

Ethics and Process Considerations: A Perspective from the WHO SAGE Working Group on COVID-19 Vaccine

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Outline of Talk*

- Situating our Working Group in the larger WHO vaccine context
- The SAGE Values Framework
- Personal Observations
- Upcoming Hopkins Ethics Framework for Vaccine Allocation and Priority Setting

*The remarks presented here are in my capacity as an academic and do not represent the positions of the WHO or any WHO committee or working group



WHO and COVID-19 Vaccines

SAGE (Strategic Advisory Group of Experts) on Immunizations

- 15 member standing committee
- <https://www.who.int/immunization/policy/sage/en/>

SAGE Working Group on Covid-19 Vaccines

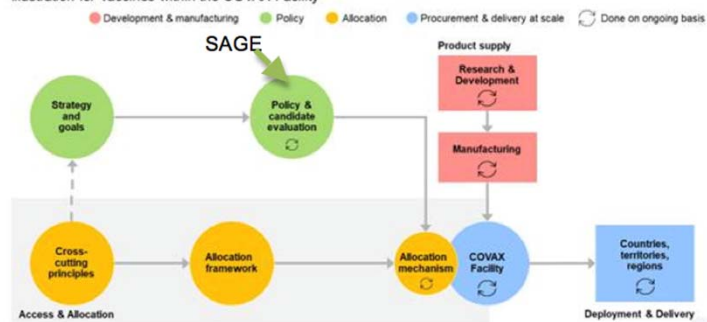
- 26 member ad hoc committee
 - 3 sub-groups
 - o Evidence
 - o Modelling
 - o Values Framework and Prioritization
- (Ruth Faden, Saad Omer, Sonali Kochhar, co-chairs)



The COVAX Facility

1: How does allocation fit in the broader process of providing global access to vaccines?

Illustration for Vaccines within the COVAX Facility



The Values Framework

- Process
 - 8+ sub-group meetings
 - 2 reviews by the full Working Group
 - Feedback from WHO COVID-19 Ethics Working Group
 - Chairs: Ross Upshur and Beatriz da Costa Thomé
 - SAGE review end of August
- Structure
 - Goal
 - Principles
 - Objectives
 - Priority Groups



High Level Observations

- Global Allocation and National Priority Setting
- Beyond Health: Human Well-being/Economic and Social Disruption
- Beyond Distributive Justice: Structural Inequities
- Legitimacy



Interim Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation in the US: Assisting Policy Maker, Stakeholder and Public Deliberation

A collaboration of researchers from the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, Berman Institute for Bioethics, and International Vaccine Access Center

3 broad ethical values and 7 ethical principles

- **Well-being and promoting the common good**
 - Promote public health
 - Promote economic and social well-being
- **Justice, fairness and equity**
 - Address background and emerging inequities between groups
 - Give priority to the worst off
 - Reciprocity
- **Legitimacy, trust and sense of ownership**
 - Respect the diversity of views in a pluralistic society
 - Engage community members to improve vaccine program design and effectiveness



ETHICAL PRINCIPLE	GOAL DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC	OBJECTIVE FOR COVID VACCINE ALLOCATION
Promote public health	Prevent COVID-19 related illness and death	Protect those at greatest risk of poor outcome from infection Protect those at greatest risk of infection and further transmission
	Prevent injury, illness and death from other causes (non-COVID)	Protect workers needed to maintain public safety
	Protect the health system	Protect health system workers
Address background and emerging inequities between social groups	Reduce higher rates of severe COVID-19 illness and mortality being experienced by systematically disadvantaged social groups and marginalized populations	Protect hard to reach groups and workers in occupations that include a disproportionate percentage of disadvantaged groups
	Address disproportionate economic and social impacts on some population groups, especially those that are marginalized or systematically disadvantaged groups	Protect workers who face elevated economic harm from not working

Thank You

Questions or Comments?

