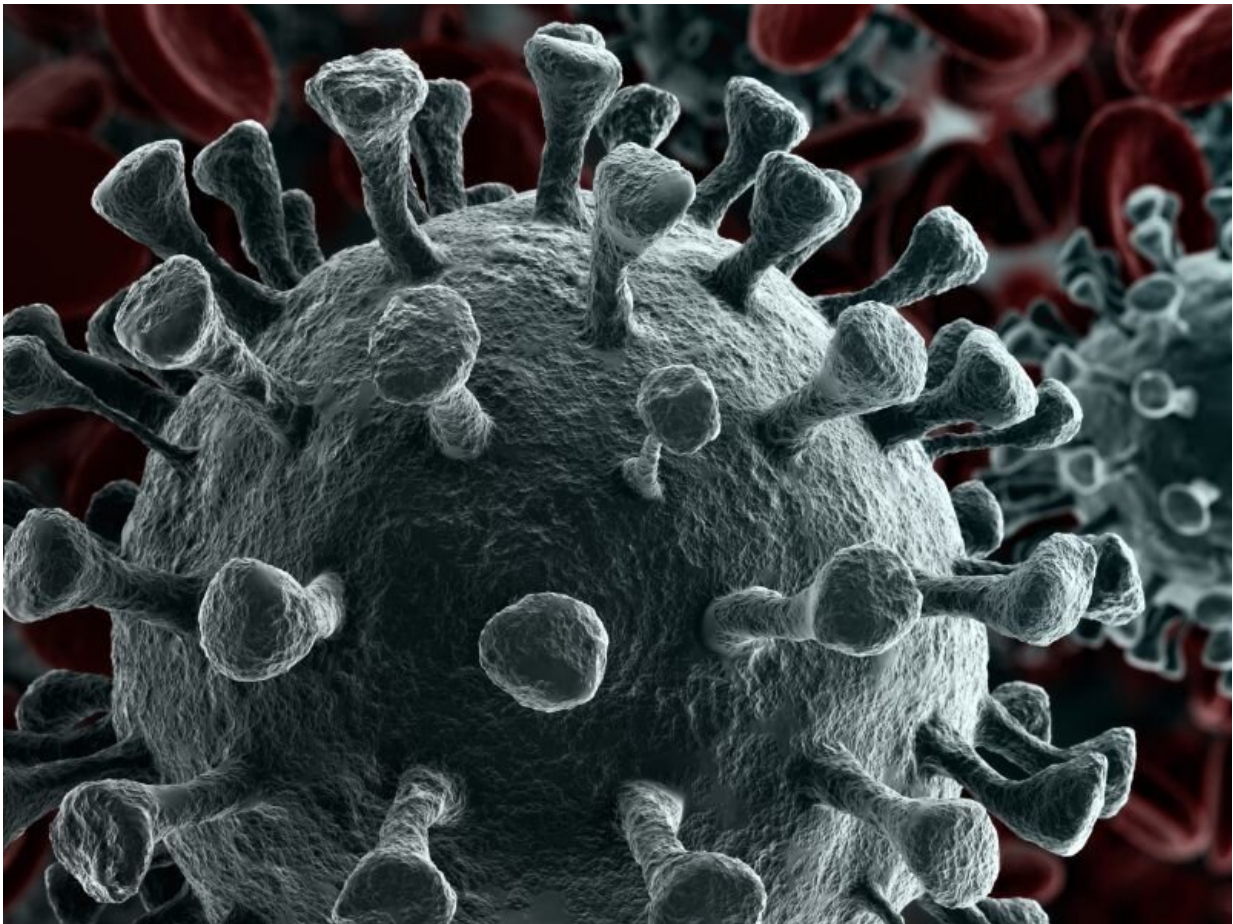


Wealthy nations need to do more to end global pandemic, Dr. Fauci says

April 28 2021, by Ernie Mundell and Robin Foster



Dr. Anthony Fauci said Tuesday that countries around the globe have

failed to help avert the "tragic" coronavirus outbreak that is now overwhelming India, and he singled out wealthy nations for not providing equitable access to vaccines and treatments.

"The only way that you're going to adequately respond to a global pandemic is by having a global response, and a global response means equity throughout the world," Fauci told the *Guardian Australia*.

"And that's something that, unfortunately, has not been accomplished," he added. "Often when you have diseases in which there is a limited amount of intervention, be it therapeutic or prevention, this is something that all the countries that are relatively rich countries or countries that have a higher income have to pay more attention to."

India recorded 360,960 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, according to health ministry data, yet another new daily global record, the *Guardian* reported.

The latest epidemiological update from the World Health Organization (WHO) issued on Tuesday said COVID-19 cases increased globally for the ninth consecutive week, with nearly 5.7 million new cases reported, the *Guardian* reported. India alone recorded nearly 2.2 million new cases in the past week—a 52% increase.

