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Southern DAILY
Make Today Different
Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

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Inside C2

nday, October 31 2021|

Biden administration issues new memo ending Trump 'Remain in Mexico' policy

Oct 29 (Reuters) - The Biden administration on Friday made a renewed attempt to end a Trump-era immigration program that forced asylum seekers to wait in Mexico for U.S. court hearings, according to a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) memo previewed by officials.

The administration first ended the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, informally called "Remain in Mexico", earlier this year, but was ordered to restart it by a federal judge, who said it had failed to follow proper regulatory procedure.

The U.S. Supreme Court in August rejected an effort by the Biden administration to block the judge's ruling.

The new memo is comprehensive, DHS officials said on a call with reporters. It "squarely addresses some of the alleged failures of the prior memo," one of the officials said.

"It takes into account a whole range of new information that's been made available or that's occurred since June," when the previous memo was issued, one official said. The administration will seek to have the court order vacated in light of the new memo, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration will continue to take steps to restart the program by mid-November, to comply with the judge's ruling, officials said.

The possible reinstatement of MPP - even on a short-term basis - would add to a confusing mix of U.S. policies in place at the U.S.-Mexico border, where arrests of migrants crossing into the United States have hit record highs. The administration said it can only move forward if Mexico agrees. The DHS officials said Mexico and the United States are still in talks.

Mexico's foreign ministry said earlier this month that it has expressed a "number of concerns" over MPP to U.S. officials, particularly around due process, legal certainty, access to legal aid and the safety of migrants.

Asylum seekers, under the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program, walk across the Paso del Norte international border bridge from the Mexican side to continue their asylum request in the United States, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico June 18, 2021. REUTERS/Jose Luis Gonzalez

U.S. FDA authorizes first COVID-19 shot for young kids

Oct 29 (Reuters) - The U.S. health regulator on Friday authorized the Pfizer Inc (PFE.N) and BioNTech SE coronavirus vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years, making it the first COVID-19 shot for young children in the United States.

Pfizer said that it would begin shipping pediatric vials of vaccine to pharmacies on Saturday. The decision by the regulator is expected to make the shot available to 28 million American children, many of whom are back in school for in-person learning.

It comes after a panel of advisers to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) voted overwhelmingly to recommend the authorization on Tuesday.

Only a few other countries, including China, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates, have so far cleared COVID-19 vaccines for children in this age group and younger.

The FDA authorized a 10-microgram dose of Pfizer's vaccine in young children, lower than the 30 micrograms in the original vaccine for those age 12 and older.

Advisers on the FDA panel said a lower dose could help mitigate some of the rare side effects.

At the meeting, they paid close attention to the rate of heart inflammation, or myocarditis, that has been linked to vaccines from both Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna (MRNA.O), especially in young men.

The regulator said on Friday that known and potential benefits of the Pfizer vaccine in individuals aged between 5 and 11 outweigh the risks.

Many adults who have been hesitant or opposed to the COVID-19 vaccine and even some who were vaccinated themselves, are expected to be more cautious about giving the shot to their children.

An advisory panel to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is scheduled to meet next week to consider recommendations on how the vaccine should be used in that age group. The CDC director will have the final say.

Pfizer and BioNTech said their vaccine showed 90.7% efficacy against the coronavirus in a clinical trial of children aged 5 to 11. read more

The United States started administering to the teens between ages 12 and 17 with the vaccine in May. Vaccination coverage among that age group is lower than in older groups, according to the CDC. read more

Pfizer's vaccine was the first to be authorized for emergency use in the United States in December last year for those age 16 and older and was granted full U.S. approval in August.

Earlier this week, Moderna reported interim data showing that its vaccine generated a strong immune response in children ages 6 to 11 years. It is awaiting a U.S. regulatory decision on the authorization for children between ages 12 and 17.

WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY

10/30/2021

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ITC Welcomes Our New Partner From Thailand

The International Trade Center has welcomed its first group of visitors from Thailand since the pandemic struck last year.

