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January 25, 2023

Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 10903 New Hampshire Avenue, Bldg. 71 Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

Via: Regulations.gov

Re: Docket No. FDA-2022-N-2810 for "Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC); Notice of Meeting; Establishment of a Public Docket; Request for Comments" Federal Register Citation 87 FR 77617.

The National Vaccine Information Center (NVIC) provides the following as our public comment for the above referenced docket. We note that the meeting's public notice in the Federal Register was issued December 19, 2022 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), with a very vague agenda "to discuss the future vaccination regimens addressing COVID-19." As of January 19, 2023, no background materials had been provided to the public. The lack of agenda and background materials prior to the deadline denies the public meaningful input to VRBPAC and hinders the ability of members of the public to provide relevant public comments and presentations. This lack of transparency appears to violate the spirit of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) governing VRBPAC meetings.

NVIC requests that the FDA provide the public with reasonable access to background materials for the meeting and a more detailed agenda, with deadlines for public comment set after the availability of these items to allow the public meaningful access to the VRBPAC public comment process.

Below are NVIC's comments in relation to "future vaccination regimens addressing COVID-19".

## Unlicensed mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Rushed to Market Without Demonstrating Adequate Efficacy

Following the declaration of a novel coronavirus public health emergency in March 2020 and the fast-tracked development of COVID-19 vaccines,<sup>1</sup> in December 2020, the FDA granted an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Pfizer/BioNTech to distribute an unlicensed mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for use in persons over 16 years old, followed by an EUA granted to Moderna to distribute an unlicensed mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for use in persons over 18 years old.<sup>2</sup> It is the fastest development and mass administration of an experimental vaccine to humans in history.<sup>4</sup>

Typically, the development, testing, and licensing process for most vaccines is about 10 years before receiving approval from the FDA.<sup>5</sup> The EUA status granted by FDA officials to the two manufacturers of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines has resulted in an initial release of unlicensed vaccines using novel technology, which have been aggressively promoted by federal health officials for widespread use by the American public with less than a year of testing.<sup>6</sup> <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> The clinical trials that were conducted on mRNA COVID-19 vaccines prior to FDA officials granting manufacturers an EUA failed to answer basic questions about the ability of the vaccines to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission, with the FDA only requiring manufacturers to demonstrate the vaccines had at least 50 percent efficacy in prevention of severe symptoms of COVID disease.<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>11</sup>

As early as April 2021, officials at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 10,262 cases, 995 hospitalizations and 160 deaths among persons who had been fully vaccinated, while also acknowledging that infection rates within vaccinated populations were likely much higher, due to passive reporting systems in use. 12 In late April 2021, CDC officials announced that they would only be tracking breakthrough cases resulting in hospitalizations and death, 13 which had the effect of skewing published data on vaccine effectiveness and denying the public adequate information upon which to make informed vaccine decisions.

By July 2021, CDC officials issued a health alert stating that the fully vaccinated were still at risk for infection and were able to infect others. 14 In a peer-reviewed study published in November 2021, effectiveness at six months had waned for the Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine and was demonstrated to be only 58 percent and Pfizer reported a 43.3 percent effectiveness. 15 In November 2022, CDC officials reported that mRNA COVID-19 bivalent vaccines were less than 50 percent effective in all adult populations in preventing symptomatic infection. 16

As of January 8, 2023, health officials have warned that, while there is evidence that COVID-19 vaccines can prevent symptomatic COVID-19 disease, there is a lack of evidence that the vaccines are effective in preventing infection and transmission of SARS-CoV-2.<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> <sup>21</sup> <sup>22</sup> Pfizer company officials have acknowledged that, prior to receiving an EUA to distribute their COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, clinical trials were not conducted to determine whether the vaccine would stop transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.<sup>23</sup>

Had the FDA required COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers to adhere to a higher standard for proof that the mRNA COVID vaccines were effective in preventing infection and transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus pandemic may not have been as severe and lawmakers would have reconsidered implementing draconian lockdown policies, which could have resulted in far less damage to the economy, child development, and the mental health of Americans.<sup>24</sup> At the very least, more honesty and transparency about mRNA COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness would have allowed the public to make better informed decisions about vaccination and coronavirus disease prevention.

#### Unlicensed mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Rushed to Market Without Demonstrating Adequate Safety

The rush to market mRNA COVID-19 vaccines by December 2020 did not allow for adequate study of long-term adverse effects. Considering that the mRNA technology and nanoparticle delivery system for vaccine production had never been licensed, <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> FDA's laissez-faire approach to requiring mRNA COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers to prove safety over the short and long term is disturbing. For example, FDA officials used vague caveats when granting Pfizer an EUA based on the "totality of the scientific evidence available" that the "known and potential benefits…outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine." Those kinds of caveats clearly demonstrate that an EUA allows a lower standard for scientific evidence of the product's safety and effectiveness than full licensure. <sup>28,29</sup> In fact, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the Pfizer COVID vaccine is still an investigational product for younger age groups.

