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Inclusion of pregnant individuals among priority populations for coronavirus disease 2019 vaccination for all 50 states in the United States



OBJECTIVE: The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists¹ recommends that coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccines should not be withheld from pregnant individuals who meet the criteria for vaccination based on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)—recommended priority groups, which include pregnancy in priority phase 1C to receive the vaccine (“. . . persons aged 16–64 years with high-risk medical conditions.”).² Final prioritization for COVID-19 vaccinations is based on individual states’ guidelines. The objective of this study was to review whether pregnant persons were uniformly included in individual states’ priority COVID-19 vaccination phase 1 allocations.

STUDY DESIGN: We accessed COVID-19 vaccination prioritization on the official state websites for each of the 50 states in the United States and for the District of Columbia (DC) to confirm whether pregnant individuals are presently included among the phase 1 priority groups. Because we used publicly available data and without patient information, no institutional review board approval was needed.

RESULTS: The results of prioritization for pregnant individuals for each state in the United States and DC are presented in the [Table](#). Most states in the United States (36 of 51; 71%) encompassing 71% of the population in the United States do not include pregnant individuals among their

TABLE
Priority classification of pregnant individuals by states in the United States

Population	State	Priority (phase)	Source
States classifying pregnant individuals priority phase 1			
12,801,989	PA	Yes (1A)	https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx
731,545	AK	Yes (1B)	http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/VaccineAvailability.aspx
3,565,287	CT	Yes (1B)	https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination—Phases
1,344,212	ME	Yes (1B)	https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/phases
2,976,149	MS	Yes (1B)	https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,22816,420,976.html#eligible
6,137,428	MO	Yes (1B)	https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/so-vaccine-distribution-order.pdf
8,882,190	NJ	Yes (1B)	https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/slowing-the-spread/who-is-eligible-for-vaccination-in-new-jersey-who-is-included-in-the-vaccination-phases
2,096,829	NM	Yes (1B)	https://cv.nmhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2021.1.22-DOH-Phase-Guidance.pdf
28,995,881	TX	Yes (1B)	https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine/EVAP-Phase1B.pdf
8,535,519	VA	Yes (1B)	https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/#phase1b
4,467,673	KY	Yes (1C)	https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-covid-vaccine
9,986,857	MI	Yes (1C)	https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/MI_COVID-19_Vaccination_Prioritization_Guidance_710349_7.pdf

Grünebaum. Inclusion of pregnant individuals among priority populations for all 50 US states. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2021.

(continued)

TABLE**Priority classification of pregnant individuals by states in the United States** (continued)

Population	State	Priority (phase)	Source
762,062	ND	Yes (1C)	https://www.health.nd.gov/sites/www/files/documents/COVID%20Vaccine%20Page/COVID-19_Vaccine_Prioritization_Phase1A-C.pdf
5,148,714	SC	Yes (1C)	https://scdhec.gov/covid19/covid-19-vaccine#phase1c
623,989	VT	Yes	https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine/about-covid-19-vaccines-vermont
States not classifying pregnant individuals priority phase 1			
4,903,185	AL	No	https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/adph-covid19-vaccination-allocation-plan.pdf
7,278,717	AZ	No	https://directorsblog.health.azdhs.gov/vaccine-prioritization-in-arizona/ https://www.azdhs.gov/documents/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/novel-coronavirus/vapac-recommendations-draft-proposal.pdf
3,017,825	AR	No	https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-vaccination-plan
39,512,223	CA	No	https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/
5,758,736	CO	No	https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine
973,764	DE	No	https://coronavirus.delaware.gov/vaccine/vaccination-timeline/#phase-1b
21,477,737	FL	No	https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-covid-19-vaccination-line-an-update-on-state-prioritization-plans/ http://www11.doh.state.fl.us/comm/_partners/covid19_report_archive/vaccination-plan/vaccination_plan_latest.pdf
10,617,423	GA	No	https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-vaccine-rollout-plan
1,415,872	HI	No	https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/hawaii-department-of-health-issues-updated-covid-19-vaccination-plan/
12,671,821	IL	No	https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-distribution
1,787,065	ID	No	https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/When-can-I-get-a-COVID-vaccine-in-Idaho-011221-5.pdf
6,732,219	IN	No	https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/files/Eligibility%201.5.21.pdf
3,155,070	IA	No	https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Vaccine/Information-for-the-Public
2,913,314	KS	No	https://www.kansasvaccine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/121/Vaccine-Prioritization-Slides-PDF
4,648,794	LA	No	https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine/
6,045,680	MD	No	https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/vaccine/
6,949,503	MA	No	https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-distribution-timeline-phase-overview#phase-1-
5,639,632	MN	No	https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/whos-getting-vaccinated/index.jsp

