

Biden pledges free Covid vaccine for 'everyone' in US if elected

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Democrat Joe Biden said Friday that if elected president he would mandate COVID-19 vaccines be free for all Americans, part of a national strategy to "get ahead" of the coronavirus.

As he laid out his [emergency plan](#) to battle the pandemic, Biden assailed

President Donald Trump for his response, saying the Republican incumbent has "given up" fighting the virus and has "quit on America."

Biden, who has made it a point to follow scientists' guidelines such as wearing facemasks and engaging in social distancing, said that if he is elected he would be focused on bringing the pandemic to heel, and to help struggling Americans with the costs.

"Once we have a safe and effective vaccine, it has to be free to everyone—whether or not you're insured," Biden said in a speech laying out his pandemic response plan just 11 days before the US presidential election.

Trump, who trails Biden in the polls, has also stressed that a vaccine—which he says will be ready in the coming weeks—should be free.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says COVID-19 vaccine doses purchased with [taxpayer dollars](#)—through billions of dollars in funding approved by Congress—would be administered to the American people at no cost.

Trump, in his second and final debate with Biden, on Thursday tried to signal that the US was overcoming the pandemic.

"We're rounding the turn, we're rounding the corner, it's going away," Trump said.

But Democrats led by Biden have hammered Trump for failing to lay out and implement a nationwide response to a pandemic that has now killed more than 223,000 Americans.

"COVID-19 dwarfs anything that we've faced in recent history, and it

isn't showing any signs of slowing down," Biden said in a speech in Wilmington, Delaware, adding that the virus is "surging" in almost every state.

"We're more than eight months into this crisis and the president still doesn't have a plan," the 77-year-old former vice president said.

"He's given up. He's quit on you. He's quit on your family. He's quit on America."

Biden said that if elected he would "immediately" put in place a national strategy "to finally get ahead of this virus, and get back our lives."

That would include consulting governors of all 50 states during the presidential transition.

After inauguration, Biden would urge Congress to pass major legislation addressing the country's needs to battle the [pandemic](#), implement a national mask mandate in federal buildings and interstate transportation and launch a national testing plan equivalent to a seven-fold increase over today's testing level.

Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, told donors Friday that the [coronavirus](#) crisis is "probably one of the greatest mass casualty events we have ever experienced as a country."

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