

US needs clear vaccine distribution strategy to defeat coronavirus

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An opinion piece published today online in *BMJ* by Nina Schwalbe in the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health at Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, calls for a national vaccine strategy now that COVID-19 vaccines are available. Schwalbe writes that a lack of clarity on a distribution plan sets unrealistic expectations among the public and could undermine public trust. But even with a clearly defined strategy in place, vaccinating hundreds of millions of Americans will not be easy. Read the full article [here](#).

Vaccines don't deliver themselves," notes Schwalbe, who is also a Principal Visiting Fellow at the United Nations University International Institute of Global Health. "Vaccines require a safe, trusted and accessible immunization system."

To address the high COVID-19 death rates in the medium to long term, Schwalbe recommends the following:

Set realistic expectations on the role of vaccines in the COVID-19 response and communicate those

clearly. For example, given limited supply, the immediate focus seem to be to reduce mortality of individuals in high-risk groups and transmission in health care settings. It is not to reach herd immunity.

Call upon the Biden administration to enact a parallel commitment to universal health coverage to help protect those people vulnerable to underlying conditions, like diabetes and [heart disease](#), that put them at risk of severe COVID-19 disease in the first place.

Work directly with communities to devise a plan that addresses their fears, and engages them to figure out the logistical challenges.

Provided by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health

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