Kwanapa Phivnil, Executive Director of The Department Of International Trade Promotion From The Ministry of Commerce Of The Royal Thai Government led a delegation to visit the ITC yesterday. Our Co–Chair, Jim Noteware and executive board member Glen Gondo also joined us to greet the group at ITC.

We were having a very fruitful discussion and came up with a proposal to organize a trade association of Texas and Thailand under the ITC banner. The first project will be to visit Thailand in May of 2022 to study investment opportunities and promote more trade between our two countries.

In the last fifteen years, ITC has sponsored many trade summits with Africa and China with more than 20,000 small businesses joining our seminars and events to promote international trade and culture around the world.

In the last two years the whole world has suffered from the coronavirus pandemic and many businesses were shut down. Many of them are still fighting to survive.

ITC has now opened its door again to try and help our community to gain more and new opportunities.

We also urge President Biden to take care of the small businesses of America which are the backbone of our economy.

Welcome to our new partner from Thailand! We will work together for our future!

Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice

A house burns due to lava following the eruption of Cumbre Vieja Volcano, on the Canary Island of La Palma, Spain. REUTERS/Borja Suarez

Faithful of San Judas Tadeo gather outside the San Hipolito church during the annual celebration of the saint of lost causes in Mexico City. REUTERS/Gustavo Graf

Golden and rusty leaves colour the autumn as a car drives on a country road in Eaux-Puiseaux near Troyes, France. REUTERS/Pascal Rossignol

Medical specialists treat a patient suffering from the coronavirus at the intensive care unit (ICU) of the City Clinical Hospital named after S.Botkin in Oryol, Russia. REUTERS/Maxim Shemetov

Prosecutors Linda Dunikoski and Larissa Ollivierre interact at the jury selection in the trial of William "Roddie" Bryan, Travis McMichael and Gregory McMichael, charged with the February 2020 death of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, at the Gwynn County...MORE

Women walk along the roadside as they head towards a market in Fermate, Haiti. REUTERS/Claudia Daut

FDA Panel Recommends Authorizing Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine For Kids 5-11

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

A key Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expert advisory panel on Tuesday recommended the agency authorize Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for use in children between the ages of 5 and 11, bringing those children one step closer to getting a shot.

The Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) found that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed its risks and voted nearly unanimously 17-0, with one abstention, to recommend the agency authorize the shot. The FDA is not bound to follow the panel's recommendation, though it often does.

Extending vaccine eligibility to children younger than 12 has been a major goal of public health officials and eagerly awaited by many pediatricians and families. The FDA has been under pressure for months to move quickly to authorize vaccines for younger children, one of the final barriers to overcome in the country's historic vaccination campaign.

Pfizer submitted data to the FDA in late September, and formally asked for emergency use authorization earlier this month. An agency review of the data published late Friday found that the benefits of the vaccine "clearly outweigh the risks," indicating that FDA scientists have a favorable view of the evidence.

Some members of the panel said they felt the recommendation was too broad. Not all children will need the vaccine, they argued, or some may only need a single dose because they've been previously infected with COVID-19.

There were also concerns about monitoring the safety profile of the vaccine, because of the potential for extremely rare but serious condition called myocarditis, or heart inflammation.

Cases of myocarditis are generally more common in teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19. It's less common in adolescents, and even more rare in young children. The problem did not turn up in the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric clinical trial, though experts said it was too small to detect such a rare complication.

Patrick Moore, a professor at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, said the potential risks of myocarditis are important, but theoretical. The risks of COVID-19 to children are much more real, he said.

Moore noted that 94 children in the 5-11 year old age group have died of COVID. "All of them had names. All of them had mothers," he said. "It's very hard for me to believe the risk for a severe outcome is going to come close to the risk, known risk, that we've seen for this virus in this age group."

