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U.S. Sen. Johnson: Did health agencies perform sufficient surveillance of COVID-19 vaccine adverse events?

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WASHINGTON – Last week, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) sent a letter to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky requesting information about whether the agency performed sufficient surveillance of COVID-19 vaccine adverse events. A recent article noted that CDC did not compile all of the data on vaccine adverse events it initially claimed it would.

According to the CDC's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document dated January 29, 2021, the agency claimed it would "perform routine [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)] surveillance to identify potential new safety concerns for COVID-19 vaccines." Specifically, the surveillance would include, "generating tables summarizing automated data from fields on the VAERS form for persons who received COVID-19 vaccines (e.g., age of vaccinee, COVID-19 vaccine type, adverse event)."

The CDC reportedly failed to provide these tables and other surveillance data in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The CDC claimed that, "no information was withheld from [the FOIA] release."

The senator wrote, "This raises questions about whether CDC ever collected the

information on vaccine safety it originally claimed it would in the January 2021 SOP."

To the extent that CDC did not generate the surveillance data it initially claimed it would, the senator called on CDC to "explain why and detail who made the decision to not follow the SOP and when that decision was made."

The full text of the letter can be found here and below.