FDA to Review Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has announced that Janssen Biotech Inc. (Johnson & Johnson) has requested an emergency use authorization for a COVID-19 vaccine. The FDA is reviewing the application and will discuss it during a February 26 meeting of its Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee.

It is anticipated that the vaccine could be approved soon after the February 26 meeting. It has an effective rate of 66% which is higher than the season flu vaccines but not as high as previously approved vaccines. The Janssen vaccine is a single dose that can be stored in a refrigerator, which would make the logistics of this vaccine easier to manage than the currently approved vaccines. Click here for more.

Senate Holds Joint Hearing on Vaccine Distribution

The state Senate Health and Human Services and Aging and Youth Committees held a joint hearing on vaccine distribution in Pennsylvania. Concerns were raised about the vaccine delivery to long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes, and senators believed that those most vulnerable are being vaccinated too slowly and discussed options to improve the progress. Senators questioned whether pharmacies and hospitals were providing vaccines only to those in Phase 1A and asked why Pennsylvania’s plan had simply adopted the federal recommendations without question. Presenters expressed frustration over the havoc caused by these changing priorities and unrealistic public expectations.

Pharmacies and hospitals provided successful examples of mass vaccination clinics and their capacity to hold additional clinics in the future if allocated sufficient doses. Providers noted that while the vaccines and supplies are free, they do have unreimbursed costs to schedule and administer the vaccine. The need for better communication, planning, and logistics was emphasized while prioritizing those most at risk. Senators expressed interest in mass vaccination clinics, including those organized at the local level, as well as mobile vaccinations in long-term care facilities. To learn more or watch the recording of the hearing, click here.