



February 8, 2021

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Governor of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

Thank you for your continued collaboration and support throughout the ongoing COVID-19 global health pandemic that has upended the lives and livelihoods of every Marylander. All of us as elected officials, regardless of political affiliation, share the same goal of vaccinating as many Marylanders as quickly and efficiently as possible with the hope of some return to normalcy as soon as possible.

Counties and their health departments are experiencing similar challenges as we seek to coordinate the vaccine distribution efforts. Below are some suggestions that we believe will make the process simpler, faster, and more user-friendly for residents.

1. Share weekly vaccine allocation projections with the public and release them sooner.

Each week, Maryland Department of Health sends its vaccine allocation plan to a limited list of providers with a warning that it should not be read by any individuals not on the distribution list. Last week, the notice was sent on the Friday before the week of the allocation, and the week before that it was sent Saturday at 8pm.

Providers need more advance notice to plan logistics, and the public deserves to know how many doses each local provider has available.

2. Demonstrate that counties are receiving their share of doses by publishing private provider allocations by distribution site.

Weekly allocation memoranda from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) state that allocations are based on county population, but no data is provided by location for pharmacy chains. Limited data on location is provided for hospital systems. Our residents and our local health departments want to know where doses will be administered and how many.

3. Fulfill local health department weekly requests before allocating doses to private providers or state sites.

Local health departments submit requests for doses each week to the MDH based on the capacity they have built with taxpayer dollars. Diverting doses to private providers and new state-run sites leaves that publicly funded capacity underutilized.

Local health departments have consistently outperformed private providers in both the speed and the targeting of vaccinations to under-served and vulnerable communities.

4. Allow Local Health Departments to operate one-stop pre-registration, or create a statewide system.

Many counties set up their own pre-registration sites from which they invite people to schedule appointments according to state and CDC priority, as vaccines are made available. It is an orderly process that can serve not only the health department vaccination clinics, but also the private providers. A centralized pre-registration system simplifies what is currently a frantic race by residents to register through multiple provider sites. A viable alternative to a centralized system in each county would be a statewide system.

5. Expedite the release of \$400 million in federal vaccination, testing, contact tracing, and COVID mitigation funds. Prioritize direct grants to Local Health Departments.

Most counties have increased support to our health departments, despite budget challenges. Congress made the decision to direct all local health department funding in its most recent relief funding through states. We hope that the funds move to the local level quickly.

Counties stand ready as a partner and resource for the all-important goal of vaccinating Marylanders. We thank you for your consideration of these suggestions and invite you to engage with the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) on our behalf to discuss these suggestions further.


Respectfully,




Wilbur Levengood
President, MACo
Commissioner, Caroline County

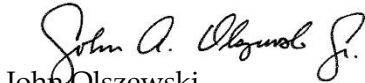


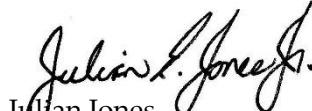
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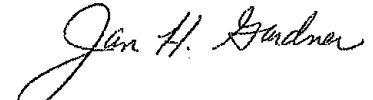

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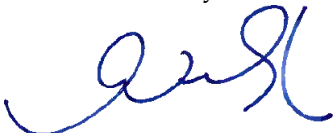

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