

## **California DPH Covid 19 Vaccine Priority for patients with schizophrenia.**

The GAC, guided by input from SCPS member Stacia Mills, MD, who does work in safety net institutions, discussed the omission of schizophrenia spectrum disorders as a separate criterion for COVID-19 vaccine priority status under State DPH guidelines, and developed a plan for addressing this.

**MOTION:**

**Whereas,**

- 1) There is strong evidence that schizophrenia spectrum disorders worsen mortality and morbidity from COVID-19 infection:
- 2) the current State DPH criteria for vaccination priority without medical basis omits schizophrenia spectrum disorders from the list of conditions that increase COVID-19 vaccination priority; and requires psychiatrists and mental health systems to provide additional documentation for patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders in order for them to receive COVID-19 vaccination

**Therefore,** the GAC moves that the SCPS Council:

- 1) Request the Newsletter and Public Affairs Committees to seek collaboration with SCPS member Stacia Mills, MD, to craft an article and outreach activities describing and providing examples of the documentation that psychiatrists might provide to patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders that, consistent with State DPH guidelines, will permit them to receive greater priority for COVID-19 vaccination on the basis that their disorder makes them more likely to develop severe life-threatening illness or death from COVID-19 infection, that acquiring COVID-19 will limit the individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival, and/or that providing adequate and timely COVID care will be particularly challenging as a result of the individual's disability.
- 2) Request the GA Committee to work with Dr. Mills to craft a letter under the signature of the SCPS President or President Elect to the chairperson of each Board of Supervisors of each SCPS County asking that they direct their departments of behavioral or mental health to ensure that patients with schizophrenia spectrum disorders who meet the State DPH criteria above are provided with documentation necessary to ensure that they receive priority for COVID-19 vaccination.
- 3) Request the SCPS GA Committee develop language for a letter under the signature of the SCPS President/President elect to be sent to the PPAC Board Chairperson chair notifying him of the desire by SCPS Council for PPAC to request urgent discussion with representatives from the State DPH to advise them of a PPAC position that

schizophrenia spectrum disorders be added to the list of severe conditions that permit priority for COVID-19 vaccination, inviting Dr. Mills to participate as a medical expert in such discussions.