

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 1, 2021

Governor Tom Wolf
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Governor Wolf:

Over the past several weeks, we have heard from our communities about the struggles and frustrations they are feeling as our Commonwealth navigates the COVID-19 vaccination process. We appreciate your efforts to communicate with lawmakers at all levels of government to discuss the challenges the Commonwealth is facing and your Administration's plans to accelerate vaccine deployment. Although we are making some progress vaccinating the 1A population, a lot of obstacles and questions remain, especially for those not in the 1A population.

We understand that former Secretary Alex Azar's choice, in the waning days of the Trump Administration, to include those 65 years and older in the Federal government's 1A guidance dramatically increased the size of Pennsylvania's 1A population. Approximately 4 million Pennsylvanians will require 8 million doses just to vaccinate our 1A population. We have been pushing the Biden Administration to increase the Federal allocation for Pennsylvania and will continue to do so, especially with a new vaccine coming online in the coming weeks.

As Pennsylvania struggles to meet demand for vaccines from the 1A population, we are also hearing from individuals in the 1B population that they are concerned it will be months before a vaccine becomes available to them. Our educators and school staff are dedicated to providing high-quality instruction to our students during this difficult time. Expediting educators' timeline for vaccine eligibility will enable them to better plan for their future curriculum and support their students' learning. Getting our children safely back into the classroom would have myriad benefits – not only alleviating many pressures on working families and allowing people to return to work but also beginning to reverse the toll that the pandemic has taken on students' educational outcomes and mental health.

We ask that you and your team begin the process of planning for 1B vaccination now, in parallel with continuing to improve and augment the 1A rollout, so that teachers and other frontline workers can have more certainty about how and when they will be able to be vaccinated. We encourage you to ensure that representatives from these essential worker groups have a seat at the table for all planning, so that they can communicate directly with your team about what approaches will work best for them, and as a result for our children and families. For example, vaccinating educators and school staff in a centralized location, such as at a school, would likely help improve vaccine uptake.

We also ask that you explore adopting best practices from other states and jurisdictions that might speed up vaccine deployment. This could include utilizing the National Guard – with their strong capacity for logistics – or working with the Federal government to open mass vaccination opportunities as more doses become available. We will continue to advocate for additional Federal funding for Pennsylvania as well as an increased allocation of vaccines, and we stand ready to work with you in any way we can to accelerate vaccine deployment to both the 1A and 1B populations.

Thank you for your consideration of our views and your leadership during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress