

John Joyce, M.D.
13th District of Pennsylvania



Committee on Energy & Commerce

February 11, 2021

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

Nearly two weeks ago, I sent a letter urging you to accelerate COVID-19 vaccine distribution across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and also asked you to outline a clear plan to ensure equitable access in rural communities. Since then, we have seen little improvement in your administration's vaccine operation.

As evidenced by the heartbreaking accounts I hear from Pennsylvanians every day, the commonwealth's vaccine rollout has been a dismal failure. My offices have taken hundreds of calls from seniors and other vulnerable Pennsylvanians pleading for help navigating the vaccine distribution process - many lack access to a computer or smartphone, others request clarity on your administration's eligibility guidelines, the majority simply cannot find an available dose.

Through it all, your administration has failed to provide clear guidance or assistance to the people of our commonwealth. Pennsylvanians deserve better.

This week, I was heartened to learn that you have established a joint task force to examine and overcome barriers to access. While this is a step forward, it will not deliver shots to my constituents today. As Pennsylvanians combat a deadly pandemic, we can't afford to wait.

Under Operation Warp Speed, multiple safe and effective vaccines were produced in record time and millions of doses were shipped across the country last year alone. It is obvious that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania failed to adequately plan for the vaccines' arrival. I fear that this misjudgment was a result of political skepticism of the previous president, for which Pennsylvanians have paid the price - and now you must do better.

Last week, the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing examining vaccine distribution across the country. Whereas West Virginia has administered the first vaccine dose to 12 percent of its population, Pennsylvania has barely reached 9 percent. Clearly, there is room for improvement.

To defeat this pandemic, every Pennsylvanian who wants a vaccine should be able to access one - regardless of where they live or whether they can access the internet. Once again, I ask that you share with my office the following:

- Targets and goals for improving the rate of vaccinations in Pennsylvania
- Timeline for an accelerated distribution of the vaccine
- Plans to ensure equity for rural communities in the distribution
- Plans to clearly communicate with Pennsylvanians about the distribution process

As we both know, the COVID-19 vaccine is the key to defeating this virus, rebuilding our economy, reopening our schools, and restoring our communities. After a challenging year of ever-changing guidelines and restrictions intended to keep our communities safe, Pennsylvanians are counting on you and your team to deliver on your promises.

For the sake of lives and livelihoods, I urge you, Acting Secretary Alison Beam, and your administration to prioritize the efficient and safe distribution of this vaccine for all Pennsylvanians. Thank you for your ongoing attention to this matter and I look forward to your expeditious response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Joyce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind the text.

John Joyce, M.D.
Member of Congress