



March 10, 2023

Joseph A. Ladapo, M.D., Ph.D.
State Surgeon General
Florida Department of Health
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-00
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1701

Sent Via Electronic Mail Only

Dear Dr. Ladapo,

Thank you for your letter regarding COVID-19 vaccine safety. We appreciate this opportunity to address your questions and we would like to correct the associated misinterpretations and misinformation about the data from the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) (VAERS), in the spirit of transparency and supporting and serving the health of our nation.

We stand firmly behind the safety and effectiveness of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, which are fully supported by the available scientific data. Staying up to date on vaccination is the best way to reduce the risks of death and serious illness or hospitalization from COVID-19. Misleading people by overstating the risks, or emphasizing the risks without acknowledging the overwhelming benefits, unnecessarily causes vaccine hesitation and puts people at risk of death or serious illness that could have been prevented by timely vaccination.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Califf, MD
Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention