

Dr. Delgado COVID-19 Update 11-30-20

I hope everyone had a nice and safe holiday weekend.

Vaccine Update

Divisions appear to be arising as to when authorization of the vaccine may occur and who should move to the front of the line.

The FDA meets next week to determine if a rollout of the vaccine will proceed. The discussions will be done publicly and live streamed to augment transparency of the process. Whether the advisory committee approval for emergency use authorization (EUA) comes the following day or takes additional time remains to be seen.

While expediency is paramount, the proper vetting and established protocols related to EUA need to be adhered to. This is not a time for short-sighted goals to trump any long term implications. A miss would cause irrevocable damage.

The reasoning and eventual foundation of any vaccination approval needs to be devoid of any non-scientific rationale or optics. The regulatory agencies — the CDC, FDA and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) — should be allowed to proceed as per their established guidelines and

authority.

This outcome remains tenuous with Operation Warp Speed, Health and Human Services and the White House coronavirus task force all putting out their independent views as to speed of deployment and which demographics should get priority after approval.

Conflicting views risk sending mixed signals to public health authorities at the state level who are racing to try to finalize plans for deploying limited doses of vaccines. The ACIP is meeting in an emergency session Tuesday to vote on a recommendation that would solidify its position on health care providers — and add residents of long-term care facilities to “Phase 1a” of the vaccination priority schedule.

There are currently enough doses available to cover that cohort population which includes an estimated 21 million people working in health care and roughly 3 million people who reside in long-term care.

Once the ACIP gives its final determination, it will forward its findings to the CDC.

Quarantine Update

The CDC is widely expected to revise its recommendations for COVID-related quarantine.

Currently, requirements are fairly stringent, with the CDC

recommending a 14 day quarantine for anyone exposed to a person with coronavirus even if the exposed individual tests negative themselves. Accumulating evidence supports ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 sooner using a symptom-based strategy. This likely update incorporates recent evidence to inform the duration of isolation and precautions recommended to prevent transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to others, while limiting unnecessary prolonged isolation and unnecessary use of laboratory testing resources.

The change will likely recommend a new self-quarantine period of 7-10 days after a known exposure and will include a test to ensure the person is negative for COVID-19.

This will likely lead to better compliance as to self quarantine by limiting the amount of days individuals face when instructed to isolate. This would be a welcome change for all especially with the upcoming holidays.

Death Rates

Patients hospitalized with Covid-19 are surviving at higher rates than in the early days of the pandemic. A more refined understanding of the disease, a variety of efficacious treatments being more widely used and the fact that on a whole, the population being infected is younger and arriving at the hospital earlier and leaving sooner has contributed. Unfortunately, the

“true picture” is a bit more nuanced. The sheer number of daily infections and escalating hospitalization rates are currently offsetting any statistical gains and appear to be pushing the daily total death rate ever higher. Secondly, the diminishing hospital capacity is jeopardizing not only our ability to absorb and care for the onslaught of further infections, but also our capacity to properly care for those that require acute/ subacute hospital care for non-COVID related illnesses.

Add to this the resources being mobilized to care for this population — more providers, PPE, equipment/supplies, health care dollars — and the toll on our health care system and economy as a whole is just staggering in scale.

I have a sense of foreboding if what is projected to occur over the next several weeks comes to fruition. The curves don't point to any deceleration for the foreseeable future.

Prevention of infection remains, by far, your most impactful recourse. Make wise choices on a daily basis to mitigate your risk accordingly.

Office Update

We remain closed to any non-emergent health matters and appreciate your continued patronage. My staff and I remain available to assist you for any emergent issues as they arise.

- R. Delgado, MD & Staff