

Pfizer asks FDA to approve COVID vaccine for young children

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New York, February 3 (RHC)-- U.S. health authorities reported more than 3,600 COVID-19 deaths on Wednesday, even as daily cases and hospitalizations continued to decline from January's record levels.

In Washington, Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy said a panel of vaccine experts would carefully review Pfizer's application asking the FDA to authorize its vaccine for children as young as 6 months old. Dr. Murthy said: "Pfizer's application will now undergo the same independent, rigorous and transparent review process that was used to authorize the vaccines that now more than 250 million Americans have received, including millions of children ages 5 and up."

As it awaits the FDA's response, Pfizer has extended its clinical trial to see if a third dose produces a stronger immune response in young children. Initial tests showed two doses failed to mount a strong response in kids aged 2 to 4.

In other news, the U.S. Army said it will immediately begin discharging soldiers who refuse to comply with the Pentagon's vaccine mandate. More than 3,300 Army personnel have so far refused COVID shots.

Meanwhile, a New York Times analysis shows the United States has a far higher per capita death rate from COVID than other wealthy nations, likely due to lower vaccination rates and disparities in U.S. healthcare.

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