In the Phase 2/3 clinical trials Pfizer conducted on its mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, before FDA officials granted the company an EUA to distribute, the majority of vaccinated participants experienced a local or systemic reaction, with younger people more often reporting side effects like pain at the injection site, headache, fatigue, fever and swollen lymph glands that occurred more often after the second dose and lasted for several days. The few serious adverse events recorded after vaccination in the trial, such as cardiac arrhythmia and a death from cardiac arrest, were dismissed by investigators as unrelated to the vaccine.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the choice by investigators to engage in the unscientific "it's just a coincidence" denial of serious adverse events after vaccination - without objection from VRBPAC or FDA officials - has had catastrophic consequences for people receiving mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

Published reanalysis of Pfizer's pre-EUA clinical trial data revealed a 36 percent higher risk of serious adverse events, including myocarditis/pericarditis, in adult vaccinated participants in comparison to placebo participants.<sup>31</sup> National Institutes of Health officials acknowledge that mRNA COVID-19 vaccines can cause myocarditis in 1 in 50,000 vaccinations,<sup>32</sup> and there are questions being raised about FDA's delayed release of information on the frequency of myocarditis after receipt of the Pfizer mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.<sup>33</sup> and lack of transparency about autopsy results of patients who have died after COVID vaccinations.<sup>34</sup>

According to research published in the medical literature since December 2020, mRNA vaccines stimulate a very strong inflammatory response that can cause, for example, inflammation of the heart and brain.<sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> If inflammation does not resolve in the body,<sup>39</sup> it can lead to chronic inflammation, disability and ongoing health problems or death. There are now multiple reports and analyses in the medical literature, which reveal a spectrum of immune mediated serious health problems associated with the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.<sup>40</sup> <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> <sup>46</sup> <sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup> <sup>56</sup>

By January, over 80 percent of the U.S. population, including 98 percent of those over age 65, had gotten at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine and about 70 percent had completed the primary series.<sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> At the same time, as of January 13 2023, there have been over 1.5 million COVID vaccine-related adverse event reports made to the federal Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), with 93 percent of those adverse events associated with mRNA COVID vaccines.<sup>59</sup> This means that over half of the 2.4 million vaccine adverse event reports filed with VAERS since it became operational in 1990 are associated with mRNA COVID vaccines, which have only been on the market for about two years. This shocking statistic is even more concerning because,

historically, there has been acknowledged gross underreporting of vaccine-related adverse events to VAERS, which some have estimated to be as a low as between one and 10 percent.<sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup>

It is widely acknowledged that not every adverse event report made to VAERS is causally associated with the vaccine received. However, the fact that more than half of all vaccine adverse event reports filed with VAERS over the past three decades are associated with mRNA COVID vaccines should not be ignored by FDA and should be followed up with methodologically sound basic science research to determine the biological mechanisms and genetic, epigenetic and other biological high-risk factors for mRNA COVID vaccine adverse events.

### Lack of Data to Justify EUA to Administer mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines to Children

By early 2022, the CDC acknowledged that about 75 percent of U.S. infants and children from birth to 17 years of age had already been infected with COVID-19,62 and that the majority of children only "experience asymptomatic or mild illness" from SARS-CoV-2 infections, with a small number of children with certain underlying health conditions having an increased risk for severe illness and serious complications. A Additionally, research continues to accumulate that demonstrates natural immunity as being robust and protective. A pre-print study published January 19, 2023 found "previous SARS-CoV-2 infection induced strong immunity against future infection". This finding is similar to existing peer-reviewed research that demonstrates natural immunity in children is protective and enduring. 66 67 68 69

Even so, when FDA officials granted an EUA to distribute mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in June 2022 for use in children as young as six months old, and extended an EUA to booster shots in January 2023, they did so with questionable safety data falling well below the previously established COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial guideline published by FDA in 2020 of demonstrating at least 50 percent efficacy in symptomatic disease prevention. <sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> At the time, little was known about long-term side effects of the vaccines <sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> or their ability to reduce severe symptoms of COVID disease.<sup>74</sup>

#### Acknowledged Risks and Lack of Additional Analyses

Additionally, the CDC has not performed adequate analyses of reported COVID-19 vaccine events as promised to the public to determine if there are additional safety signals of concern.<sup>75</sup>

There is inadequate scientific documentation of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness to make the assumption that benefits outweigh the risks, especially when the vaccine fails to prevent infection and transmission.

Adhering to the precautionary principle and with respect for the informed consent ethic, the National Vaccine Information Center calls on the FDA to ask Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna to voluntarily withdraw mRNA COVID vaccines from the market.

There is historic precedent for withdrawal of a previously licensed and recommended vaccine that was subsequently found to be associated with a serious complication. RotaShield rotavirus vaccine was withdrawn by its manufacturer in 1999 when intussusception was identified as a serious but rare complication of that vaccine, a reaction which could injure and kill those who received RotaShield.<sup>76</sup>

In light of the known risks and failures of mRNA COVID vaccines, the public is waiting for the FDA to do its job and exercise appropriate regulatory authority over manufacturers of a vaccine that has yet to be fully licensed for all age groups.

Sincerely,

Barbara Loe Fisher

Barbara Loe Fisher, Co-Founder & President Theresa Wrangham

Theresa Wrangham, Executive Director

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