

*CBS Evening News with Tony Dokoupil*

08/11/26

6:41:48 p.m.

2 minutes and 52 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Fauci Private COVID-Era Texts Revealed]

TONY DOKOUPIL: We turn now to new developments in those two Republican-led Senate investigations into Dr. Anthony Fauci and his handling of the COVID pandemic. Text messages from Fauci's government-issued cell phone turned over to investigators and just released offer a rare window into the private conversations of our public health leaders at the height of the crisis and on an issue of maximum public concern: Was it safe for pregnant women to take the vaccine? In the messages, Dr. Fauci acknowledged the lack of data and a concern that since many people experienced a fever after the second vaccine dose, it "theoretically could be associated with miscarriage in the 1st trimester." Just days later, in a public conversation, he didn't mention that theoretical risk, and though he advised caution, he cited no red flags at that time, based on about 10,000 pregnant women who were being tracked. The point of going over this again is not to look back with 20/20 hindsight, but to consider what disclosures like these mean for the public's trust in the health recommendations we all rely on. To talk about this and the state of the science today, we have Dr. Serena Chan, an OB-GYN and Director of Advocacy at CCRM, Fertility of New Jersey. Dr. Chen, thank you very much for joining us. Dr. Fauci has declined to comment on these messages. When you read them, what do you make of it?

DR. SERENA CHEN: So, I see somebody who is an expert, a global expert in infectious diseases, looking at data, and having a conversation with other expert colleagues about what is going on. He's got to make a big decision, and he has to look at everything, and perfectly reasonable to look at possible concerns. Ultimately, though, when you look at the data, the risks and the benefits were really clear at the time.

DOKOUPIL: The reason people react to this is because there appears to be this gap between what's being said in private with all this uncertainty and doubt and then what's being said in public. How do you read that?

CHEN: I think that what he said in public, ultimately, obviously, is the right thing. This is our recommendation today that all pregnant women should get the COVID vaccine every year, and the flu vaccine, because we still know, as he knew then, that the risks of COVID are so much higher than the vaccine, even though there may have been some concerns about fever.

DOKOUPIL: The recommendation today is what?

CHEN: To get the vaccine absolutely. If you're pregnant, you are more vulnerable. You're much more likely to get a serious complication or even have a higher rate of death from COVID or the flu and those vaccines are really critical to protecting you and your baby.

DOKOUPIL: Dr. Chen, thank you very much.

CHEN: Thanks for having me.