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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AACI Applauds Approval of COVID-19 Vaccine, Supports Widespread Vaccination Efforts

The Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI) commends the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its swift action to grant Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine.

As an association representing 102 leading academic and freestanding cancer centers in North America, AACI thanks the scientists, researchers, and clinical trial participants who contributed to the development of a safe, effective vaccine for people 16 and older. We also commend the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for its efforts to ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine, particularly to underserved communities that have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

Health care providers at AACI cancer centers care for a particularly vulnerable patient population: many patients with cancer are immunosuppressed, and most have serious co-morbidities that increase their risk of contracting COVID-19. Cancer patients also experience poor outcomes after infection with the virus. This vaccine—and others that may receive EUA from the FDA—represents a major step forward in protecting these patients from another devastating illness.

“Though the approval of the first COVID-19 vaccine represents a ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ of the coronavirus pandemic, AACI leadership recognizes that challenges still lie ahead. Widespread, equitable uptake of vaccines is imperative to the success of any COVID-19 vaccination effort,” said AACI Executive Director Jennifer W. Pegher.

“Now more than ever, it is critical to ensure that public health recommendations are founded on strong scientific evidence. AACI applauds the rigor with which the current vaccines were evaluated, and its members are thankful for the potential to save lives,” added AACI President Karen E. Knudsen, MBA, PhD, enterprise director at Sidney Kimmel Cancer Center at Jefferson Health in Philadelphia. “In the coming months, AACI cancer centers will be charged with the important task of boosting public trust in clinical research and educating community members on the importance of vaccination. We stand ready to embrace this challenge and help bring an end to the pandemic.”

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AACI's mission is to accelerate progress against cancer by enhancing the impact of North America's leading academic cancer centers. For more information, please visit aaci-cancer.org.