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INFECTIOUS DISEASES SOCIETY FOR OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY

Statement on CBP policy to withhold influenza vaccinations for migrants in border detention facilities

As medical providers for pregnant women, we echo the recent statement¹ by the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the HIV Medicine Association, the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, and the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene denouncing the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol's decision to withhold vaccinations against seasonal influenza from migrants in border detention facilities. This decision is unjust, inhumane and a violation of the US's own public health and human rights policy.

We are deeply concerned about the impact of withholding the influenza vaccine on pregnant women who are being detained per Customs and Border Patrol policy.^{2,3} Influenza is more likely to be a severe, life-threatening illness in pregnant women and can also result in harm to the developing fetus. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended annual influenza vaccination for ALL persons 6 months of age or older, including pregnant women, in the absence of medical reasons not to be vaccinated.⁴ We stand with our infectious disease and public health colleagues in support of this recommendation.

The Infectious Diseases Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology calls for the immediate implementation of a plan to administer seasonal influenza vaccinations at U.S. Customs and Border Patrol facilities. We specifically urge that pregnant women be provided with recommended vaccinations to reduce the chance of significant illness in both the woman herself, and in the fetus or newborn. Further, we are deeply troubled by reports detailing insufficient or negligent care provided to pregnant women and their infants in federal detention facilities⁵ and support calls for a comprehensive investigation of the agency's protocol for providing health care at its facilities.

1. <https://www.idsociety.org/news--publications-new/articles/2019/customs-and-border-patrols-flu-vaccine-policy-breaches-basic-public-health-tenet/>
2. <https://rewire.news/article/2018/03/30/trump-administrations-latest-attack-immigrants-detaining-pregnant-people/>
3. https://www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Document/2018/11032_3_PregnantDetainees.pdf
4. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/pregnant.htm>
5. <https://rewire.news/article/2019/04/05/ice-increased-risks-pregnant-migrants-detention/>

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