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Metastatic Breast Cancer | Research | Advocacy | Support

METAvivor is submitting the following written comment to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) meeting May 28, 2026, Docket No. FDA-2026-N-3962. We write to express our support for updated COVID vaccine formulations that better match emerging variants, and to urge reinstatement of universal COVID vaccine approval for people 6 months and older, regardless of medical history, at least once a year, for all COVID vaccine formulations.

METAvivor is a volunteer-led, nonprofit organization dedicated to funding research that improves both the quality and length of life for individuals living with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer (MBC). Our mission is rooted in hope and action—we advocate for increased public awareness of the unique needs of the MBC community, provide strength and purpose to patients, and maximize the impact of every dollar we invest in critical research.

Metastatic breast cancer occurs when cancer cells spread from the breast to other parts of the body—most often the bones, liver, lungs, or brain. While treatments can extend life, a diagnosis of stage 4 breast cancer is not considered survivable leading to around 42,000 deaths annually. In 2025, it is estimated that over 316,000 Americans were diagnosed with breast cancer. While only about 6% of diagnoses are Stage 4 MBC *at the time of diagnosis*. Around 30% of all people diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer will eventually go on to develop metastatic breast cancer, and an estimated 170,000 individuals are currently living with MBC.

As an organization comprised of individuals battling metastatic breast cancer (MBC), their caregivers, and loved ones, METAvivor is deeply concerned about the decline in vaccine confidence along with the fractured and uncertain public health landscape that has emerged in recent years with the rise in vaccine skepticism and the declining vaccination rates in recent years. Because transparency and information sharing is fundamental to public confidence and ultimately to overall public health, we urge FDA and other federal agencies to allow publication of recently blocked studies on the safety and effectiveness of COVID and other vaccines.

METAvivor is also concerned that, under current FDA approval, people under 65 with no underlying conditions are not considered eligible to receive the COVID vaccine, even if they



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live with someone who is immunocompromised or otherwise at high risk of severe illness. Because immunocompromised individuals, including MBC patients, may not be able to mount a full, effective immune response to vaccines, it is *vital* that their healthy loved ones and care givers can be vaccinated to help protect them from exposure. High vaccination rates protect not just the individuals who are vaccinated, but the vulnerable among us. We urge you to remove barriers to vaccine access by restoring approval of COVID vaccines for healthy individuals 6 months and older, regardless of health status.

Individuals with metastatic cancer and their caregivers already face innumerable challenges as they navigate an array of interventions and side-effects, and fight for the highest possible quality of life during their treatment. We owe it to these individuals and other vulnerable populations to ensure that COVID and other vital vaccines are appropriately updated to match prevalent strains, accessible, and affordable for all who wish to receive them.

We urge you not to forget metastatic breast cancer patients in your deliberations, because the length of our lives, the well-being of our families, and our ability to benefit from future life-saving research and medical breakthroughs depend upon restoration of vaccine confidence and the availability of updated and accessible vaccines.

Alpha Lillstrom Cheng, METAvivor Vice President and
Advocacy Committee Chair

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