

# Premature Release of Covid-19 Vaccine Could Be a 'Dangerous Experiment on the American People,' Nurses Union Warns



By [Lisa Newcomb](#) | [Common Dreams](#)

Following news that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention asked states to prepare for the potential distribution of a Covid-19 vaccine by November 1, medical experts and advocacy organizations are warning that politics should not be made a priority over public health.

“As anxious as the country is for health security and protection against Covid-19, we cannot subject people to greater risk to score political points for a president who

has, for months, demonstrated his abandonment of public health and safety in the face of this terrible pandemic,” Bonnie Castillo, a registered nurse and executive director of National Nurses United (NNU), [said](#) in a statement Thursday.

Public health experts have raised alarm over the possibility that President Donald Trump will try to use a prematurely approved vaccine as an “October surprise” to boost his reelection chances.

*One word I've never seen used by clinically vetted medical treatments: "Surprise"*

*There should be no surprises at this point. There should only be evidence & transparency.*

*"Surprise" is for marketing. "Surprise" doesn't build trust, which is what we'll all need in any vaccine.*  
<https://t.co/0Ng5TbpWti>

*– Dr. Dave Stukus (@AllergyKidsDoc) [September 3, 2020](#)*

The warning from NNU came after Robert Redfield, director of the CDC, sent a letter to state governors on August 27 urging them to prepare locations for potential Covid-19 vaccine distribution. The CDC [asked](#) them to expedite imminent applications from McKesson Corporation, which has contracted with the agency to distribute vaccines, and to waive “requirements that would prevent these facilities from becoming fully operational by November 1.”

The timing of the potential release—just two days before the November 3 general election—raised red flags for NNU and other watchdogs as the [CDC](#) and [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) have come under fire for buckling to political pressure from the president as he scrambles to curry public favor in his reelection bid.

“With both the [agencies], we have already seen far too many examples of the erosion of scientific integrity and the subversion of public health through political intervention and pressure by the Trump administration and corporate employers,” Zenei Cortez, registered nurse and co-president of NNU, [said](#) Thursday.

*The companies testing vaccines say they won't be ready until 2021, but Trump is saying they'll be ready 2 days before the election.*

*He screwed up the entire COVID response, but will pretend he's a hero at the last possible moment. A conman til the end. <https://t.co/AzJpISyaPj>*

– Nick Knudsen ☐☐ (@DemWrite) [September 3, 2020](#)

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar dismissed critics’ concerns that the vaccine was being rushed to help Trump’s election chances in an [interview](#) with “CBS This Morning” Thursday.

“I think it’s very irresponsible how people are trying to politicize notions of delivering a vaccine to the American people,” Azar said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s top infectious disease expert, also attempted to allay fears of political meddling in an [interview](#) with *CNN* Thursday.

“I don’t think so,” Fauci said when asked if Americans should be worried about political intervention in the vaccine’s release. “I mean, the FDA has been very explicit that they are going to make a decision based on the data as it comes in... I think that we can have some confidence and have faith in what the FDA is saying.”

But the FDA has been embroiled in controversy in recent weeks.

Two public relations officials were fired after FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn apologized for misrepresenting the efficacy of convalescent plasma in treating Covid-19 last month.

Public health experts including the University of Florida professor Natalie Dean, who specializes in emerging infectious diseases and vaccine study design, have expressed confusion over the standards the FDA will use to determine that a Covid-19 vaccine is ready for distribution.

*Remember last month when the FDA wrote multiple commentaries laying out the rigorous criteria for a Covid vaccine? Yet the discussion has since evolved, and I'm left wondering – what level of evidence do they need for an EUA? This is entirely too vague.* <https://t.co/VYAPyGZgQ2>

– Natalie E. Dean, PhD (@nataliexdean) [September 3, 2020](#)

“With 184,000 U.S. lives lost to Covid-19 under the watch of a president and administration that have left people exposed and dying even when known prevention measures, as other nations have proven, are available,” said Jean Ross, a registered nurse and co-president of NNU, “placing an insufficiently tested product on the market will surely look like a dangerous experiment on the American people.”

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