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“Bringing people together to serve humanity”

The National Black Church Initiative Data and Information Committee Independent, Non-Scientific Community-Based Statement on the Efficacy and Safety of the COVID-19 Vaccines for Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson

One of the country’s great theologians, Dr. Martin Luther King, said:

“Science investigates; religion interprets. Science gives man knowledge which is power; religion gives man wisdom which is control. Science deals mainly with facts; religion deals mainly with values. The two are not rivals.”

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 150,000 Black and Latino churches, has assembled a group of nine Black and Latino physicians to assess the safety and efficacy of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. The group based its decisions on the data in each company’s Emergency Use Authorization application that it recently submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The group, called the NBCI COVID-19 Data and Information Committee, also looked at the conclusions of other independent organizations that evaluated the FDA submissions.

The NBCI did this because both Blacks and Latinos tend to be underrepresented in clinical trials and the data amassed by the predominantly White American medical system often has significant racial gaps.

Two of these independent organizations were the National Medical Association (NMA) founded by Black doctors, and the National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA), founded by Latino doctors. The members of both these groups are seasoned medical practitioners with many years of experience. They concluded, and we agree, that the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are both efficacious and safe, and that it is crucial that members of African American

and Latino communities get vaccinated as soon as possible to keep them from being hospitalized with COVID-19 and dying in record numbers as they have over the past year.

The NMA has determined that, in the African American community alone, the hospitalization rate is 3.7 times greater and the death rate is 2.8 times greater than in the White community.¹

According to the NMA:

- Ten percent of people who enrolled in both the Pfizer and Moderna clinical trials were Black (4,400 and 3,000 people, respectively). These numbers are large enough to represent Black people accurately so everyone can have confidence in the results of these clinical trials.
- The efficacy and safety of all the vaccines were consistent across age, gender, race, and ethnicity.

According to the FDA:

- In the Johnson & Johnson trial, 19% were Black (4,251 people).
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine was tested after the COVID-19 variants emerged in England, Brazil, and South Africa, and seems to be effective against them. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are being evaluated for effectiveness against the variants.

All three vaccines are 100% effective at preventing death and severe disease. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 95% and 94.1% effective, respectively, at preventing mild to moderate disease, and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 66% effective in this respect and 72% effective two weeks later.

It is imperative that Black and Latino churches step up and provide guidance for our 106,000,000 churchgoers. Our cultural competency is critical to getting everyone vaccinated. We must reassure our members that these vaccines work well and are safe for all of us. Black and Latino churches stand on this claim and have put their stamp of approval on the science, because science and faith must work hand-in-hand when the existence of humankind is at stake.

Sincerely,

Rev. Anthony Evans
President and CEO of the National Black Church Initiative

The members of the NBCI COVID-19 Data and Information Committee
• Dr. Joseph Webster, the Committee Chair and a gastroenterologist from Tallahassee, FL
• Dr. William Strudwick, a specialist in emergency medicine in Washington, D.C.
• Dr. Anthony Ibe, a family medicine practitioner in Washington, D.C.
• Dr. James McCoy, Morehouse School of Medicine, Chairman of NBCI National Clinical Strategy Taskforce
• Dr. Walter Faggett, a pediatric psychiatrist and member of the Emerson Clinical Research

Institute

- . Dr. Fabian Sandoval, a neurological researcher and CEO and President of the Emerson Clinical Research Institute
- . Dr. Elena Fuentes-Afflick, the Vice-Chair of Pediatrics at the University of California at San Francisco
- . Dr. Glenn Flores, the Chair of Pediatrics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
- . Dr. Mario Pacheco, a family practitioner in the rural southwest and Vice Chancellor for Hispanic/Latino Health at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>