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(continued)

TABLE

Priority classification of pregnant individuals by states in the United States (continued)

Population	State	Priority (phase)	Source
1,068,778	MT	No	https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusvaccine#9925611147-when-can-i-get-vaccinated
1,934,408	NE	No	http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/COVID-19-Vaccine-Information.aspx
3,080,156	NV	No	https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NEVADA-COVID-19-VACCINE-PLAYBOOK-V3-BRIEF_011121.pdf
1,359,711	NH	No)	https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/covid19-vaccine-allocation-plan-summary.pdf
19,453,561	NY	No	https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/phased-distribution-vaccine#phase-1a—phase-1b
10,488,084	NC	No (phase 4)	https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/vaccines/Deeper-Dive-Group-4.pdf
11,689,100	OH	No	https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination-program
3,956,971	OK	No	https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/covid19/documents/vaccine/COVID-19%20Vaccine%20Priority%20Population%20Framework%20for%20Oklahoma%20-%2012-10-20.pdf
4,217,737	OR	No	https://covidvaccine.oregon.gov/
1,059,361	RI	No (phase 2)	https://covid.ri.gov/vaccination
884,659	SD	No	https://doh.sd.gov/documents/COVID19/Vaccine/COVIDVaccineAvailability_Distribution_FlyerSize.pdf
6,833,174	TN	No	https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/COVID-19_Vaccination_Plan.pdf
3,205,958	UT	No	https://coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine-distribution/
7,614,893	WA	No	https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/VaccinationPhasesInfographic.pdf
705,749	Washington, DC	No	https://coronavirus.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/coronavirus/page_content/attachments/Vaccination-Program-Phases-with-Tiers.pdf
1,792,147	WV	No	https://dhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx
5,822,434	WI	No	https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-about.htm
578,759	WY	No	https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/immunization/wyoming-covid-19-vaccine-information/

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priority populations. Only 6 of 13 states that mentioned pregnancy as a priority indication for COVID-19 vaccination and none of the 36 states not including pregnancy in priority groups linked back to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definition of pregnancy as an increased risk of severe illness.³

CONCLUSION: We found substantial variations in how pregnancy is classified for COVID-19 vaccination by states in the United States and DC. ACIP includes pregnancy among the phase 1 groups, defined as: “Adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. Severe illness

from COVID-19 is defined as hospitalization, admission to the ICU, intubation or mechanical ventilation, or death.”³ By stark contrast, most states in the United States exclude pregnancy from their priority populations. Pregnant individuals are at an increased risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 infections.^{1–3} Excluding them from phase 1 priority will unnecessarily increase adverse outcomes for pregnant individuals. This becomes even more important if physicians recommend COVID-19 vaccinations to all pregnant persons.⁴ States in the United States and DC should reconsider their COVID-19 priority vaccination and include immediately pregnant individuals among their phase 1 priority groups. A more effective approach toward eliminating variation in priorities of the states would be for the federal government to mandate this change. ■

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Rapid antigen detection testing for universal screening for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 in women admitted for delivery



OBJECTIVE: In the recent year, the rapidly emerging severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has posed major challenges on public health systems.¹ Timely detection of cases is considered crucial to help forestall this unprecedented coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic. This is of utmost importance in the obstetrical population, because these women have multiple interactions with the healthcare systems and with other parturients when admitted for delivery. Hence, universal screening for SARS-CoV-2 was suggested as useful means among women presenting for delivery.² The gold-standard recommended diagnostic method for SARS-CoV-2 is real-time reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR).³ Nevertheless, the laboratory capacities to perform RT-PCR in a timely manner in this setting are limited, calling for alternative assays. The introduction of rapid detection tests (RDTs) was suggested as a useful means for earlier detection of positive cases.⁴ We aimed to evaluate the performance of an antigen-

based RDT for universal screening for SARS-CoV-2 in women admitted for delivery.

STUDY DESIGN: A prospective study following asymptomatic women admitted for delivery between October 21, 2020, and December 28, 2020, in a university affiliated hospital in Israel. At the time of admission, nasopharyngeal swabs from all women were collected for universal screening for SARS-CoV-2 using an antigen-based RDT (NowCheck COVID-19 Ag Test, Bionote Inc, Hwaseong-si, Republic of Korea). All women were cotested using the gold-standard RT-PCR on the NeuMoDx 288 Molecular System (NeuMoDx Molecular, Ann Arbor, MI). The institutional review board approved this study.

RESULTS: A total 1326 parturients were included and cotested at their time of admission using both an antigen-based RDT and RT-PCR. Of them, 9 (0.7%) had a positive