A decision by agency regulators is expected in the coming days, and a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) panel is scheduled to meet Nov. 2 and 3 to recommend how the vaccines should be used.

If the panel gives favorable recommendations and CDC Director Rochelle Walensky accepts them, the vaccination campaign would begin.

A study from Pfizer released as part of its panel briefing document last week showed that smaller doses of its COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 appear safe, and are nearly 91 percent effective at preventing symptomatic disease.

Pfizer said vaccinating children in that age group "could prevent harms" including interruption of education, hospitalization, severe illness, long-term consequences, and death.

The Biden administration last week said it's purchased enough vaccine to inoculate all 28 million 5- to 11-year-olds in the U.S., and will distribute it through a network that will rely on more than 25,000 pediatrician's offices, as well as community health centers, schools and pharmacies.

Children ages 5 to 11 account for about 9 percent of all reported COVID cases in the U.S., according to FDA data presented to the panel on Tuesday. While it has been declining in recent week, the number of new COVID-19 cases in kids remains exceptionally high. This past week almost 118,000 child COVID cases were added, with more than one million over the past six weeks, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. (Courtesy thehill.com)

Related

Texas Pre-Ordered 1.3M Doses Of The Pediatric COVID Vaccine For Kids Ahead Of Federal Approval

The Texas Department of State Health Services announced on Monday that the Lone Star State will be receiving about 1.3 million doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 ahead of its anticipated authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which was granted on Tuesday. The pediatric vaccine, like its adult companion, requires two shots for full immunization, though it contains just a fraction of the dosage.

The agency's director Imelda Garcia said that the yet to be recommended vaccines were ordered as part of the federal government's process called "pre-order prior to launch," according to The Dallas Morning News.

"This enables the state to place vaccine orders before the FDA authorization, and before the CDC recommendation process is complete," Garcia explained.

The Morning News noted that there are roughly 3 million children between the ages of 5 and 11 in Texas.

According to Garcia, the orders for the pediatric vaccines were placed in three waves, with the first two submitted on Thursday and Saturday. The order for the third wave was expected to be placed on Monday evening.

The first wave of orders, consisting of more than 404,000 doses, will be shipped out within one to five days after the FDA grants emergency use authorization to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children, which is expected to happen sometime this week.

The second wave of more than 303,000 vaccines will be shipped within three to seven days while another wave of more than 303,000 doses will go out in five to nine days, according to the Morning News.

Garcia said that more than 800 health care providers across 120 counties in Texas will be receiving doses of the vaccine once it's granted emergency authorization. Around 130 counties will not be receiving vaccines because they have not placed orders.

According to Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 tracker, around 54 percent of Texas's total population is fully vaccinated.

Camora Taylor, 12, receives a COVID vaccine Aug. 4 in Ferguson, Missouri. (Photo/Spencer Platt /TNS)

The state has started pre-ordering the shots, and will start to ship as soon as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration initiates the process. An FDA advisory panel met Tuesday and recommended authorization of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children from ages 5-11.

Advisers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which makes additional recommendations on who should get the vaccine, are scheduled to meet Nov. 2 and 3.

"This new age group is a big factor just in helping us reduce the viral load across the state," said Imelda Garcia, the head of the state's Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel.

The emergency use authorization would add about 2.9 million Texans to the vaccine eligibility pool and comes as children's COVID cases and hospitalizations have surged during the delta wave. The pediatric vaccine, like its adult companion, requires two shots for full immunization, though it contains just a fraction of the dosage.

Pfizer said last week that its shots are more than 90 percent effective in children ages 5 to 11.

The 1.3 million doses likely headed to Texas are not differentiated by first and second doses. Depending on demand, providers can request additional doses in the weeks after the emergency use authorization is granted. Just more than 1 million of those doses will be allocated directly to the state's providers, including hospitals and pediatricians' offices. Roughly 260,000 more will head to pharmacies, which have independent relationships with the federal government.

