

COMPASS

CENTER ON MEDICAL PRODUCT ACCESS, SAFETY, AND STEWARDSHIP

People throughout the world need access to lifesaving drugs, vaccines, and medical devices whether to prevent or treat chronic illnesses, or to respond to the latest public health threat or outbreak, a future influenza or other pandemic, or the increasing problem of drug-resistant infections. Not only is access critical, but people everywhere rightfully expect high standards of safety and effectiveness and clear communication of what is and is not known about benefits and potential risks.

Solutions to these challenges cannot come from one group alone, but require collaboration across disciplines—from the medical, behavioral, communications and social sciences to law and foreign relations—and across sectors—from academia to governments to manufacturers and health systems and the public.

The Center on Medical Product Access, Safety and Stewardship (COMPASS) is uniquely situated to bring experts and decision makers together to find solutions. COMPASS marshals the resources of a renowned university in the heart of the nation's capital to convene partners to address pressing challenges in novel ways.

At COMPASS we are committed to partnership and to agile, multidisciplinary solutions that have real world impact.

OUR MISSION

COMPASS works across disciplines to develop innovative solutions for safe, effective, and trusted medical products that address the world's pressing public health challenges.

OUR ONGOING WORK

Expert Vaccine Analysis Team (EVAT)

Founded in 2019 as the COVID Vaccine Analysis Team (COVAT) to provide facts and independent analysis on the emerging COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on issues surrounding rapid development and testing of new vaccines, the group hosted more than 50 journalist briefings and Q&A sessions, connecting communicators with independent scientists, including former leading government and industry vaccine experts.

In 2025, COVAT was reconstituted as the Expert Vaccine Analysis Team (EVAT) to meet an emerging set of urgent challenges: escalating vaccine misinformation, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, and the erosion of trust in institutions and public health, accompanied by inconsistent, at times inaccurate, government messaging and information. Today, EVAT provides facts and rapid analysis on emerging vaccine and outbreak issues to journalists, science writers, and public health communicators,

helping people make better informed decisions that keep them and their communities safer and healthier.

EVAT members include former FDA, CDC, and HHS leaders, academicians, and policy experts with extensive expertise in vaccine science, immunization, medicine, communications, and public health.

PRIOR PROJECTS

National Capital ROAR Coalition

Antimicrobial resistance is one of our most pressing public health threats. In an increasingly interconnected world, resistant organisms flow continuously across borders and through communities. Individual hospitals cannot address this challenge alone. COMPASS founded and led the Region Organized Against Resistance (ROAR), a coalition of health care and public health organizations in the National Capital Region dedicated to combating antibiotic resistance through sharing data and best practices at a regional level.

Assessment of Antibiotic Stewardship Efforts in Long-term Care Facilities

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics in nursing homes is a major factor driving resistance and affecting patients. Up to 70% of nursing home residents receive one or more courses of antibiotics in a year, and studies suggest that 40–75% of these prescriptions are inappropriate or unneeded.

To learn more about what DC's nursing homes were doing and what kind of support they might need to monitor and prevent antimicrobial resistance, COMPASS and the National Capital ROAR Coalition partnered with the DC Department of Health to assess infection prevention and control and antibiotic use practices in DC's skilled nursing facilities. COMPASS developed a

site visit tool and visited facilities to talk with staff members who do this work day-to-day. This in depth and in-person approach allowed a better understanding of the realities and challenges nursing homes face, and how to address them.

Antibiotic Resistance Global Mapping

Despite increasing surveillance efforts, there are major gaps in our understanding of antimicrobial resistance rates and trends worldwide, particularly in geographic areas with weak public health and medical infrastructures. COMPASS was supported by the Armed Forces Health Surveillance system in a multi-year effort to map the prevalence of Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae in Africa and Southeast Asia. This project comprehensively mined diverse sources for relevant data, including surveillance and scientific literature, and data not included in typical analyses, such as open-source data and information from laboratories and health care facilities. Results of the analyses and mapping of these data have been widely shared in publications and publicly available databases.

RESOURCES

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