Pfizer gets full FDA approval

By Madilynne Medina

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the Pfizer vaccine on Monday after a panel reviewed by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

Pfizer was granted full FDA approval for individuals 16 years or older, but it’s still categorized as an emergency use for individuals 12 to 15 years of age.

Full approval means the drug’s effects have been analyzed and reviewed by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research and are believed to provide benefits that outweigh known and potential risks for the intended population, as defined by the FDA website.

Pfizer is the first U.S. vaccine to receive full approval. According to a Tuesday Very Well Health article, pharmaceutical companies do not have a patent to create names for products, making “Pfizer” a descriptor rather than a name for the vaccine.

Since the vaccine’s approval, “Community” is recognized as the first official title for the Pfizer vaccine, according to the same website.

Very Well Health is a website containing medically-reviewed articles written by healthcare professionals and PhD researchers.

Before full FDA approval, a large number of businesses and universities including San Jose State University have developed vaccine mandates and other safety measures such as social distancing and mask requirements.

The Pfizer vaccine, now officially referred to as Community on the FDA website, was approved for emergency use by the FDA in December 2020.

Emergency use authorization (EUA) allows medical countermeasures, including vaccines, to be used during public health crises, according to the FDA.

While the vaccine was granted full FDA approval for individuals 16 years or older, 49 states fall under EUA for individuals 12 to 15 years of age, according to the Monday Forbes article.

According to a June 30 report by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), 39% of unvaccinated adults said they were waiting on full FDA approval to receive the vaccine.

The KFF is an American nonprofit organization that focuses on national health issues by developing policy analyses and participating in occasional partnerships with news organizations.

President Joe Biden encouraged eligible U.S. citizens to receive the vaccine and urged businesses to require stricter vaccine mandates during a Monday news conference in the South Court Auditorium of the White House Complex.

“Today I’m calling on more companies in the private sector to step up the vaccine requirements that will reach millions of Americans,” Biden said. “If you’re a business leader, a non-profit leader, a state or local leader, who has been waiting for full FDA approval to require vaccinations, I call on you now to do that,” he said.

Mark McClean, a former FDA commissioner and director of the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, said in a Monday news conference although employers had some authority regarding vaccine requirements for employees, companies will be more comfortable with mandates considering the FDA approval, according to a statement.

The Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy utilizes academic research from Duke University to inform policy making, according to its website.

“Companies who could [enforce the vaccination mandate] before, I think they’re going to be more confident now and I think they’ll get more acceptance from their workers,” McClean said.

Boosters shots

Shortly before the approval of the Pfizer vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an Aug. 18 statement suggesting booster shots would be needed for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to provide “long-lasting protections.”

The current data suggests protection against the COVID-19 virus decreases over time following the initial dose of the vaccine, according to the same statement.

The FDA is preparing to start offering booster shots for all Americans who have been fully vaccinated for at least five months on Sept. 20, according to the same statement.

A third dose is recommended to those with compromised immune systems, which is currently available in San Clara County, according to an Aug. 14 Santa Clara County Public Health Department news release.

The CDC considers individuals immunocompromised if they have a weakened immune system, which can include people with HIV/AIDS, cancer and transplant patients and those with inherited diseases that affect the immune system.

Immunocompromised individuals don’t build enough protection or any protection after the first vaccination, according to the CDC’s website.

“Those who are immunocompromised are more likely to become infected with COVID-19 and become severely ill because of it, according to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department.

According to the CDC’s website, approximately 2.7% of the U.S. population is immunocompromised, according to the same Santa Clara County news release.

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SJSU vaccination requirements

San Jose State President Mary Papazian stated in a campuswide email Tuesday the current California State University (CSU) vaccination requirements will not be in effect following FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine.

“Papazian said that, because the vaccine must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Sept. 30. If they are accepting campus facilities.

Those who are not fully vaccinated or have an approved medical or religious exemption must participate in mandatory COVID-19 testing. COVID-19 testing will be administered on campus Monday through Friday by Fulgent Genetics in the Event Center.

SJSU media relations specialist Robin McElhatton said the university strongly recommends using the “Report a Case portal” on the Health Awareness website if an individual tests positive or comes in contact with someone who tested positive.

While booster shots are expected to roll out in late September, McElhatton said it’s unclear if the university or CSU system will require booster shots for eligible individuals.

SJSU complies with local and state COVID-19 guidelines. It is too early to know what the guidelines will be for the Fall 2021 semester, McElhatton said in an email.

San Jose State sophomore Somya Tiwari said she would be interested in a booster shot as long as it’s approved with her current vaccine.

“Endorsed received Serum Institute of India’s COVID-19 vaccine, called ‘Covishield’,” Tiwari said.

Covishield is formally known as Oxford/AstraZeneca, named after its developers, the University of Oxford and pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca.

The vaccine is currently approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) for emergency use, according to the WHO’s COVID-19 vaccine tracker.

Tiwari said she’d prefer a strong recommendation for a booster shot rather than any mandate.

