



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

January 4, 2021

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States
The White House
Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President Pence:

The largest vaccination campaign in recent history is underway in New York City and New York State, as we make the final push in the battle against COVID-19. But the speed and success of these efforts depend on seamless, coordinated delivery of this life-saving resource at every level of government. To ensure as many New Yorkers as possible can quickly receive this safe, easy, and free vaccine, we must work together every step of the way.

In New York City, we're currently vaccinating healthcare workers and the staff and residents of long-term care facilities, who have been on the frontlines of responding to COVID-19 since day one and are the most at risk. We've administered more than 100,000 doses, but that's not fast enough.

At this critical moment, we are calling upon the federal government to:

- 1. Support increased speed of vaccine manufacturing** to increase overall supply, by pre-purchasing additional doses, invoking the Defense Production Act, and partnering with additional distributors and deliverers.
- 2. Allocate additional vaccine doses to New York City and other commuter jurisdictions who are vaccinating more than their residents**—Vaccine doses are currently allocated pro-rata based on resident population, but New York City is appropriately vaccinating all eligible populations who work in the city at our health facilities and elsewhere, including residents of New Jersey and Connecticut who work in the city. This is true of other commuter jurisdictions, like the Capitol Region, where doses are not being restricted based on home address.

New York City is well-positioned to efficiently vaccinate eligible populations and should be allocated an equitable share of doses to continue quickly vaccinating all eligible people in New York City under CDC and State guidelines.

- 3. Provide greater advance notice of dose allocation quantity and delivery schedule for planning purposes**—Effectively scheduling and planning for large-scale vaccinations requires careful planning and coordination at every level of government, as well as with private partners and healthcare networks. To plan ahead, we need information in advance on the quantity of doses and schedule for delivery so that we can help prepare community providers to be ready to vaccinate once they receive doses, and to conduct the strategic outreach with communities necessary to build trust.
- 4. Accelerate the dissemination of vaccine through coordinated pharmacy distribution**—Encourage partner retail pharmacies to increase pace of vaccination through the CDC Long-Term Care Facility Pharmacy Program and ensure that they are vaccinating seven days a week, including holidays. Only 11,000 people in this high-risk population have received the vaccine - the federal government must encourage and support this round-the-clock commitment. The CDC should also immediately expand its National Pharmacy Program, which would help prepare the pharmacy networks we will count on nationwide to mobilize vaccination of millions of individuals when the time comes.
- 5. Incentivize and support providers through technical assistance and financial support**—to carry vaccines and conduct patient follow-up to ensure vaccine protocol compliance. This can include increasing reimbursement rates for vaccination given the 2-dose protocol and the newness of the vaccine, which requires greater patient consultation and monitoring for adverse reactions.
- 6. FDA approval to pre-fill syringes with vaccine**—The current Emergency Use Authorization for the vaccine does not permit syringes of reconstituted vaccine to be drawn and prepared in advance, even if used within the appropriate time windows, to rapidly vaccinate multiple individuals. If multiple doses could be drawn by the pharmacist and given to a nurse to administer ahead of time, the pace of vaccinations could increase, as would the savings of staff time. This small change would make a big difference for vaccinators across settings, including hospitals, urgent care sites, FQHCs, and more, empowering experienced staff to speed up their work.

We share the goals of vaccinating as many Americans as possible and beating back Covid-19, and stand ready to work with you in accelerating the pace of both. We urge you to swiftly adopt these proposals so we can complete our city and nation's recovery.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio
Mayor

cc: Alex Azar, Secretary of Health and Human Services
Robert Redfield, Director of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention