

Honorable Tony Coelho

September 4, 2020

Committee on Equitable Allocation of Vaccine for the Novel Coronavirus
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
500 5th St NW
Washington, DC 20001

Committee Members:

I am writing to amplify the comments submitted by the disability community in response to the Discussion Draft of the Preliminary Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health. While it is troubling to me that this work is starting at a moment when it now has to be rushed, I appreciate your efforts to get input from the disability community. In my experience as a longtime disability rights advocate and an original of the Americans with Disabilities Act, I view this as a process that is aligned with our mantra of “Nothing About Us Without Us” and therefore urge you to outreach directly to our disability community as you wrestle with difficult questions related to vaccine allocation even after the comment deadline. We stand ready to provide thoughtful feedback.

In the meantime, I want to express my strong support for the following comments from our disability community that have been brought to my attention. Those include:

- Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- American Association of People with Disabilities
- Not Dead Yet

Please give these comments special attention as they represent the perspectives and insights from a community that is at the highest risk of infection and of severe illness from infection. Please let me know how I can be helpful as you work to assure fair and equitable vaccine distribution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'T' followed by the name 'Coelho' in a cursive script.

Tony Coelho

Tony Coelho is a former Congressman from California, lifetime disability rights advocate and original author of the Americans with Disabilities Act

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