



May 5, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The 21,000 kidney care professionals of the American Society of Nephrology (ASN) thank you for your commitment to ending the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States and throughout the world.

At this time, the United States has administered 247,000,000 vaccine doses bringing the number of individuals fully vaccinated in the nation to 105,523,520 in the face of nearly 600,000 American deaths due to COVID-19. ASN sincerely thanks you and your administration for providing equitable access to the COVID-19 vaccine for the more than 550,000 Americans with kidney failure receiving dialysis. When ASN requested swift release of a federal COVID-19 vaccine allocation to be distributed equitably to dialysis patients in all dialysis units, you and your administration delivered.

The most vulnerable Medicare beneficiaries to COVID-19 are Americans with kidney failure who are receiving dialysis. People dependent on dialysis—who are disproportionately Black, Latinx, Native American, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders—are extremely vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, with COVID-associated mortality exceeding 20%, comparable to or even higher than COVID-associated mortality in long-term care facilities. In addition to people on dialysis, more than 850,000,000 people worldwide have kidney diseases, including 37,000,000 people in the United States.

As an organization with members in more than 130 countries, ASN is concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic in every region of the world. To date, a total of 152,533,706 COVID-19 cases and 3,198,515 related deaths have been reported from 225 countries and territories. The distribution of cumulative cases (proportion of global cases) from the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting regions are as follows:

- Eastern Mediterranean Region: 9,188,751.
- European Region: 52,009,750.
- Region of the Americas: 62,462,328.
- South-East Asia Region: 23,060,767.
- Western Pacific Region: 2,489,293.
- Africa: 3,321,260.

During the last seven days, India reported more than 2,646,526 new cases (including more than 2,000,000 new cases for the second consecutive week); Brazil, and the United States each reported more than 350,000 new cases; and Argentina, Colombia, France, Germany, Iran, and Turkey have each reported more than 100,000 new cases.

In addition to the leadership you and your administration have already provided in the United States and abroad, ASN respectfully requests the Biden Administration consider:

- Working with WHO and other international organizations to control the spread of the virus through public health measures.
- Identifying and providing medical supplies urgently to help countries care for the sick—particularly oxygen.
- Coordinating with other countries to create a global solution to vaccine access and rapidly shipping those vaccines that can be safely shipped.
- Coordinating with ASN to work with the global kidney community to assist with vulnerable people with kidney diseases, kidney failure, and kidney transplant.
- Driving increased vaccine production while ensuring trade protections do not inhibit this effort.

By taking these important steps, the Biden Administration will reduce additional suffering and death around the world. Moreover, these key measures will hopefully reduce the spread of COVID-19 variants and increase the likelihood of success in our vaccination efforts at home and abroad.

Again, thank you. ASN appreciates your leadership to end this scourge for all global citizens. To discuss this letter or ASN's recommendations, please contact ASN Executive Vice President Tod Ibrahim at tibrahim@asn-online.org or (202) 641-1365.

Sincerely,



Susan E. Quaggin, MD, FASN
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