“Maybe if you asked me a few weeks ago, I would have been a little bit hesitant about maybe a third shot, but recently I just had a good friend of mine who mom passed away from COVID-19 virus,” Tiwari said in a phone call. “I just want to make sure everyone I care about is safe, so I would definitely go for it but it depends on the studies, she said.

Kyle Tran, film and public relations sophomore, said in a phone call he’d received one of the three U.S. vaccines and would be interested in a booster shot.

However, Tran said he’d prefer a strong recommendation for a booster shot rather than any mandate.

“Maybe if you asked me a few weeks ago, I would have been a little bit hesitant about maybe a third shot, but recently I just had a good friend of mine who mom passed away from COVID-19 virus,” Tran said in a phone call. “I just want to make sure everyone I care about is safe, so I would definitely go for that third shot if more information is available for it.”

Follow Madilynne on Twitter @madilynneee
It’s disorienting, even to grief and happiness. Lorde’s new album, “Solar Power,” uplifts Lordes’s talent into an honest masterpiece.

She has grown exceptionally since her 2017 album “Melodrama,” where she took the persona of the heartbroken girl who sways alone in her apartment. This time she focuses on acceptance of where life has taken her and leaves behind the nostalgia of heartbreak. Lorde fully embraces the carefree persona she has taken in her new album and while some critics prefer her previous synth-heavy albums, I enjoyed the mystical sound she moved into.

“Big Star” focuses on the dogs death and the way her grief shifted into pain. She sings “I toss up if it’s worth a plane,” referring to the guilt she feels from not spending as much time as she would have liked with her furry companion.

Likewise, in “The Man With The Axe,” she sings about the man who has helped her find peace through her anxious thoughts. Lorde compares herself to a tree and her partner to “the man with an axe” who she fell in love with.

While the metaphor itself falls short of being poetic, Lorde adds a surprising amount of vulnerability, especially since she has refrained from being too specific about past relationships.

Even in “Mood Ring,” she satirizes “elusive” influencers who try to sell happiness as easily as makeup. Lorde points out the irony in believing that self care comes from social media since true self care should be achieved away from a phone.

Lorde herself made a name off of stripped down synths and vocal manipulations driving the melodies, but on “Solar Power,” Lorde replaces those electronic beats with laid-back guitar tunes. The 90s inspiration from the Sundays to Mary Star is abundant throughout the album, as Lorde uses heavy percussion to drive the beats with fun, flavorful riffs.

While “Solar Power” has gotten mixed reviews from critics and fans alike, I think it’s because we are more comfortable with celebrating music made in utter darkness.

Lorde attempts to tell her audience that happiness can be as poetic as sadness, especially when you surround yourself with others.

Previously, Lorde has rarely done collaborations, but “Solar Power” is filled with surprising features. On “Secrets From A Girl Who’s Seen It All,” Robyn, a Swedish pop singer, ends the song with a poem about a planet called Sadness. It certainly makes the most anthemic song on the album as she proclaims, “all your mystical ambitions, they won’t let you down.

Life will always be “surprise by euphoria,” mixed with existential dread. Lorde even tells us, but Lorde doesn’t want us to lose hope. She might be dancing in the sun, carefree and happy, but with this album it feels like she brought us with her.

By Saumya Monga

BY MONGA SAUMYA

"Solar Power" moves quickly from heartbreak to grief and happiness. It’s disorienting, even incoherent at times, but also beautiful and poetic. Lorde is showing us that life is chaotic and sometimes all we can do is embrace it, find the light and dance in the sunshine.

Co-produced by Jack Antonoff, who has had an excellent year working with well-known artists such as Taylor Swift and Clairo, and Lorde’s distinct production style, this album it feels like she exist existential dread but with a slight amount of happiness.

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PG&E causes preventable catastrophes

Bryanna Bartlett
Correspondent

The Pacific Gas and Electric company (PG&E), California’s largest utility provider, is once again to blame for the state’s most devastating wildfire. Surpassing last year’s record of the state’s worst wildfires, the Dixie Fire has burned through 7,105,000 acres in the last 42 days. It is currently the largest fire in California history.

PG&E announced its efforts to mitigate wildfires when trees and other vegetation collide with its power lines. Known as the Focused Hazardous-Fire Risk Tiering System (HFTS), the company refrained from updating and following these policies. It has been convicted of numerous reasons why residents shouldn’t have lessened its risk.

However, the scope of PG&E’s Mitigation Plan is not only substations. According to PG&E’s Hazardous Fire Risk Tiering System Inspection Program, high voltage lines that carry electricity from a power plant to a substation, where it is then distributed, are at risk. PG&E officials admitted to failing to inspect any of its substations in Tier 3 and Tier 4 areas, according to PG&E’s website. PG&E said the burial plan would take several years as California has 25,326 miles of high voltage lines and 239,507 miles of distribution lines, two-thirds of which are overhead, according to the same Cal Fire news release.

Underground burial is an expensive-ass Hail Mary PG&E hopes will drastically change the course of demise the company’s faulty equipment and lackadaisical management have put us on.

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