

## **Wolf Administration, Medical Professionals Share Important Updates on COVID-19 Vaccinations for Children**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, First Lady Frances Wolf, alongside Acting Physician General Dr. Denise Johnson, led a discussion about the COVID-19 vaccine and its effect on children during a Facebook Live event hosted by the Pennsylvania Commission for Women. The event, entitled *Vax Facts for Parents and Guardians*, is the first in a series aimed at providing Pennsylvania communities with relevant and accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines and addressing the questions of concerned citizens.

The full event is available at [www.facebook.com/PACommissionforWomen](https://www.facebook.com/PACommissionforWomen).

“COVID-19 continues to affect us all, including our children, and if we truly want to see the other side of this pandemic, we have to keep making strides in vaccinating Pennsylvanians” said First Lady Wolf. “A key piece to this, we know, is ensuring people have access to the best and most reliable information. That’s why this conversation is so important. We want parents to be informed, so that they can make the best decision for themselves, their families, and their communities.”

The conversation comes on the heels of the Food and Drug Administration’s announcement on Monday, May 10, that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccination meets its standards for 12- to 15-year-old children. A study of 2,260 adolescents found that the vaccine was 100 percent effective in protecting against symptomatic disease and did not present any major safety concerns.

On Wednesday, May 12, the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted 14-0 (one member abstaining) to recommend the use of the vaccine for this age range. The CDC’s director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, adopted the recommendation Wednesday evening.

A panel of Pennsylvania medical professionals joined Mrs. Wolf and Dr. Johnson to address various questions from citizens across the state. The panel included:

- The Philadelphia-based *Twin Sister Docs*, Dr. Delana Wardlaw, a Family Medicine Physician with Temple University Physicians, and Dr. Elana McDonald, a board-certified Pediatrician, and Chief Medical Officer and owner of three Philadelphia based outpatient practices;
- Dr. Nick Mulhearn, a pediatrician with Meadville Pediatrics; and

- Dr. Sylvia Owusu-Ansah, UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine and Associate Vice Chair of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Dr. Johnson opened the discussion by explaining why it is important that children get vaccinated. She solidified her position by sharing why she got the COVID-19 vaccine and recommends it for adults and children.

"I got the COVID-19 vaccine, because it protects me, my family and friends, and everyone around me," said Dr. Johnson. "Please strongly consider getting vaccinated if you have not already done so. If you have been vaccinated, encourage your loved ones to also take this step to protect themselves from COVID-19. Together, we are making tremendous progress in combating the virus."

Dr. Owusu-Ansah, who wrote about immunizing children for the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2016, pointed out that parents' concerns then are the same concerns now. She reiterated the usefulness of vaccines by expressing that, "Immunizations only work if people get them. A pin-prick moment of discomfort, eased by a reassuring hug, can lead to a lifetime of well-being."

The conversation recognized vaccine hesitancy among parents who might not feel comfortable vaccinating their children, while also reassuring them of the safety and effectiveness of vaccinations. The panelists broke down the approval process, explaining what Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) is and how it applied to the COVID-19 vaccine. Furthermore, the panel pointed to reliable sources of information and reiterated the importance of seeking guidance from credible medical professionals.

"When looking at vaccine hesitancy, it is important to view how others interpret a situation and not try to cast judgement, but instead work towards a common understanding," said Dr. Mulhearn. "So much of the COVID vaccine has been politicized, and the facts regarding the safety of the vaccine and the intent of the vaccine often get overlooked."

The Twin Sister Docs voiced their commitment to eradicating the COVID-19 pandemic, touting vaccinations as a key piece to the effort.

"In 2020, COVID-19 was the third leading cause of death in the United States," said Dr. Wardlaw. "With continued vaccination efforts, our goal is to eliminate COVID-19 from the list."

"Coronavirus continues to show us how deadly it can be," said Dr. McDonald. "If we all get vaccinated, we can stop this disease."

*Vax Facts* panel discussions will continue to dive into topics around the COVID-19 vaccine, specifically highlighting vaccine hesitancy and the communities that it effects most. The next conversation will be held on **Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 12 PM** and will focus on vaccine safety related to fertility, pregnancy, and breastfeeding.

More details from today's event including the full video and information about the panelists can be found on [Facebook](#). It will also be available on [PAcast](#).

**Media Contact:** Madeline Williams, [madwilliam@pa.gov](mailto:madwilliam@pa.gov)

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