

# U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins bipartisan group of colleagues urging Biden Administration to help develop next generation COVID-19 vaccines

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin has joined a bipartisan group of Senators in a letter urging Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response Dawn O’Connell to outline the Biden Administration’s plans to support the development of next generation COVID-19 vaccines. According to the CDC, vaccinated people are far less likely to be [hospitalized](#) or [die](#) from COVID-related illnesses, but breakthrough cases are still possible.

In their letter, the Senators push the Administration to support the development of vaccines that provide even more durable protection against COVID-19, particularly with the emergence of new variants. Next generation COVID-19 vaccines may be universal, offering broad protect against changing variants of the virus, or help reduce the need for follow up booster shots.

“We appreciate your open and thoughtful comments on the Administration’s efforts to end the pandemic and the critical role the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) serves in developing next generation COVID-19 vaccines that are easier to store, ship, and administer and that may prove more durable than the current authorized and approved vaccines,” **said the Senators.** “We request a briefing to better understand the Administration’s plans to support development of next generation COVID-19 vaccines.”

The letter was led by U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), and also signed by Senators

Tina Smith (D-MN), Mitt Romney (R-UT), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Bob Casey (D-PA), and Chris Murphy (D-CT).

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#) and below:

*Dear Assistant Secretary O'Connell:*

*Thank you for your testimony before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) on January 11, 2022. We appreciate your open and thoughtful comments on the Administration's efforts to end the pandemic and the critical role the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) serves in developing next generation COVID-19 vaccines that are easier to store, ship, and administer and that may prove more durable than the current authorized and approved vaccines. To this end, we request a briefing to better understand the Administration's plans to support development of next generation COVID-19 vaccines.*

*Throughout the pandemic, BARDA has played a significant role in development and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, resulting in over 80 percent of Americans aged five and above having received at least one dose of a vaccine. Between December 2020 and June 2021 in the U.S., vaccination saved 240,000 lives and prevented an estimated 14 million infections and over one million hospitalizations. The data are clear: the currently available vaccines have been very successful in reducing serious illness, hospital admissions, and death. Yet while the first generation of COVID-19 vaccines provided a tremendous return on investment, these vaccines have limited success in preventing forward transmission by vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infections. Further, existing COVID-19 vaccines do not appear to be as durable as many other vaccines, requiring booster shots to continue protection against the virus, particularly with the emergence of variants.*

*In your testimony you stated, "...we all see the need for next generation vaccines," and said that BARDA is working with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) to develop a unified research agenda and budget aimed at accelerating the availability of next generation vaccines. This work, according to your testimony, includes identifying promising vaccine candidates and supporting the research of potential candidates in the initial phases of development. We specifically request an update on the status of the unified research agenda and budget and further request additional detailed information on BARDA and NIAID's strategy for the development of next generation vaccine candidates.*



*Thank you for your continued work to protect Americans. We look forward to your response and request a briefing on these issues by March 4, 2022.*

*Sincerely,*

An online version of this release is available [here](#).