

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Statement attributable to:  
Sterling N. Ransone, Jr., MD, FAAFP  
President  
American Academy of Family Physicians

## **Family Physicians Urge All Eligible Children and Adults to Get Vaccinated Against COVID-19**

“The American Academy of Family Physicians reaffirms that [COVID-19](#) vaccines are safe, effective and have been shown to prevent serious illness and hospitalizations in children and adolescents, including children who are otherwise healthy. Given the unknown impact of long-term COVID, especially in children, it is essential that all patient populations who are eligible be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2. The likelihood of infection and the health risks associated with COVID-19 outweigh any potential risks associated with vaccination.

“Family physicians play a critical role in ensuring all members of the community, including children, have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, flu vaccine and other routine immunizations that prevent dangerous diseases. Children aged 5-11 are just as likely to get COVID-19 as adults and they have also been shown to be a source of virus transmission for adults. We know that the COVID-19 vaccine is one of the most successful ways to keep ourselves, our families and our communities healthy.

“The AAFP [applauded](#) the FDA when it granted emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine last year, for individuals aged 5-11 based on the summary of the efficacy and safety data. In November, the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine for use in children 5 to 11 years. The AAFP [approved](#) the advisory committee’s recommendation after conducting a thorough review of the evidence.

“Eligible children should be vaccinated against COVID-19 because the virus poses a health risk. ‘Healthy’ children can spread COVID-19 to vulnerable individuals, including younger siblings and classmates who are not yet old enough to be vaccinated. Vaccinations not only prevent hospitalizations and infections; they also reduce the need for future school closures and disruptions and allow sports, after-school and other school-based social events to occur with reduced risk. Protecting these important developmental activities helps improve our children’s quality of life.

“Family physicians remain a trusted source of information for their patients and local communities. We have trusting relationships with our patients, understand their unique health needs and stand ready to counsel them about and administer COVID-19 vaccines. Every ounce of prevention—especially vaccination—helps us combat this virus. For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please see our resources at [FamilyDoctor.org](https://www.familydoctor.org).”

**Editor's Note:** To arrange an interview with Dr. Ransone, contact Julie Hirschhorn, 202-655-4949, or [jhirschhorn@aafp.org](mailto:jhirschhorn@aafp.org).

###

#### **About American Academy of Family Physicians**

*Founded in 1947, the AAFP represents 133,500 physicians and medical students nationwide. It is the largest medical society devoted solely to primary care. Family physicians conduct approximately one in five office visits -- that's 192 million visits annually or 48 percent more than the next most visited medical specialty. Today, family physicians provide more care for America's underserved and rural populations than any other medical specialty. Family medicine's cornerstone is an ongoing, personal patient-physician relationship focused on integrated care. To learn more about the specialty of family medicine, the AAFP's positions on issues and clinical care, and for downloadable multi-media highlighting family medicine, visit [www.aafp.org/media](https://www.aafp.org/media). For information about health care, health conditions and wellness, please visit the AAFP's award-winning consumer website, [www.familydoctor.org](https://www.familydoctor.org).*