



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

February 22, 2021

Marylou Sudders, Secretary
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

RE: COVID-19 Vaccinations in Local Communities

Dear Secretary Sudders:

We write today to echo the concerns and frustrations of our local boards of health and emergency personnel. As we approach the one-year mark since the Commonwealth of Massachusetts declared a State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our municipalities and its citizens have pivoted on numerous occasions from the old ways of conducting business to new methodologies.

One example of these pivotal moments includes the fast-tracking of a vaccine to fight this insidious virus. Without a doubt, the roll-out of the vaccine to inoculate millions of individuals has been a disgrace. Moreover, our local health department officials and emergency personnel have pivoted quickly to address this historic and herculean task, notwithstanding the slow supply chain. As part of their emergency preparedness, our local emergency service providers have standard operating procedures already in place. Many of our municipalities have expended valuable time and resources, establishing vaccination protocols.

However, with Tuesday's new directive from your office that the Commonwealth will no longer provide first dose COVID-19 vaccines to individual municipalities, the Baker Administration is jettisoning months of planning, innovation and execution that has been completed by our local boards of health and emergency personnel. Our municipalities stand ready, willing and able to assist their communities in the ongoing fight against COVID-19. To say that we are all frustrated with this new directive is an understatement.

Additionally, we write to serve as a voice for our at-risk residents. Tuesday's directive now places many of our most vulnerable citizens in a perilous situation. Specifically, the mass vaccination sites are not easily accessible to many individuals. Many citizens of our Commonwealth do not have access to, or properly know how to, navigate the appointment registration process. For those that are able to access the site, they are hindered by a system that repeatedly crashes. Finally, if they are able to navigate the website and secure an appointment, their next hurdle is to determine how that they will secure transportation to the mass vaccination site. Many of our constituents, especially our seniors, do not have access to safe and reliable transportation.

The infrastructure and protocols that have been established at the municipal level by our emergency personnel, boards of health and local officials must be utilized. Our municipalities should be empowered to be able to directly administer vaccines to our residents at the local level. To echo the sentiments of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts, "the locals know the locals best".

We have seen the success first-hand that localities have had in immunizing high-risk individuals in their communities. It is vitally important that the government of the Commonwealth work closely with local municipalities for the care and protection of the citizens of Massachusetts. Let our communities continue to take care of their residents.

Sincerely,



Senator Walter F. Timilty
Norfolk, Bristol and Plymouth

Senator Michael D. Brady
Second Plymouth and Bristol

Senator John J. Cronin
Worcester and Middlesex

Senator Diana DiZoglio
First Essex

Senator James B. Eldridge
Middlesex and Worcester

Senator Ryan Fattman
Worcester and Norfolk

Senator Anne Gobi
Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex

Senator Adam Gomez
Hampden

Senator Edward Kennedy
First Middlesex

Senator Jason M. Lewis
Fifth Middlesex

Senator Joan B. Lovely
Second Essex

Senator Michael O. Moore
Second Worcester

Senator Susan Moran
Plymouth and Barnstable

Senator Marc R. Pacheco
First Plymouth and Bristol

Senator Michael Rush
Norfolk and Suffolk

Senator John Velis
Second Hampden and Hampshire

Representative Bruce J. Ayers
1st Norfolk

Representative Christine Barber
34th Middlesex

Representative Peter Capano
11th Essex

Representative Mark J. Cusack
5th Norfolk

Representative Josh S. Cutler
6th Plymouth

Representative David F. DeCoste
5th Plymouth

Representative Marcos A. Devers
16th Essex

Representative Carol Doherty
3rd Bristol

Representative Nika Elugardo
15th Suffolk and Norfolk

Representative William C. Galvin
6th Norfolk

Representative Carlos Gonzalez
10th Hampden

Representative Christopher Hendricks
11th Bristol

Representative Brad Jones
20th Middlesex

Representative Meghan K. Kilcoyne
12th Worcester

Representative Joan Meschino
3rd Plymouth

Representative Tram T. Nguyen
18th Essex

Representative Edward R. Philips
8th Norfolk

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa
1st Hampshire

Representative Dan Sena
37th Middlesex

Representative Alyson M. Sullivan
7th Plymouth

Representative Steven G. Xiarhos
5th Barnstable

Representative Lori Ehrlich
8th Essex

Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley
12th Suffolk

Representative Susan Gifford
2nd Plymouth

Representative Danielle Gregoire
4th Middlesex

Representative Vanna Howard
17th Middlesex

Representative Sally Kearns
13th Essex

Representative Kathleen LaNatra
12th Plymouth

Representative Brian W. Murray
10th Worcester

Representative Steve Owens
29th Middlesex

Representative Jeffrey N. Roy
10th Norfolk

Representative Paul A. Schmid III
8th Bristol

Representative William R. Strauss
10th Bristol

Representative Thomas P. Walsh
12th Essex

cc: Governor Charles D. Baker
Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito