

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0550

February 26, 2021

Dr. Francis Collins
Director
National Institutes of Health
9000 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Mr. Andy Slavitt
Acting Administrator
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Dr. Collins and Mr. Slavitt:

I write today to express concern over guidance that Americans must continue following the most restrictive COVID mitigation measures following vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccines paid for by Congress, produced under Operation Warp Speed, and deemed safe and effective by the Food and Drug Administration are scientifically known to be at least 90 percent effective. To date, more than 45 million Americans have been vaccinated, with the numbers continuing to grow.

Accompanying these positive developments, however, is a very troubling— and very frequent – pattern of contradictory statements by Biden Administration appointees and even a high-ranking NIH official.

Specifically, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, is in the near-daily practice of issuing public statements across numerous media and broadcast outlets that amount to little more than unfocused guesswork, rank speculation and a refusal to fully acknowledge that these vaccines work. Insisting that Americans continue to socially distance, wear masks, avoid restaurants and even forego gathering with family following vaccination is nothing less than demoralizing to the nation.

By refusing any degree of transparency or specificity that taking any of the approved COVID vaccines means an end to mask mandates and social distancing, I believe you are inviting the worst outcome of all: the destruction of public confidence and Americans' faith in science, our regulatory entities, and the ultimate promise of vaccines.

It is essential that government officials – especially Dr. Fauci – speak with a consistent voice when it comes to offering Americans hope. The reason why we urge parents to get their children vaccinated for measles, polio, rubella and other serious diseases is so they will have peace of mind that these medicines are essential for their daughters and sons to be free of those illnesses.

I urge you to convey to the nation – particularly our most vulnerable citizens – that vaccines with the FDA’s seal of approval offer them more than the opportunity to wait in line and get a shot. They can provide a return to normalcy.

Further, given his numerous public statements, I do not believe that Dr. Fauci is any longer an effective public representative of this clear message.

Congress and other officials can also enhance public confidence. Given the number of Members that have been vaccinated, my colleagues should be able to show the benefits by displaying a return to normalcy and showing that the science drives our actions. We want to – and should – lead by example.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell Issa', with a stylized, cursive script.

DARRELL ISSA
Member of Congress