More than 800 COVID vaccine providers in 120 counties will receive the doses in three shipment waves. The first includes about 440,000 doses that will ship within one to five days after the emergency use authorization is issued; the other orders will follow close behind. Garcia said the vaccine's authorization will be another critical development in the fight to stop the spread of COVID-19. She plans to vaccinate her daughter.

"It's not only for my daughter's health and safety, but vaccinating her also protects our extended loved ones," she said.

The vaccine currently is available to Texans ages 12 and over. The Pfizer vaccine is the only one authorized for use in children ages 12 to 15; Moderna shots are available for 16- and 17-year-olds.

As of Monday, more than 15.3 million Texans have been vaccinated fully — nearly 64 percent of the state's 12-and-over population. (Courtesy https://www.expressnews.com/)

Decades After Polio, An Iron Lung Is Still Relied On To Breathe By Patient

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Martha Lillard needed a large respirator called an iron lung to recover from polio, which she caught in 1953. She still uses a form of the device at nights. (Photo courtesy of Martha Lillard)

On June 8, 1953, Martha Lillard celebrated her fifth birthday with a party at an amusement park in Oklahoma. A little over a week later, she woke up with a sore throat and a pain in her neck. Her family took her to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with polio.

She spent six months in the hospital, where she was put in a giant metal tank — a ventilator informally called an iron lung — to help her breathe. To this day, Lillard is one of the last people in the U.S. who still depends on an iron lung to survive.

Polio is a potentially life-threatening disease, once among the world's most feared. In the late 1940s, polio disabled an average of 35,000 people in the U.S. every year.

A polio vaccine became widely available in 1955, and millions of Americans got vaccinated. Since 1979, no cases of polio have originated in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The disease has been nearly eradicated — the World Health Organization documented only 175 cases of wild polio in 2019. It remains endemic in only Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Although most people who contract polio will not have visible symptoms, a severe case can infect the brain and spinal cord and cause paralysis. Lillard's breathing muscles were weakened by the disease, and she survived thanks to the iron lung.

Iron lung respirators are prepared in an emergency polio ward at a Boston hospital in August 1955. (Photo/AP)

The machines are giant ventilators about 7 feet long. Patients lie inside with just their heads resting outside; a seal around the patient's neck creates a vacuum. Bellows at the base of the device do the work of a human diaphragm — they create negative pressure so the user's lungs fill with air, and positive pressure allowing the person to exhale.

Sixty-eight years later, an iron lung is still keeping Lillard alive — she sleeps in it every night. While many people who had polio or post-polio syndrome either weaned themselves off the machines or switched to another form of ventilator, Lillard never did.

"I've tried all the forms of ventilation, and the iron lung is the most efficient and the best and the most comfortable way," she told Radio Diaries.

The antiquated machines are now more likely to be found in a museum than in someone's home. In the 1990s, when her iron lung was breaking down, she called hospitals and museums that might have had old ones in storage. But they'd either thrown them away or didn't want to part with their collection. She eventually bought one from a man in Utah — the machine she still uses today.

The machines were once serviced by Philips Resperonic, but Lillard says the assistance she received from the company was minimal. Once, she says a technician was sent to service her machine and prepared to leave before putting the machine back together.

Lillard has gotten stuck in the iron lung. She lost power when an ice storm came through Oklahoma and her emergency generator didn't kick on, leaving her trapped in the device without heat.

"It's like being buried alive almost, you know — it's so scary," Lillard says. She tried to call 911, but the cell towers weren't working. "I was having trouble breathing. And I remember saying out loud to myself, 'I'm not going to die.' "

Lillard was eventually able to get a signal, but she remembers the emergency responders had no idea what an iron lung was. Luckily, they were able to get the generator going for her.

Martha Lillard says she worries about running out of replacement parts to make her iron lung respirator function properly. (Photo courtesy of Martha Lillard)

Wear on parts is her main issue now. The belts need to be replaced every few weeks, the cot inside every six months, the motor every 12 years or so. Her most immediate need is collars. The collars create the critical airtight seal around the neck. Each one lasts only for a few months. And she has bought all the back stock of collars from places that don't produce them anymore.

