

1216 Broadway
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10001

To: Public health authorities

From: Lawrence I. Golbe, MD, Director of Clinical Affairs, CurePSP

Re: COVID-19 and progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), corticobasal degeneration (PSP) and multiple system atrophy (MSA)

I am clinical director at CurePSP, a nonprofit based in New York City, dedicated to support of those suffering from PSP, CBD and MSA and their families and caregivers.

This memo indicates that PSP, CBD or MSA are conditions that increase the risk of death from Covid-19 and therefore should qualify as underlying conditions warranting priority for receiving a Covid vaccine.

These three disorders are relatively rare brain degenerative conditions. They all cause generalized slowness and stiffness, which can be described as “Parkinsonism,” and the conditions as a group are among the “atypical Parkinsonian disorders” or “Parkinson-plus disorders.” Each of the three has many other disabling neurological features and none has a cure. Unlike Parkinson’s disease itself, none of these disorders responds well to levodopa.

All three disorders involve the brainstem, impairing the ability to swallow safely, to cough efficiently and to control secretions. The general skeletal muscle stiffness further weakens the cough response. For these reasons, those with PSP, CBD or MSA have difficulty clearing secretions related to respiratory infections. Affected persons also have difficulty moving in bed to avoid bedsores, controlling bladder function and generally cooperating with nursing care. All three conditions can affect cognition and behavior in ways that can further interfere with hospital care.

Therefore, PSP, CBD and MSA are “underlying medical conditions” conferring increased risk from Covid-19 and warranting priority in vaccine administration.

For more information on these disorders, please visit www.curepsp.org or contact me directly at golbe@curepsp.org. Thank you for your understanding.

