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FDA Will Take *55 Years* to Answer FOIA on Vaccine-Approval Data

By WESLEY J. SMITH | November 22, 2021 7:34 AM



The FDA headquarters in White Oak, Md., August 29, 2020. (Andrew Kelly/Reuters)

The other day, outgoing NIH head **Francis Collins** griped that people don't place enough trust in public-health officials. I wonder why? Perhaps it is because the public is being denied the information needed to judge important questions of policy and competence.

Case in point: Some activists sent the FDA a Freedom of Information Act request about the data that went into approving the vaccine. The FDA agreed to

Freedom of Information Act requests are rarely speedy, but when a group of scientists asked the federal government to share the data it relied upon in licensing Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, the response went beyond typical bureaucratic foot-dragging.

As in 55 years beyond.

That's how long the Food & Drug Administration in court papers this week proposes it should be given to review and release the trove of vaccine-related documents responsive to the request. If a federal judge in Texas agrees, plaintiffs Public Health and Medical Professionals for Transparency can expect to see the full record in 2076.

Excuses, excuses!

The plaintiffs, a group of more than 30 professors and scientists from universities including Yale, Harvard, UCLA and Brown, **filed suit** in September in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, seeking expedited access to the records. They say that releasing the information could help reassure vaccine skeptics that the shot is indeed “safe and effective and, thus, increase confidence in the Pfizer vaccine.”

But the FDA can't simply turn the documents over wholesale. The records must be reviewed to redact “confidential business and trade secret information of Pfizer or BioNTech and personal privacy information of patients who participated in clinical trials,” wrote DOJ lawyers in a **joint status report** filed Monday.

The FDA proposes releasing 500 pages per month on a rolling basis, noting that the branch that would handle the review has only 10 employees and is currently processing about 400 other FOIA requests.

Yeah, well call it “FOIA Infrastructure” and hire more people!

How ridiculous can you get? And how likely to sow greater distrust — by the very people who continually bleat, “Trust the experts!”

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