

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2021

The Honorable Norris Cochran
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable David Norquist
Acting Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense, Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Acting Secretary Cochran and Acting Secretary Norquist,

Thank you for your leadership as our country works to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the establishment of Operation Warp Speed, we have seen a historic public-private partnership to create multiple COVID-19 vaccines in a matter of months. We support your work to quickly distribute these vaccines across the nation to help save lives and return to normalcy. We look forward to the additional vaccines being shipped to states as early as next week. As you may know, our state of West Virginia has led the nation in distribution of COVID-19 vaccines and seeks to continue this effort.

As of January 26, 2021, the State of West Virginia's first dose vaccination administration rate was 94.1%. This makes West Virginia's vaccine administration rate one of the highest in the nation. West Virginia has administered 169,227 first doses of the vaccine and 43,648 second doses, totaling 212,875 doses administered statewide. Governor Justice has announced future vaccination clinics across the state to ensure our aging population and frontline workers can easily access the vaccine. While many states work to increase their rate of vaccination, West Virginia estimates it can administer up to 125,000 vaccines a week, far above its current weekly allocation of roughly 24,000 vaccine doses.

West Virginia has the third highest rate of people over 65 years of age, and the highest rate of persons at-risk of complications from COVID-19 infection. This rate of at-risk persons makes it imperative that West Virginia be prioritized for future vaccine allocations. By prioritizing vaccine doses to states most at need and ready to use them, we can ensure that no vaccine expires before use. While previous allocations relied solely on a pro rata population formula, we feel this needs to be adjusted to better reflect the phases of vaccine administration. West Virginia has a higher rate of our population eligible for vaccination under the first phase than any other state. This coupled with West Virginia's successful vaccination administration, supports the need for more vaccine doses to the state.

Prioritizing vaccine doses to states with at-risk populations and most ready to use the vaccines, such as West Virginia, will help improve the health of our state's residents and the nation as a whole. While you work to improve our vaccine supply chain and manufacturing, we urge you to focus future allocations on states with the highest need and most ready to use the vaccine, so no vaccine doses expire. Thank you for your consideration of this request and your tireless work to keep Americans safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



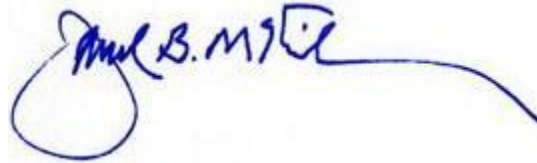
Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Shelly Moore Capito
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress