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Joint Statement of the Bay Area Health Officers on the Safe Administration of the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

Yesterday, the CDC and FDA announced they would accept the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendations to lift pausing on the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for all adults. The Bay Area Health Officers, representing the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Solano and the City of Berkeley, concur with the findings of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and Western States Scientific Safety Review that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe and that Bay Area health providers should resume its administration to prevent community spread and severe illness and death from COVID-19.

The region's Health Officers agree that the risk of developing the rare clotting disorder is extremely low. According to the CDC, to date there have been only 15 confirmed cases of the rare clotting event among nearly 8 million total doses administered in the USA, all in females, which translates to a risk less than 2 cases per million doses overall, and 7 cases per million doses among women between 18 and 49 years of age. For those who have a confirmed case of COVID-19, the risk of dying from it in the United States is 1 in 56.

The region's Health Officers also support the addition of a warning label, so that the members of the public can make an informed decision.

The public is strongly urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible. All vaccines are proven to be highly effective at preventing hospitalization or death from COVID-19, and people who are fully vaccinated are also much less likely to be contagious or transmit the virus to someone else. The longer you wait to get vaccinated, the greater the risk of contracting COVID-19, and infecting a friend, loved one, or coworker.

People who have received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should contact their primary healthcare provider if they have concerns or if they develop severe symptoms of headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination. COVID-19 vaccine safety is a top priority for the Bay Area's Health Officers, and we will continue to monitor the situation and look to the CDC for any additional future guidance.

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