



# NATIONAL GRANGE

1616 H ST. NW, WASHINGTON, DC 20006 | PHONE (202) 628-3507 | FAX (202) 347-1091  
WWW.NATIONALGRANGE.ORG | INFO@NATIONALGRANGE.ORG

*American Values. Hometown Roots.*

June 23, 2021

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

Dear Committee Members:

The National Grange is America's oldest agricultural and rural life advocacy organization. Its 150,000 local grassroots members represent farming, ranching, rural and small-town communities across the nation. Since its founding in 1867, the Grange has focused intently on families and community service.

Pneumococcal disease can strike anyone at any age, but it is particularly dangerous to populations that are vulnerable because of conditions that put their health at risk and/or by virtue of their age. Rural populations are disproportionally at risk because they live in an environment where access to health care is limited by geography, distance, the number of providers, and the alarming decline of hospitals serving these areas. In addition, the Federal Communications Commission says 44 million households do not have an internet connection and a large percentage of these are in rural areas. Therefore, telehealth for diagnosis and patient care is nonexistent for a large number of rural residents because they have no reliable internet.

This year, more than any in decades, we have learned that vaccines can change our lives. The sooner people have access to vaccines, the greater the protection for all of us. More than 34 million Americans have had COVID-19 since the pandemic began. Many emerging studies have shown that the impact of COVID-19 on the lung is significant, so we face an unprecedented time as the flu season begins and pneumonia cases start to climb. Pneumococcal disease, of course, can strike anyone of any age category, but older adults who make up a higher proportion of rural populations are doubly vulnerable.

As your Committee looks at new vaccines that can lend greater protection, we ask you to remember swift action can save suffering and lives. As your wise deliberations proceed, we ask that you act expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Betsy Huber, President  
National Grange