

February 15, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The nation's Governors again congratulate you on your victory and look forward to a working partnership as we battle these difficult times together. We thank you for the coordination that your team has already extended to the Governors. We are the front line in the battle against COVID-19 and we will only succeed if we work together.

We have two immediate issues of concern. First, we believe it is essential that the American people understand the vaccine distribution process and the extent of the effort that governments on both the federal and state level are extending. There has been an ongoing issue since last year with which we would ask your assistance. Due to the anxiety created by the demand and supply of the vaccine, it is imperative that the American people fully understand the process.

Currently the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides public information on a state and territory level as to the number of vaccines distributed to each state and the number of vaccinations performed. The CDC reporting mechanism has created unnecessary confusion. We would ask that the CDC reporting accurately reflects the reality.

The vaccine is delivered and administered through several different programs. By one program, the federal government administers a program in which it contracts with private pharmacies for vaccinations in nursing homes and long-term care facilities (LTCF program). The program is not controlled by the states. Your Administration has started a new federal program to directly deliver vaccines to certain pharmacies in our states the federal government selects. Your Administration has also announced another new federal program whereby the federal government will directly distribute to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) that it selects. These are three separate federal efforts beyond our control.

State and territorial governments then receive vaccine allocations for "first doses" and "second doses" from the federal government. We appreciate transparency, accountability and our responsibility for the administration of the first and second doses. However, the federal LTCF program, federal pharmacy program and the federal FQHC program, are federally administered and beyond the states' control.

We believe it is important that the CDC in its reporting distinguish between these separate efforts to avoid confusion and provide a clear understanding to the American people. States also need visibility into the federal vaccination efforts at the facility level happening in our borders.

Second, we believe that federal decisions to use pharmacies and FQHCs should be coordinated with state governments. States also allocate doses often to these same pharmacies and FQHCs. We understand the capacity of the individual entities and we know the range of the individual entities throughout and their inventory. As usual, some pharmacies and FQHCs are better suited for the task than others. Following the performance data on these entities is essential. We also know the need in the respective communities they serve and other efforts in the geographic vicinity. If the federal government distributes independently of the states to these same entities without state coordination and consultation, redundancy and inefficiency may very well follow.

We are most appreciative of our relationship with your administration and Mr. Jeff Zients in particular, who has been doing great work, and we look forward to working through these issues in a mutually productive manner. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,



Governor Andrew Cuomo, New York  
Chairman



Governor Asa Hutchinson, Arkansas  
Vice Chairman



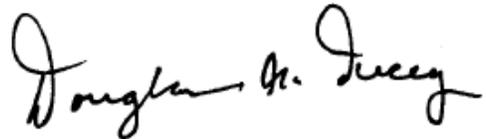
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Member, NGA Executive Committee



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