



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Pennsylvania Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



American College of Physicians
Leading Internal Medicine, Improving Lives

Pennsylvania
Chapter

February 16, 2021

An Open Letter to Acting Secretary of Health Alison Beam

Dear Acting Secretary Beam:

The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians, Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians, representing thousands of primary care physicians across the Commonwealth, were shocked by the Department's action on Friday, Feb. 12, 2021, to cut out independent primary care providers from the state's COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan.

Our organizations have expressed more than a willingness to help with the vaccine rollout, as well as outreach to minority communities, with no response.

Many of our member physicians are rightfully upset by the Department's actions. We stand with them. An announcement of such magnitude should have been handled more transparently, not only out of respect for the physicians who have followed the Department's guidance and remain on the front lines in helping prevent a surge of the virus, but for the high-risk patients they serve. Additionally, the ongoing refusal to include the state's physician organizations as stakeholders in developing the Commonwealth's response to the pandemic is baffling.

Many people turn to their primary care physician for guidance as to whether they should get the vaccine. Physicians, nurses, and physician assistants who provide care in private practice settings are trusted by their patients. This is especially noteworthy when considering those patients who may otherwise be reluctant to get the vaccine. A pharmacist or other provider who is unknown to the patient will not be able to provide that same level of confidence. Additionally, many older Pennsylvanians may believe that they will receive the vaccine in their primary care physician's office. The new order, without any forewarning or outreach to our organizations – organizations that are partners with the Department on many levels – creates yet another hurdle for a demographic that is already struggling to navigate the vaccine distribution landscape.

We urge you and Governor Wolf to immediately rescind this provision of the order, engage with our member organizations, and recognize the critical value our members have already provided over the past year in preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth. Doing so will help avoid further problems in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,

The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians
The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
The Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians