



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

February 22, 2021

Tomás J. Aragón, M.D., Ph.D.
Director, California Department of Public Health
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

RE: Vaccinations and Federal Qualified Health Centers

Dear Dr. Aragón:

The County of San Bernardino and our local cities and towns are fully committed to delivering the COVID-19 vaccine to our residents as quickly, safely, and equitably as possible. This effort is of the utmost importance to protecting our residents' health and well-being and allowing our economy to reopen so our communities can return to normal day-to-day activities.

We greatly appreciate the partnership with your team at the Department of Public Health and the Administration and both the County and our 2.1 million residents are very grateful for the vaccines received to date. As of February 16th we had received 255,150 doses and have administered 191,186 with plans to administer another 57,147 doses by the end of the week. This will bring us to 97% administered out of our total doses allocated.

San Bernardino County is the 5th largest County in the state and comprises 5.53% of the California population. Yet our county receives an allocation representing only 4.33% of our population. As of 02/02, we had been allocated 228,825 vaccine doses. If we received doses based upon the percent of the population we would have been allocated 280,638 doses or an additional 51,813 doses that would have been administered in our county. As we continue to receive a lower number of doses per capita, the disparity gap continues to increase and prevents our residents from receiving lifesaving vaccines and, as of the writing of this letter, this gap has grown to 65,000 doses that we should have received for our residents.

The County of San Bernardino would like to express our concern that none of the Federal Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) within our County were considered under the federal allocation recently announced. This omission will continue to adversely affect San Bernardino County and underserved populations. The limited doses provided by the State to the County need to be diversified across the County-run mass vaccination sites, 41 FQHCs, and hospitals.

Our understanding is that the criteria was specific to FQHCs that serve a significant number of people experiencing homelessness, agricultural workers, residents of public housing, limited English proficiency, large aging populations; and health centers that can handle vaccine storage and staffing. All of the four County owned FQHCs meet that criteria as well as a vast majority of the FQHCs represented by the Community Health Association Inland Southern Region (CHAISR).

The County would also like to emphasize that the constant changes in direction by the state regarding the vaccination rollout has resulted in widespread frustration within our communities.

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These changes have negatively impacted internal plans and operations, especially our ability to predict the amount of people we can vaccinate, further increasing frustration amongst our residents regarding when they can be vaccinated and availability of appointments due to shortage of vaccines. Despite these challenges, our county employees have pivoted numerous times to meet changing state directives. However, the ever changing nature of these mandates negatively impacts the county's long-term planning efforts of our pandemic response.

Our Countywide population is highly diverse and stands at over 2 million people. Across the County, we have made extraordinary progress in protecting our communities; as a result our local COVID-19 numbers have shown a steady decline. On average, the County has been very effective in utilizing our vaccine with the successful goal of zero inventory within seven days. With the current dose allocation to the County and lack of support in the federal allocations, the barriers in our ability to deliver doses for our vulnerable populations continue.

As with everything related to COVID-19, the consequences can mean the difference between life and death. With this sentiment in mind, we urge the state and federal partners to reconsider, and not limit our doses. This sentiment is dire with the onset of a new variant of the virus making its way into communities across the state.

If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please contact Maral Hernandez, Governmental and Legislative Analyst, at 909- 387-4777 or maral.hernandez@cao.sbcounty.gov.

Sincerely,



Curt Hagman
Chairman
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors



Dawn Rowe
Vice Chair

cc: San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation