

### Transcript Details

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### Inside the COVID-19 Response: Scientific Rigor Amid Uncertainty

#### ReachMD Announcer:

This is *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Jason Goldman, who's the President of the American College of Physicians as well as their liaison to the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. He'll be sharing his perspectives on scientific decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's Dr. Goldman now.

#### Dr. Goldman:

The scientific environment during the COVID-19 pandemic was quite challenging with the public expecting a high level of quality, which we tried to provide in a chaotic situation. It was like trying to build the plane while flying it. But what we focused on was the best information we had at the time to make the best decisions while using the same robust process each time.

Science is an iterative process, and once you find an answer, you constantly review it to make sure that the answer is still valid. But you have to be willing to make changes to your assumptions and decisions when you have new information. The expectations were very high. We tried to meet those. I think there was a disconnect with the understanding of how science works and what the outcome was, but it was a very chaotic time, and we tried to do the best that we could with the information we had available.

The COVID pandemic really showed the public how we have a scientific process in real time. We had to make decisions rapidly. Things were changing every single day, but we kept a consistent practice. When I was sitting there in the CDC and heard that there was this pandemic coming, I knew that changes and events were going to occur rapidly. When the COVID workgroup was started, because the vaccine was being developed, we were meeting almost weekly, if not more often, to constantly review the data, make good, sound decisions, and make recommendations based on the evidence we had. That data was then presented to the full Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, which would, again, question those decisions and that information to try and make sure that the decisions being made were what's best for the American public and for the safety of our patients.

Everything was done with the best intentions in a chaotic time, but it remained a very robust, consistent process that we could apply each time we made those decisions. We didn't change the process based on the decision but made sure that we were consistent. That is the key to having trust in science and public health—that consistency of information and process.

#### ReachMD Announcer:

That was Dr. Jason Goldman sharing insights on scientific decision-making during the COVID-19 pandemic. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Clinician's Roundtable* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!