"That's the main thing I'm having a hard time with, because I try to stretch out, make these collars last longer," Lillard says. "And when they start deteriorating, it gets harder and harder to breathe as they leak more."

She has only a handful of collars left. "I really am desperate," she says. "That's the most scary thing in my life right now — is not finding anybody that can make those collars."

Today, Lillard spends much of her time alone. She paints, watches old Hollywood movies and takes care of her beagles. She has been mostly isolating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, seeing her sister, Cindy, and her brother-in-law, Daryl, in the evenings.

Dr. Jonas Salk administers vaccine to young patient.

Being affected by polio at such a young age has meant Lillard hasn't been able to have all the experiences others have had. She attended school from home for much of her childhood and couldn't participate in most extracurricular activities — she still remembers longing to go camping with her siblings. She was not able to have children or hold a steady job because of her physical limitations.

Although some of her life experiences were limited, Lillard thanks a childhood friend named Karen Rapp for teaching her to appreciate small things. Together, they observed ants and built little villages of grass huts.

"There's much more to see if you really look for it," she says.

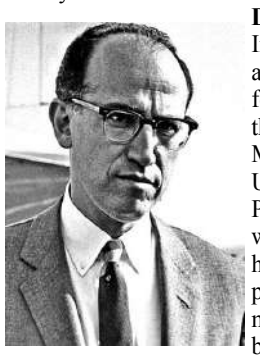
And she's grateful for the iron lung.

"It's what sustains me. It's what heals me. It's what allows me to breathe the next day," Lillard says. "I look at it as a friend, as a very dear friend." (Courtesy npr.org)

Related

Jonas Salk Creator Of The Salk Vaccine

Jonas Edward Salk (Born Jonas Salk; October 28, 1914 – June 23, 1995) was an American virologist and medical researcher who developed one of the first successful polio vaccines. He was born in New York City and attended the City College of New York and New York University School of Medicine.



Dr. Jonas Salk

In 1947, Salk accepted a professorship in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. It was there that he undertook a project to determine the number of different types of poliovirus, starting in 1948. For the next seven years, Salk devoted himself towards developing a vaccine against polio.

Salk was immediately hailed as a "miracle worker" when the vaccine's success was first made public in April 1955, and chose to not patent the vaccine or seek any profit from it in order to maximize its global distribution. T he National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the University of Pittsburgh looked into patenting the vaccine but, since Salk's techniques were not novel, their patent attorney said, "if there were any patentable novelty to be found in this phase it would lie within an extremely narrow scope and would be of doubtful value."

Jonas Salk wrote about the polio vaccine trial project, "the most elaborate program of its kind in history, involving 20,000 physicians and public health officers, 64,000 school personnel, and 220,000 volunteers," with over 1.8 million school children participating in the trial. A 1954 Gallup poll showed that more Americans knew about the polio field trials than could give the full name of the current U.S. president.

An immediate rush to vaccinate began in both the United States and around the world. Many countries began polio immunization campaigns using Salk's vaccine, including Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, West Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Belgium. By 1959, the Salk vaccine had reached about 90 countries. An attenuated live oral polio vaccine was developed by Albert Sabin, coming into commercial use in 1961. Less than 25 years after the release of Salk's vaccine, domestic transmission of polio had been completely eliminated in the United States.

Salk in 1955 at the University of Pittsburgh

In 1963, Salk founded the Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California, which is today a center for medical and scientific research. He continued to conduct research and publish books in his later years, focusing in his last years on the search for a vaccine against HIV. Salk also campaigned vigorously for mandatory vaccination throughout the rest of his life, calling the universal vaccination of children against disease a "moral commitment". Salk's personal papers are today stored in Geisel Library at the University of California, San Diego. (Courtesy Wikipedia)