Vaccines Save Lives

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MICROBIOLOGY

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that vaccines save and improve lives. ASM supports continued investment in the development of vaccines, as well as effective deployment of evidence-based public preventive strategies and education to protect against existing and re-emerging diseases.

Public Perception of Vaccines

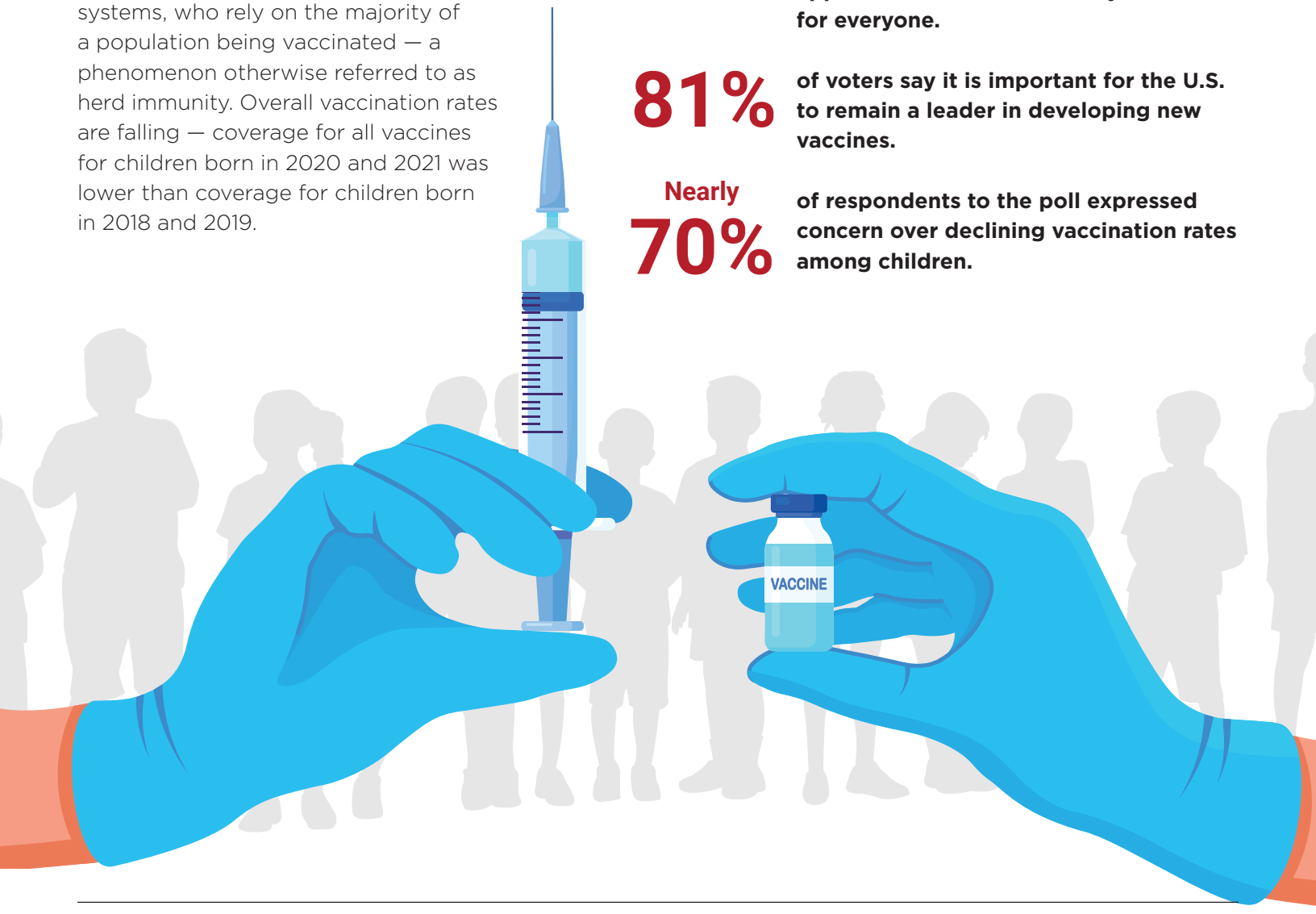
The recent re-emergence of vaccine-preventable diseases is alarming and compromises the health and well-being of those, including infants and those with compromised immune systems, who rely on the majority of a population being vaccinated — a phenomenon otherwise referred to as herd immunity. Overall vaccination rates are falling — coverage for all vaccines for children born in 2020 and 2021 was lower than coverage for children born in 2018 and 2019.

Despite this, vaccines still receive broad support from the American public. According to a January 2025 Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease poll:

74% **of American voters believe the U.S. should prioritize ensuring FDA-approved vaccines are widely available for everyone.**

81% **of voters say it is important for the U.S. to remain a leader in developing new vaccines.**

Nearly 70% **of respondents to the poll expressed concern over declining vaccination rates among children.**



The development and effective use of vaccines saves lives. In the U.S., childhood **vaccines have prevented 508 million cases of vaccine-preventable illness, 32 million hospitalizations and 1.13 million deaths.**

According to CDC estimates, over the last nearly 30 years in the U.S., childhood vaccines have SAVED:

21,900
lives from Polio

123,200
lives from Pneumococcus-related diseases, such as pneumonia.

85,000
lives from Measles

Based on a study of 30 cohorts of children 1994-2023.

U.S. Government Role: A Multi-Agency Effort

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ensures the safety, effectiveness and availability of vaccines in the United States. The FDA approves vaccines after extensive study of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. The U.S. vaccine safety system continuously monitors for adverse events after a vaccine is licensed.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) tracks vaccine use, conducts disease surveillance, educates consumers on vaccines and supports essential public health infrastructure.

Researchers at the Department of Defense's (DoD) Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, develop and test vaccines aimed at saving military and civilian lives, including vaccines for meningitis, Ebola virus, Zika virus and COVID-19.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) conducts and supports basic research in areas such as infectious diseases, microbiology and immunology to generate the knowledge essential for developing safe and effective vaccines.

The United States Department of Agriculture conducts research to develop and improve vaccines for agricultural animals, manages strategic stockpiles of veterinary vaccines and regulates veterinary biologics and vaccines.

Project NextGen, a partnership between NIAID and the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), invests and coordinates across the federal government and the private sector to develop better vaccines that are easier to administer and offer longer lasting protection.

Established by Congress in 2022, the White House Office of Pandemic Preparedness and Response Policy advises the President on preparing for and responding to pandemics and leads interagency coordination and communication in responding to pandemic and biological threats.