

Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup finds Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe, effective for 5- to 11-year olds

November 3, 2021



The Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup last night completed its review of the federal process and has unanimously concluded that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is safe and effective for youth 5 to 11 years of age. The Workgroup provided its confirmation to the governors of California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington this morning.

The Oregon Health Authority will inform health care providers today that vaccinations for 5- to 11-year olds can begin in Oregon today.

On Friday, October 29, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the use of the vaccine in 5- to 11-year olds, and the CDC affirmed that decision on Tuesday. The Workgroup reviewed and affirmed the federal decisions Wednesday morning.

The Workgroup thoroughly reviewed safety data for the vaccine, including the absence of any severe adverse events among vaccine recipients in the clinical trial. Reactions were mild and similar to those seen in

adolescents and adults and with other vaccines routinely recommended for children and were less common at ages 5-11 years than at 16-25 years.

Washington, Oregon, and Nevada joined California's COVID-19 Scientific Safety Review Workgroup in October. The workgroup, made up of nationally-acclaimed scientists with expertise in immunization and public health, has concurrently and independently reviewed the FDA's actions related to COVID-19 vaccines. It will continue to evaluate other COVID-19 vaccines as they go through the federal process.

Statement from Governor Kate Brown:

"This is great news for Oregon children, parents, and families. Vaccination is the best tool we have to protect ourselves and our loved ones. With today's review by leading doctors, pediatricians, and health experts, Oregon parents and children can be confident in the safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for 5-to-11-year-olds. It is completely normal for parents and kids to have questions about vaccines—I urge you to reach out to your family doctor, health care provider, or pharmacist and get your questions answered today."

Statement from Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak:

"Today is an important day for families all across the state of Nevada and I am so proud to say that the COVID-19 vaccine is available for those as young as 5-years-old. Thank you, again, to the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup for coming together to give parents confidence in the science behind this vaccine. I encourage all families to choose vaccination for their children and for themselves. Protecting our kids will give them more days at school, with their friends and with their families. Vaccination is our way out of this pandemic."

Statement from California Governor Gavin Newsom:

"This expanded eligibility for lifesaving vaccines moves us closer to ending the pandemic, which has taken a heavy toll on the wellbeing of our kids. California is leading the nation in vaccinations, with 54 million administered and 87 percent of the eligible population having received at least one dose, and we're moving swiftly to implement a robust vaccination program for 5-11-year-olds. I urge families to get the facts on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and take action to protect themselves and loved ones from COVID-19, especially as we head into the winter months."

Statement from Washington Governor Jay Inslee:

"Parents can breathe a sigh of relief that their kids can also be vaccinated against the deadly COVID-19 virus. This gets us a step closer to having the entire population of Washington eligible for the vaccine. And a step closer to finding our way out of this pandemic."