

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

January 28, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write with urgency regarding Montana's limited COVID-19 vaccine supply. Like many other states, Montana is experiencing unprecedented demand for the vaccine that cannot be met with current federal allocations of roughly 13,500 first doses per week. Given Montana's success in quickly and effectively administering doses received, I ask your administration to do everything in its power to ramp up production and send more vaccines to Montana. Ultimately, Montana is not being rewarded with appropriate dose allocations despite our efficiencies surrounding vaccine distribution and administration.

I was troubled to learn from recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data that our state ranks near the bottom in terms of vaccines allocated by the federal government. Montana is in dire need of greater predictability and increased COVID-19 vaccine doses from the federal government. Access to approximate vaccine allocation projections for several weeks, if not several months, in advance is important now more than ever, and will help my administration better communicate to Montanans when they can expect to be eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Your recent commitment to providing states with a reliable three-week forecast of forthcoming vaccine shipments is much appreciated and a step in the right direction, but we still have farther to go.

During my second full day in office, I directed our Department of Public Health and Human Services to revise the state's vaccine distribution plan to prioritize and protect Montanans most at risk of complications from COVID-19. The revised distribution plan, which was developed following a thorough review of recent COVID-19 activity, hospitalizations and deaths, and vaccination resources, puts Montanans 70 years of age and older, Montanans 16 to 69 years of age with a high-risk medical condition, and Native Americans and other persons of color who may be at elevated risk for COVID-19 complications in line for the vaccine under Phase 1b, after frontline health care workers. Nearly one week after my administration's changes, the federal government recommended similar modifications.

On January 19, our state moved into Phase 1b of its COVID-19 vaccination plan to ensure the most vulnerable Montanans have access to vaccines. In Phase 1b, our supply of roughly 13,500 first doses per week ultimately remains constrained with no dedicated mechanism to anticipate future vaccine allocations from the federal government. I ask your administration to help us address this serious and ongoing concern.

I look forward to further partnering with you and the Department of Health and Human Services to address our limited COVID-19 vaccine supply. Montana's track record for effective vaccine administration is well established, and we stand ready to expand upon our efforts if you are able to fulfill our request for more doses. Thank you for your consideration of this imperative request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gianforte', is written over the printed name and title.

Greg Gianforte
Governor