

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 22, 2021

Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Dear Governor DeSantis:

We write to share serious concerns about the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in Florida:

- The CDC recently reported over 1 million unused vaccines “on hold” in our state, demonstrating that even though we need more vaccine doses from the Federal government, more can be done to expeditiously administer the vaccines we do receive.
- Public messaging about vaccine distribution and availability has been confusing, misleading, and is creating a perception of unfairness and political motivation.
- Health agencies, hospitals, and other providers are not getting timely updates about vaccine allocation, forcing them to conserve supplies for the following week’s appointments that could otherwise be administered.
- Many healthcare providers administering vaccines do not have the technology infrastructure to schedule appointments in the absence of state support.
- Most private physicians who have registered through Florida SHOTS are not receiving vaccines but have become aware that certain concierge doctors have received allotment.
- Religious centers, homeowners’ associations, and other community organizations eager to participate in the administration of vaccines have not received information on how to do so.
- The state has not been transparent about its distribution plan. Despite publishing a preliminary plan in October of 2020, the state has not shared written updates to the plan. Florida Surgeon General Scott Rivkees recently made public statements indicating that the department is relying on your December 23, 2020 Executive Order, which merely lists three priority categories and does not lay out a comprehensive distribution strategy.

Based on these concerns we urge you to consider the following:

1. **Improve communication to local public health agencies and providers.**
Make all vaccine allotment information transparent and immediately accessible to all county health directors. This information is central to more efficiently administering vaccines and evaluating gaps in distribution that could disadvantage vulnerable and underserved communities.
2. **Provide more robust and consistent vaccine information to the public.**
Deploy public service announcements, including for non-English speakers, to ensure all Floridians have access to important information about the vaccine, including where and to whom doses are being allocated. Provide community health centers, independent

pharmacies, homeowner's associations, religious centers, and other community organizations with clear guidance on the process for developing vaccine distribution partnerships. We stand ready to assist you in disseminating this information.

3. Support public health agencies and other providers with technology solutions.

Deliver technological guidance and support, as needed, to entities assisting with vaccine distribution to overcome the challenges we have seen with websites and phone lines crashing from surges in vaccine-related inquiries and scheduling.

We appreciated meeting with Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz recently to discuss how we can best assist the state with vaccine distribution and encourage you to make regular briefings with the congressional delegation a part of your administration's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Lois Frankel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Alcee L. Hastings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Al Lawson
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Kathy Castor
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Darren Soto
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Charlie Crist
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Val B. Demings

Val Demings
MEMBER OF CONGRESS