On May 11, 2023 the Department of Health and Human Services announced the end of the end of COVID-19 public health emergency. Yet, people continue to be effected (1,932 deaths in the four weeks to July 1st), new variants continue to be discovered and new boosters continue to be considered by the government.

Please join TASH and NADSP as we explore the latest developments in COVID-19 variants and the future direction of vaccine development and policy. Our three speakers will address scientific and policy developments as well as best practices for people at greater risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection, as well as the people who support them. Katelyn Jetelina will address scientific and policy developments and what to expect during the post pandemic. Dr. Jetelina will be followed by B.J. Stasio and Nikeeta Smith who will discuss their experiences during the pandemic and the importance of vulnerable groups and the people who support them getting vaccinated.

Presenters

Katelyn Jetelina, MPH PhD is an epidemiologist, data scientist, and scientific communicator. She is a Senior Scientific Advisor to several government and non-profit agencies, including the White House, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Resolve to Save Lives. In addition, Dr. Jetelina is the publisher of Your Local Epidemiologist – a public health newsletter that “translates” ever-evolving science to the public, reaching over 300 million views.

BJ Stasio is a strong self-advocate who lives in Buffalo, New York with his wife. He has served as Self-Advocacy Coordinator with the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) for more than 20 years. His work is focused on person-centered planning, trainings, and voting issues for people with disabilities. BJ is Co-Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS).

Nikeeta Smith began working in the field of direct support in 2009. In 2016, she became credentialed through the NADSP and shortly after was promoted to Assistant Manager. Applying what she had learned throughout the DSP credentialing process inspired her to take even more of a leadership role in her profession. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, she was promoted to Residential Manager.