



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

January 4, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

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 a seamless, coordinated rollout of this life-saving resource at every level of government. To ensure as many New Yorkers as possible can quickly access this safe, easy, and free vaccine, we must work together every step of the way.

In New York City, where 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. We know the CDC is setting the guidelines, and we are following your lead on how to implement those guidelines here, but we can mobilize a massive scaling-up to do more, faster, if the State takes a few key, decisive actions.

We need more advanced notice right now on upcoming eligible populations, so we can do the large-scale planning and outreach needed for a quick ramp-up, including preparing providers citywide. That means knowing sooner who the State says can get the vaccine and when, so we can make sure people know how they can get it and have places to go for it. This requires careful planning – and there is no time to waste.

We are requesting that the State immediately provide clear guidance to open eligibility for all:

- Phase 1a healthcare workers
- Phase 1b populations
- And activate the CDC national COVID-19 vaccination pharmacy program to enable pharmacies to administer the vaccine, along with other private and public providers to ensure equitable access.

In simple terms, that means expanding eligibility immediately from one million to more than two million New Yorkers, helping get more shots more quickly to vulnerable seniors citywide and a

range of hometown heroes who have been on the frontlines of this crisis since the beginning, and who we continue to count on every day, such as:

- **Teachers and school nurses, who teach and protect our kids**
- **Transit workers, who drive our City and keep our economy running**
- **Food and agriculture workers and grocery store workers, whose work helped to feed New York throughout this crisis**
- **Emergency responders, who save lives every day**
- **Health staff and staff at local outpatient care providers, who care for patients around the clock in communities across our City**
- **NYPD officers who respond to all sorts of medical emergencies.**

We can begin getting these essential workers the vaccines they need and deserve now if our providers know they have clear guidelines and certain permission to really start delivering them to every eligible person who seeks them.

The stakes are high. Flexibility, clear long-term planning guidance now, and more advanced notice ahead of key junctures, including specific population guidance, will enable us to plan ahead for how to most effectively match vaccine doses with demand. This includes preparing providers to receive and be ready to administer the vaccine by giving them specific timing guidance – and helping connect them with eligible populations. It will also help us reach those who will soon be eligible for the vaccine, including by building vital outreach efforts. Each of these pieces is crucial – and we must do everything we can to make sure they work seamlessly together.

New York City stands ready to lead in this historic effort, and we're mobilizing an all-hands-on-deck effort to do so. Our New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has decades of experience administering safe and ambitious immunization campaigns and is equipped to oversee a safe and successful COVID-19 vaccination effort in partnership with New York State. We share the goals of equitable access for populations hardest hit by the pandemic and we're prepared to deliver on that promise, so we can complete our City's recovery. These important State actions would help achieve it.

Sincerely,



Bill de Blasio
Mayor