

## **Equity, Ethics, and Technology**

### **LAS 432 Week 5**

Student Name

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The COVID-19 pandemic sent the world into a global lockdown and fueled a scientific race to find an effective vaccine to help populations and socioeconomic systems return to a sense of normalcy. Although a vaccine was developed in record-breaking time, many obstacles still inhibited swift rollout, including production capacity, supply chain, human and technological resources, and health and governmental infrastructures to deliver vaccines to people. In addition, many nations, including the United States, have seen additional barriers to vaccine distribution in marginalized populations, including ethnic minorities and lower income people. These barriers include limited technological and geographical access, misinformation, and historical mistrust due to the medical suppression of people of color.

In addition to national concerns over vaccine equity, there is also growing concern over global vaccine equity. Resource-rich and wealthy nations are now at the forefront of vaccine nationalism, which, although being responsible to its population, has done little to expand efforts to vaccinate populations in need across the globe. Together, these types of inequities produce a globally uncoordinated rollout that could end hopes of achieving herd immunity and could aid the rise of variants, altering the effectiveness of current vaccines and ultimately prolonging the pandemic. As the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen recently suggested, "A global pandemic requires a world effort to end it—none of us will be safe until everyone is safe."

Consider this in relation to the social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. What are the equities and inequities associated with vaccine distribution? What are the pros and cons for national security, health, and local, national, and global economies? What populations are most at risk? What can be done to produce more equal access to vaccine technology? These are some guiding questions to help you develop your response, but you may approach the question of equity in multiple ways (global, ethnic, economic, geographic, etc.).

For your initial post, assess the equity of vaccine distribution and make a concrete recommendation for how to improve equity now and in the future.