

## Minorities have been missing out on treatments

# New conservative target: Race as factor in COVID treatment

MADISON, Wis., Jan. 24, (AP) — Some conservatives are taking aim at policies that allow doctors to consider race as a risk factor when allocating scarce COVID-19 treatments, saying the protocols discriminate against white people.

The wave of infections brought on by the omicron variant and a shortage of treatments have focused attention on the policies.

Medical experts say the opposition is misleading. Health officials have long said there is a strong case for considering race as one of many risk factors in treatment decisions. And there is no evidence that race alone is being used to decide who gets medicine.

The issue came to the forefront last week after Fox News host Tucker Carlson, former President Donald Trump and Republican Sen. Marco Rubio jumped on the policies. In recent days, conservative law firms have pressured a Missouri-based health care system, Minnesota and Utah to drop their protocols and sued New York state over allocation guidelines or scoring systems that include race as a risk factor.

JP Leider, a senior fellow in the Division of Health Policy and Management at the University of Minnesota who helped develop that state's allocation criteria, noted that prioritization has been going on for some time because there aren't enough treatments to go around.

"You have to pick who comes first," Leider said. "The problem is we have extremely conclusive evidence that (minorities) across the United States are having worse COVID outcomes compared to white folks. ... Sometimes it's acceptable to consider things like race and ethnicity when making decisions about when resources get allocated at a societal level."

Since the pandemic began, health care systems and states have been grappling with how to best distribute treatments. The problem has only grown worse as the omicron variant has packed hospitals with COVID-19 patients.

Considerable evidence suggests that COVID-19 has hit certain racial and ethnic groups harder than whites. Research shows that people of color are at

a higher risk of severe illness, are more likely to be hospitalized and are dying from COVID-19 at younger ages.

Data also show that minorities have been missing out on treatments. Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published an analysis of 41 health care systems that found that Black, Asian and Hispanic patients are less likely than whites to receive outpatient antibody treatment.

Omicron has rendered two widely available antibody treatments ineffective, leaving only one, which is in short supply.

The Food and Drug Administration has given health care providers guidance on when that treatment, sotrovimab, should be used, including a list of medical conditions that put patients at high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19. The FDA's guidance says other factors such as race or ethnicity might also put patients at higher risk.

The CDC's list of high-risk underlying conditions notes that age is the strongest risk factor for severe disease and lists more than a dozen medical



Registered nurse Shelly Girardin, (left), is illuminated by the glow of a computer monitor as Dr. Shane Wilson examines COVID-19 patient Neva Azinger inside Scotland County Hospital in Memphis, Mo., on Nov. 24, 2020. (AP)

conditions. It also suggests that doctors and nurses "carefully consider potential additional risks of COVID-19 illness for patients who are members of certain racial

and ethnic minority groups."

State guidelines generally recommend that doctors give priority for drugs to those at the highest risk, includ-

ing cancer patients, transplant recipients and people who have lung disease or are pregnant. Some states, including Wisconsin, have implemented policies that bar race as a factor, but others have allowed it.

St. Louis-based SSM Health, which serves patients in Illinois, Missouri, Oklahoma and Wisconsin, required patients to score 20 points on a risk calculator to qualify for COVID-19 antibody treatment. Non-whites automatically got seven points.

State health officials in Utah adopted a similar risk calculator that grants people two points if they're not white. Minnesota's health department guidelines automatically assigned two points to minorities. Four points was enough to qualify for treatment.

New York state health officials' guidelines authorize antiviral treatments if patients meet five criteria. One is having "a medical condition or other factors that increase their risk for severe illness." One of those factors is being a minority, according to the guidelines.

## LEXUS BRINGS NEXT CHAPTER OF BRAND TO LIFE WITH ALL-NEW LEXUS NX



*In an effort to meet the growing and diverse aspirations of discerning drivers in Kuwait, Lexus has announced the launch of the all-new Lexus NX. The second generation of the luxury mid-size crossover further raises the bar for performance, comfort, and safety to redefine the segment, and opens the next chapter for the Lexus brand.*

With the launch of the first-generation RX in 1998, Lexus created a new category of luxury crossover and has been a leader in the realm ever since. In 2014, Lexus launched the NX, which was well received by customers, thanks to its agile driving performance and powerful design, and has gone on to sell over one million units in more than 90 countries across the globe.

The all-new Lexus NX heralds new directions in exterior and interior design and comes with a new electrified powertrain, bringing a quantum leap in dynamic performance to deliver a more rewarding connection between driver and machine with the Lexus Driving Signature. The introduction of the model also marks the debut of a brand-new multimedia platform that takes connectivity, information, and convenience to the next level.

In addition, the all-new vehicle benefits from the expansion of the scope and functionality of the next-generation Lexus Safety System+ to help guard against an even wider range of accident risks and bring greater peace of mind to drivers in the region.

