Western States Join Scientific Safety Review Workgroup to Ensure Safety of COVID-19 Vaccine

Experts will independently review the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccine

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Nevada, Washington and Oregon have joined California's COVID-19 Scientific Safety Review Workgroup which will independently review the safety and efficacy of any vaccine approved by the FDA for distribution. Last week, California Governor Gavin Newsom announced the panel made up of nationally acclaimed scientists with expertise in immunization and public health.

"Once again, I am thrilled to work with other states in the Western States Pact to ensure we take care of all our residents by bringing together the best and brightest scientific minds across states borders. We know we are stronger together," **said Governor Steve Sisolak**. "When the time comes, Nevadans will be able to feel confident in the safety of the vaccine knowing that an independent review by experts across the West gave it their seal of approval."

This Western States Pact verification process will be happening in lockstep with the federal approval process. The goal is to not have this independent review cause any delay in getting a safe vaccine to the residents in these Western states.

"We appreciate the opportunity to join with other western states to help build confidence in a COVID-19 vaccine," **said Richard Whitley, Director of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services**. "We have worked hard to develop a plan for distribution in our state and when there is an approved vaccine we want Nevadans to know it has been reviewed and deemed safe and effective."

The review panel is a key component to the state's initial COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan which prioritizes those most at risk and is based on the principles of safety, equity and transparency. Nevada will join the Governors of Washington and Oregon, to identify experts to join California's workgroup to guide the review of any vaccine approved by the FDA.

"As COVID-19 does not stop at state lines, our response to it must similarly cross borders," **said California Governor Gavin Newsom**. "Along with our western state partners, California will let science and facts guide our decision making to ensure the safety of our communities."

"We believe in science, public health and safety. That is why I am pleased that Washington is joining California and other western states in this effort," **Washington Governor Jay Inslee said**. "Any COVID vaccine must be guided by the expertise of scientists and medical professionals and that's just what this workgroup will do. The Western States Pact will continue working together to ensure the best health outcomes for everyone in our states."

"The vaccines currently in development, once approved, are what Americans have been waiting for to protect their families, their children, and their loved ones in long-term care facilities," **said Oregon Governor Kate Brown**. "The independent review conducted by this panel of doctors, scientists, and health experts will ensure that a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is available to everyone, especially communities that have been disproportionately impacted by this disease."

This is not the first time Western States have collaborated in response to COVID-19. In April, California, Oregon, Washington, Colorado and Nevada joined in a Western States Pact which shared a vision for fighting COVID-19 and reopening their economies. Western State leaders in May urged congressional leaders to approve $1 trillion in COVID-19 relief for states and local governments and are partnering to pilot a project testing new exposure notification technology pioneered by Google and Apple.

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