

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 17, 2021

Governor Tony Evers
115 East State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Thanks to American innovation, unprecedented federal action, and the tireless commitment of our health care workers and pharmacists, hundreds of thousands of Wisconsinites have received COVID-19 vaccines. We are proud of Wisconsin's status as the nation's leader in vaccine utilization and appreciate your contributions to this critical rollout.¹ However, we are deeply concerned that many seniors in assisted living homes are still waiting for full vaccination more than three months after the first vaccine received emergency approval from the Food and Drug Administration.² In fact, recent data suggests that Wisconsin ranks last nationally when it comes to fully vaccinating this critical population.³ We urge you to ensure this vulnerable population receives their full vaccination series as quickly as possible.

Especially concerning are reports that Wisconsin possessed enough vaccine doses to begin vaccinating assisted living facilities prior to late January.⁴ We are equally concerned with the conflicting explanations state health officials have given for this delay.⁵ While we understand that public health officials are operating with imperfect information and that the state needed to reserve doses for health care workers and frontline responders, other states have faced these same challenges and have largely already fully vaccinated their assisted living populations. We are concerned that the state's approach in January may have unnecessarily slowed this vaccination process. To ensure Wisconsin seniors quickly receive the care they require, we respectfully request the answers to the following questions:

- 1) What factors contributed to conflicting interpretations of guidance from the requirements of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program?

¹ See *How the Vaccine Rollout is Going in Your State*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (March 14, 2021), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/covid-19-vaccine-doses.html>. Wisconsin leads the nation in the percentage of doses used.

² Sarah Volpenhein, *Wisconsin assisted living residents were prioritized for vaccine, but delay starting program pushed them further back in line*, THE MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL (March 11, 2021), available at <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2021/03/09/wisconsin-delayed-starting-assisted-living-covid-19-vaccine-program/4392335001/>

³ CVS Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program vaccination data, available at <https://cvshealth.com/sites/default/files/cvs-health-covid-19-vaccination-data.pdf>; Walgreens Federal Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program vaccination data, available at https://www.walgreens.com/images/adaptive/pdf/Walgreens-Covid-Vaccine-External-Report_20210312.pdf.

⁴ Sarah Volpenhein, *Wisconsin assisted living residents were prioritized for vaccine, but delay starting program pushed them further back in line*.

⁵ *Id.*

- 2) What prevented the state from allocating vaccines in such a way to activate the assisted living arm of the federal program while continuing to vaccinate nursing home residents and health care workers?
- 3) What lessons can Wisconsin implement from other states to ensure assisted living populations quickly receive their complete vaccine series?

As more and more Wisconsinites receive this life-saving vaccine, we ask that our assisted living populations not be left behind. We ask that you fulfill our state's commitment to these seniors so that at-risk Wisconsinites can begin to see a light at the end of the tunnel and that life in our state can return that much closer to normal.

Thank you for your attention, and we stand ready to work with you on behalf of all Wisconsinites.



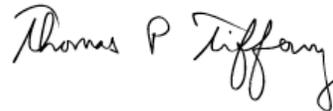
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