

Sent via email: ACIP@cdc.gov

January 22, 2021

Jose R. Romero, MD, FAAP
Chair, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Re: Docket No. CDC-2021-0002

Dear Chairman Romero:

On behalf of the American Society of Transplant Surgeons (ASTS), I write to thank the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for its tireless efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. ASTS is a medical specialty society representing over 1,800 professionals dedicated to excellence in transplantation surgery. Our mission is to advance the art and science of transplant surgery through patient care, research, education, and advocacy.

We join the Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) in asking ACIP to consider recognizing clinicians working in Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) as essential healthcare workers designated for early access to the vaccine to alleviate disruption to the transplant process. There are 58 OPOs operating across the U.S. dedicated to procuring as many organs for transplantation as possible. OPO clinicians and staff must work in-person with potential donors, their families, and hospital personnel, in the context of intensive care units and operating room environment where direct and aerosolized COVID-19 exposures are the greatest, opening themselves to possible exposure to the virus. Indeed, we know of several instances of transplant personnel acquiring COVID-19 from such exposures. Their service is critical for transplant patients to receive a life-saving organ. Hence we endorse the consideration to offer vaccination to clinical OPO personnel as tier 1 priority.

We acknowledge the challenges going forward and offer any assistance to advance the Committee's important work. Please feel free to call upon us with questions or concerns by contacting ASTS Executive Director Maggie Kebler-Bullock at Maggie.Kebler@asts.org or on (703) 414-7870.

Sincerely,



Marwan S. Abouljoud, MD, CPE, MMM
President
ASTS

President

Marwan S. Abouljoud, MD, CPE, MMM
Henry Ford Transplant Institute

President-Elect

A. Osama Gaber, MD
Houston Methodist Hospital

Secretary

Ginny L. Bumgardner, MD, PhD
The Ohio State University

Treasurer

William C. Chapman, MD
Washington University

Immediate Past President

Lloyd E. Ratner, MD, MPH
Columbia University

Past President

Dixon B. Kaufman, MD, PhD
University of Wisconsin

Councilors-at-Large

Michael J. Englesbe, MD
Julie K. Heimbach, MD
Debra L. Sudan, MD
Matthew Cooper, MD
Ryutaro Hirose, MD
Kenneth Washburn, MD
Kenneth A. Andreoni, MD
Devin E. Eckhoff, MD
Irene K. Kim, MD
Ashley H. Seawright, DNP, ACNP-BC

Executive Director

Daniel D. Garrett, CAE
daniel.garrett@asts.org

National Office

1401 S. Clark St.
Suite 1120
Arlington, VA 22202
703-414-7870
asts@asts.org
ASTS.org

American Transplant Congress

June 5-9, 2021
Seattle, Washington