Although the WHO is trying to support India through the Covax initiative—a global program aimed at ensuring countries most in need get access to vaccines and other treatments—"we have to do even more than that," Fauci added.

"The United States has really revved up their activity in helping out India... we're sending oxygen, remdesivir, personal protective equipment, a variety of other medications and soon we'll be sending vaccine to help out," he noted.

"So I think that that's a responsibility that the [rich countries](#) need to assume. Right now it's a terrible tragic situation where people are dying because there's not enough oxygen, where there's not enough hospital beds," he noted. "We have to try, looking forward, to get as much equity when it comes to public health issues as we possibly can, because we're all in this together. It's an interconnected world. And there are responsibilities that countries have to each other, particularly if you're a wealthy country and you're dealing with countries that don't have the resources or capabilities that you have."

While the rapid rollout of the vaccination program in the United States has triggered a drop in new infections, there were still 406,000 new cases reported in the United States in the past week, the *Guardian* reported.

"This is such an important and challenging situation we're dealing with right now," Fauci said. "I'm devoting all of my attention, all of my energy, 24/7, on trying to get control of this terrible outbreak that we're experiencing, not only here in the United States, but throughout the world."

US to Share 60 million vaccine doses with other countries

As [coronavirus](#) cases surge around the world, the White House said Monday that the United States will share up to 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine with other countries.

The announcement came as India's health system showed signs of collapse amid a soaring case count. The AstraZeneca vaccine will be shipped out once it clears federal safety reviews, *The New York Times* reported.

Biden Administration officials noted that the move will not affect the United States' national vaccination drive.

"We do not need to use AstraZeneca in our fight against COVID," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said during a media briefing, the *Washington Post* reported.

The latest decision represents a shift for the White House, which has been reluctant to make extra doses of coronavirus vaccine available in large amounts.

Unlike the Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines, AstraZeneca's vaccine has not yet been granted emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and U.S. officials would not say which countries will receive it once it is approved, the *Times* reported.

Jen Psaki said about 10 million doses could be released "in the coming weeks" if the FDA determines that the vaccine meets "our own bar and our own guidelines," and that another 50 million doses are in various stages of production, the *Times* reported.

Although many countries are desperate for vaccines, AstraZeneca's shots may not be their first choice, as the vaccine has faced concerns about rare blood clots and its effectiveness against variants, the *Post* reported.

The European Union (EU) is suing the company for missed delivery targets, and South Africa stopped using the vaccine after a small trial found it was not effective against the dominant variant in the country. The EU also temporarily paused distribution of the vaccine while it investigated the blood clots associated with it, before ultimately resuming injections.

In a statement, a spokesperson for AstraZeneca said the company would not comment on specifics, but that "the doses are part of AstraZeneca's supply commitments to the U.S. government. Decisions to send U.S. supply to other countries are made by the U.S. government," the *Times* reported.

Millions of Americans have missed their second COVID shot

More than 5 million Americans have missed the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine, new government data shows.

The number of vaccine recipients who missed their second dose now stands at nearly 8%, more than double the rate seen among people who got inoculated during the first several weeks of the national vaccine campaign, the *Times* reported.

Already, millions of people are wary about getting vaccinated at all, and now local health authorities are struggling to make sure that those who get their first shot also get their second.

"I'm very worried, because you need that second dose," Dr. Paul Offit, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's vaccine advisory panel, told the *Times*.

Why the missed second shots?

Some said they feared the side effects, which can include flu-like symptoms, while others said they felt they were sufficiently protected with a single shot. But a surprising hurdle has also surfaced: A number of vaccine providers have canceled second-dose appointments because they ran out of supply or didn't have the right brand in stock, the *Times*

reported. Walgreens, one of the biggest vaccine providers in the United States, sent some people who got a first shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine to get their second doses at pharmacies that only had the other [vaccine](#) on hand, the newspaper said. Several Walgreens customers said they scrambled to get the correct second dose, but others likely gave up, the newspaper added.

Public health officials had worried from the start that it would be hard to get everyone to come back for their second shot, and now some state officials are scrambling to keep the tally of partly vaccinated people from swelling.

Compared with the two-dose regimen, a single shot triggers a weaker immune response and may leave some people more susceptible to dangerous virus variants, the *Times* said. And though a single dose provides some protection against COVID-19, it's not clear how long that protection will last.

While millions of Americans have missed their second shots, the overall rates of follow-through, with some 92 percent getting fully vaccinated, are strong by historical standards, the *Times* noted. As of Wednesday, nearly 142 million Americans had received their first shot, while 96.7 million have gotten their second, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Meanwhile, the U.S. coronavirus case count neared 32.2 million on Wednesday, while the death toll topped 573,000, according to a tally from Johns Hopkins University. Worldwide, nearly 149 million cases had been reported by Wednesday, with over 3.1 million people dead from COVID-19.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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