From the AANP President

W e have been living in the dark reality of the COVID-19 virus for a year now, and our personal and professional lives have been upended and impacted in ways we could never have previously comprehended. I’m so proud of you, my nurse practitioner (NP) colleagues! I’ve witnessed all the ways you’ve evolved your practices and accepted the challenges to meet the needs of patients with the virus. NPs are testing and treating COVID-19 patients in multiple settings, including volunteering in testing and vaccination sites. Your dedication to improving the health of this country is inspiring!

The vaccine rollout is gaining momentum. This is the beginning of the end of COVID-19 if we can get enough individuals protected through immunizations. It is believed one person can infect 2 to 3 people with COVID-19. We need a large portion of the population to be resistant through vaccinations before we see herd immunity and the subsequent infection rates go down.

It has been my honor to serve on the Operation Warp Speed Vaccine Consultation Panel with other health care leaders and consumer advocates. Our biweekly meetings provided updates on vaccine development and plans for rollout to the states with detailed military precision. I was in awe of the science in the development of these new mRNA vaccines, using science previously used in cancer research to trigger the immune system to target cancer cells, now targeting the cancer of COVID-19. To have vaccines with 95% efficacy is truly a scientific success story!

I was so happy to receive my first COVID-19 vaccine! It gave me hope, and I no longer wake up every day wondering, “is this the day I will catch COVID-19?” I shared my vaccination video on social media, hoping to lead by example, with the goal of inspiring my community and friends across the country to get their vaccines when they have the opportunity.

In our roles as NPs, our friends, family, and patients look to us for health care advice and answers. We now have the opportunity to impact the health of our nation. With over 1 billion patient visits each year to NPs, we can use our voices to advocate for vaccination for patients and our communities. Together, we can continue to be part of the solution to help our country heal and move beyond the dark days of COVID-19 into a bright future.

By Sophia L. Thomas, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, PPCNP-BC, FNAP, FAANP

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