Takeaki Kato, the NX Chief Engineer, explains: "For this project, we ensured quality by implementing 'digital development' to evaluate the design structure under various conditions using computer models. Professional racing drivers also conducted test drives at the Shimoyama test course to thoroughly train the vehicle's body structure and inherit and evolve the Lexus driving flavor. We have redefined the ideal cockpit space as the contact point between the driver and vehicle, aiming for a design that enables a deeper, more intuitive connection and allows for more precise control of the vehicle. All of this has been done with the full force of our team working together for the smiles of our customers, who we hope will be inspired by the passion that was poured into delivering this exceptional vehicle."

Kei Fujita, Chief Representative, Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "We are thrilled to launch the all-new Lexus NX in the region, announcing the beginning of Lexus' next chapter of excellence. The vehicle is designed to meet the diverse lifestyles of our Middle East customers with a comprehensive upgrade and complete renewal of the model's key strengths. The introduction of the electrified model, which is also a prominent feature of our upcoming model lineup, underlines Lexus' commitment to promoting the realization of a carbon-neutral society."

Fujita continued: "The sophisticated new design and enhanced driving performance add to NX's appeal, while a wealth of new technologies ensures every journey is safer, more connected, and more enjoyable. I'd like to thank our loyal customers in the region for continually inspiring us as we strive to create amazing experiences by transforming performance into passion and technology into imagination."

The next chapter for Lexus centers around four pillars, namely Design, Lexus Driving Signature,

**"Introduction of new hybrid-electric model accelerates the rollout of electrified vehicles to realize a carbon-neutral society,"**

**"New Lexus-first 14-inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ compatibility,"**

Electrification, and Advanced Technology. The all-new NX plays a key role in leading the brand forward by embodying all of these aspects:

- The NX has been redesigned from the inside out. Every exterior surface has been reimaged. The signature spindle grille has been refined in the front. And, the most notable expression of future Lexus design is the elegant new block LEXUS rear badging and full-width tail lamp.

- Lexus Driving Signature results from an entirely original approach to vehicle development. This ensures a uniquely Lexus experience where each vehicle exhibits a direct, linear driving feel that is consistent across the lineup.

- For the second-generation NX, Lexus doubles down with an additional electrified option, a 2.5-liter hybrid electric powertrain.

- Advanced Technology abounds in the all-new NX. Drivers can stay in touch with the intuitive features of Lexus Interface, such as wireless Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™. At the same time, occupants enjoy greater peace of mind, thanks to class-leading safety features such as the Lexus Safety System+.

The all-new Lexus NX is built on Lexus' Global Architecture K (GA-K) platform, which guarantees a more rewarding driving experience. A low center of gravity and new front MacPherson strut suspension system, which features double wishbones with trailing arms at the rear, contribute to the vehicle's outstanding stability and handling to create exceptional ride comfort.

The hallmark Lexus spindle grille at the front of the vehicle plays an integral role in its design, with an upright position that dispenses with its chrome frame. Smooth lines flow back to accentuate the long bonnet, adding form and volume to the body as it flares broadly through to the muscular rear wings. The front design features four projector LED headlights incorporating Lexus' first slim Adaptive High-beam System (AHS). In contrast, the L-shaped daytime running lights positioned above the headlights have a fade-out function when the driver activates the indicators. The long front-end contrasts with a condensed rear section that is distinguished by new L-shaped all-LED light clusters and Lexus' signature blade lighting in a bar spanning the vehicle's width. On the tailgate, the Lexus emblem has been replaced with the 'LEXUS' name to create a modern, simple look that further strengthens the vehicle's visual identity.

The all-new NX is the first model to feature Lexus' Tazuna concept for the driver's cockpit, an approach that was initially revealed in the Lexus LF-30 electrified concept car. Taking its name from a Japanese word describing a rider's use of the reins to control a horse, Tazuna focuses on delivering direct, intuitive control of the vehicle by following the principle of "hands on the wheel, eyes on the road." It also raises the quality of the driving experience by making the driver feel confident and in command of their vehicle and surroundings. To help keep the driver's attention focused on the road ahead, the multi-information display (MID), multimedia screen, gauges, and meters are grouped so they can be easily read at a glance.

The steering wheel features a modern design that will be adopted on other new-generation Lexus models and

has been precision engineered by Takumi craftspeople to provide the best grip feel and enhance the driver's feeling of control and connection with the car. The shift lever was made as compact as possible, while fitting snugly in the hand at an ideal angle. While the driver experiences the focused, engaging environment created by the new Tazuna cockpit design, passengers enjoy a greater sense of space with elevated levels of comfort, quality, and attention to detail that are quintessentially Lexus, evoking the feeling of a luxurious lounge.

Inside, drivers can create an oasis with nature-inspired Thematic Ambient Illumination, an optional feature that bathes the NX interior in a choice of 14 themes. Each theme has been carefully selected to express a full range of emotions and evoke a feeling of comfort, with themes including Rain Forest, Waterfall, and Sunset. In addition, there are 64 different ambient lighting colors to choose from.

