

## **Vaccines and Boosters for College Students**

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Right now, at least 1000 universities and colleges are still mandating that all students receive a primary two-dose COVID vaccine. About three hundred institutions of higher education are still requiring booster shots.

Several primary and secondary schools continue to mandate COVID vaccines, although the deadlines have been extended for compliance for many of these schools, in some cases multiple times. This is most likely due to both resistance from parents who are increasingly hesitant about these vaccines, and school officials who are increasingly concerned about massive withdrawals of children from public schools.

Before the COVID debacle started, non-profit groups in many countries aggressively defended the rights and freedoms of people and groups. But today, not so much. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) still supports vaccine mandates. The ACLU, along with many of the workers' unions, has completely abandoned its core principles and now endorses the violation of individual rights.

According to the ACLU's website, the organization is "the nation's premier defender of the rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. With more than 1.7 million members, 500 staff attorneys, thousands of volunteer attorneys, and offices throughout the nation, the ACLU of today continues to fight government abuse and to vigorously defend individual freedoms including speech and religion, a woman's right to choose, the right to due process, citizens' rights to privacy and much more. The ACLU stands up for these rights even when the cause is unpopular, and sometimes when nobody else will. While not always in agreement with us on every issue, Americans have come to count on the ACLU for its unyielding dedication to principle. The ACLU has become so ingrained in American society that it is hard to imagine an America without it."<sup>1</sup>

Really! How can these statements be reconciled with the support of mandates requiring that many Americans, including children and young adults, agree to receive an experimental product as a condition of attending school or holding a job?

### **New Analysis: No Justification for Vaccines for College Students**

According to a new analysis, continuing mandates for college students to get COVID vaccines, particularly boosters, cannot be justified at all. The analysis was based on data from the Centers for Disease Control that was applied to a hypothetical campus with 30,000 students. The analysis showed that between 22,000 and 30,000 **previously uninfected** young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 would need to receive an mRNA booster in order to prevent just one COVID-19 hospitalization.

This is a conservative and optimistic estimate, since about 67% of adults ages 18-49 have been infected with SARS-CoV-2. It is well understood that prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 results in significant long-term protection, negating almost any benefit from COVID vaccines or boosters for this group.

While there is almost no benefit, it is estimated that for this same number of students, boosters would result in between 18 and 98 serious adverse events requiring hospitalization and between 1373 and 3234 events that would result in interruption of daily activities or requiring medical care. To be clear, this means that there would be significantly more adverse events than COVID-19 hospitalizations averted.

But that's not all. Prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 increases the rate of post-vaccination symptoms by two- to three-fold. This means that in this same population, the number of systemic reactions resulting in disruption of school and daily activities would likely increase to between 1839 and 4333 events.

The authors describe the insistence on maintaining these policies as "status quo bias" – when a rule becomes "normalized" it tends to remain in place even when there is no rational basis for it. Irrational rules concerning COVID vaccines are expensive, frustrating, and stressful for both those forced to get the shots and those who are charged with enforcing the mandates. The authors write that when mandates are unethical, "...individuals may have an ethical duty to oppose them, in part to promote tolerance and prevent further bureaucratic encroachment and disenfranchisement of individuals with reasoned arguments against such mandates."<sup>2</sup>

Refusing to comply is one of the most powerful tools available to adults of all ages in response to COVID-related policies.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aclu.org/about/aclu-history>

<sup>2</sup> Bardosh K, Krug A, Jamrozik E et al. "COVID-19 vaccine boosters for young adults: A risk-benefit assessment and five ethical arguments against mandates at universities."