress to pass a new pandemic relief package. About \$10 billion will be rerouted—half to purchase vaccines ahead of a possible fall or winter spike in cases, and half to purchase 10 million courses of Paxlovid, Pfizer’s antiviral drug that has been shown to substantially reduce the severity of COVID-19 in high-risk people. Another \$300 million will be spent on monoclonal antibody treatments.
- Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5 now represent 13% of new COVID-19 cases in the United States, up from 7.5% last week and 1% in early May. Cases in the U.S. are climbing once again, with a 7-day moving average of about 109,000 new cases daily.
- Moderna released findings from a study on its modified COVID-19 booster shot, which showed a stronger immune response to the Omicron variant than the company’s original vaccine.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has recommended Novavax’s COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use in adults. Novavax experienced significant manufacturing problems that lowered the quality of the vaccine produced, leading to the FDA withholding its recommendation until issues were addressed. Novavax is a protein-based vaccine, different from the mRNA vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna) and the DNA-based vaccine (Johnson & Johnson). So-called “anti-vaxxers” have made false claims about the dangers of mRNA vaccines, recently saying that they can cause AIDS. This protein-based alternative may be an acceptable alternative option. However, some aren’t optimistic. John Moore, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Weill Cornell Medicine, stated in a recent Kaiser Health News piece, “Realistically, there probably aren’t that many unvaccinated people who will now decide to take Novavax.”

Being unvaccinated is mostly down to politics, not science, sadly.”

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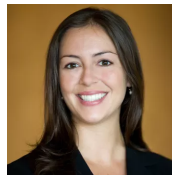
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