The all-new NX's inviting interior lets drivers and passengers enjoy a host of advanced features for a refined cabin experience. These include a new 14-inch touchscreen multimedia system – a Lexus first – that is compatible with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™, a 7-inch color multi-information display (MID), a wireless charging system for smartphones, and a Climate Concierge to ensure the cabin temperature is precisely adjusted to suit each occupant. The system uses S-Flow control to recognize which seats are occupied and directs heating or cooling performance accordingly, while taking into account the temperature setting, cabin temperature, ambient temperature, and the effect of sunlight through the windows.

The vehicle also offers SmartAccess with a push-button start. It comes complete with an 8-way adjustable power driver seat, as well as ample luggage space, thanks to the 60:40 split-folding rear seats. Additionally, the 2022 Lexus NX adds the convenience of an electrically powered backdoor.

Complementing the all-new NX's distinctive design is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options. A newly developed inline 4-cylinder, 2.4 L turbocharged engine that produces 275 hp and 430 nm of torque is mated to a new 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission (8AT). Meanwhile, the new hybrid-electric system combines two power sources consisting of a 2.5-liter petrol engine and two electric motors producing a combined power of 239 hp and can deliver 239 nm and 391 nm of torque, respectively. The hybrid-electric system is also mated to a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) that provides the lowest fuel consumption value of 21.5 km/L while delivering a new level of driving pleasure.

The all-new Lexus NX hybrid-electric model can be driven entirely on electrical power with zero fuel consumption and tailpipe emissions, or by combining the power generated from both the petrol engine and two electric motors, depending on the vehicle's speed and customer's driving behavior. Its hybrid-electric batteries are continuously charged by either the petrol engine or when decelerating and braking, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord. A host of advanced technologies ensure the hybrid-electric model drives like any other conventional vehicle and does not require special fuel.

As with any Lexus vehicle, safety is a top priority for the all-new Lexus NX. Drivers can enjoy complete

**"Second generation of the mid-size luxury crossover heralds pioneering new directions in exterior and interior design,"**

**"Vehicle incorporates state-of-the-art technologies, including the latest Lexus Safety System+ for greater peace of mind,"**

peace of mind, thanks to the Lexus Safety System+, which is an advanced safety and driver assistance system that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS) with new features and expanded detection range, Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB), Emergency Steering Assist (ESA).

The system also includes all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) with two new features, namely the Turn Signal Control (TSC) that makes highway overtaking safer and smoother by providing an initial increase in acceleration when the driver has engaged the turn signal, and the Curve Speed Reduction (RSR) that suppresses vehicle speed when entering a bend and offers additional acceleration upon exiting the bend. Drivers also benefit from Lane Tracing Alert (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), Advanced Driver Assistance (ADAS), and Adaptive High-beam System (AHB).

In another world-first, the new Safe Exit Assist (SEA) feature uses the Lexus-first e-latch system combined with a Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) to help prevent accidents. The system works by detecting traffic or cyclists approaching from the rear and automatically cancels door opening if an occupant tries to open the door to avoid a collision. The vehicle also includes comprehensive safety features designed to protect its occupants, Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Traction Control (TRC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Parking Assist Monitor (PAM), Rear Cross-Traffic Alert (RCTA), Active Cornering Assist (ACA), Drive-Start Control (DSC), Panoramic View Monitor (PVM), and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), among many others.

Further adding to its stylish visual appeal, the 2022 Lexus NX comes in a refined range of color options that allow discerning owners to customize their vehicles according to their tastes.

Customers can choose from nine distinctive exterior colors, including two new colors, namely Sonic Chrome and Madder Red. Meanwhile, the interior comes in four elegant colors, including brand-new Black & Rich Cream and Hazel options, together with Dark Rose and Black. Three newly developed wheel designs have also been introduced in 20-inch size to further express the driving feel pursued by the Lexus brand.

For those seeking to experience the ultimate in thrilling responsiveness, the all-new NX is also available in an F Sport version. Engineered for exhilaration, the F brand DNA has trickled down from the legendary LFA, which represents the pinnacle of refined performance. The NX F Sport model boasts exclusive interior and exterior features, including a distinctive 'F' mesh-pattern grille in Piano Black, new front and rear bumper designs with larger side vents cut into the front bumper, black roof rails, and 20-inch alloy wheels with a 10-spoke design inspired by the wheels used on Lexus' LC flagship coupe. The cabin comes with Dark Spin Aluminum ornamentation, a unique meter, bolstered sport seats, a newly developed steering wheel, and aluminum pedals and scuff plates. Owners can choose from a range of ten exterior colors that emphasize the vehicle's sportiness, including two that are exclusive to the NX F Sport model, namely Heat Blue CL and White Nova GF. The interior is available in Flare Red, White, and Black variants.