

United States Senate

January 8, 2021

Scott A. Rivkees, M.D.
Surgeon General
Florida Department of Health

Dear Dr. Rivkees:

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration's tireless work on behalf of the American people has led to the tremendous development and allotment of the coronavirus vaccines. By the end of next week, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will have delivered over 20 million doses of vaccines to states, with Florida being allocated 1.47 million doses. The delivery of the vaccine to our communities represents a new front in the battle against this pandemic and we must work to ensure every American who wants a vaccine can get one. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to distribute the COVID-19 vaccines to Floridians, and for taking steps to prioritize Florida's seniors and health care workers.

I understand that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is currently working with states on their plans for vaccine distribution to ensure a robust and coordinated response. Distribution is not without challenges, however, fast, reliable, and equitable vaccine distribution may be achieved through clear and coordinated efforts among federal, state, territorial, local jurisdictions, and private entities. As we all work to bring an end to this devastating pandemic and provide necessary relief to Floridians in need, it is vital that the distribution effort is carried out with the utmost efficiency and effectiveness. That's why, in the interest of keeping Florida families informed and providing federal assistance wherever possible, I write today to request an update on the following:

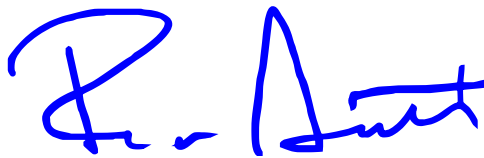
1. What is your method for identifying everyone in the age 65+ group and ensuring everyone who wants a vaccine receives one in a timely manner? When do you estimate Florida will finish vaccinating people over the age of 65?
2. In your draft vaccine plan, Florida prioritized first responders, law enforcement and essential employees. What is the status of vaccination of first responders and law enforcement?
3. The state's vaccine plan prioritizes residents in long-term care facilities. Why did Florida choose to activate the federally-supported COVID-19 vaccination program for skilled nursing facilities in December, but delay activating the program for assisted living facilities until January?

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4. How are you addressing snowbirds and others visiting Florida that want the vaccine? Are you prioritizing Florida residents?
5. When will the state move from vaccinating priority groups to the general public?
6. I am hearing from constituents who are having trouble getting information about the vaccine in their communities. Many are unable to register through provided phone lines or websites, and are faced with extremely long lines to get the vaccine. What efforts are being undertaken to fix these issues and ensure coordination with local partners so Floridians have all the information they need about where to get the vaccine?
7. The state has advised Floridians to obtain the vaccine through hospitals. How does an individual determine which hospital they should contact? Is there a plan to make information easily available so Floridians can make an informed choice? I am hearing from constituents that when they call hospitals, they are being told vaccines are for patients only and then are referred back to County Health Departments. Can you address this?
8. Congress appropriated \$8 billion for the states for vaccine distribution. What are the total estimated costs that you anticipate to have for vaccine distribution?
9. What state resources have you allocated for vaccine distribution?
10. What additional resources do you anticipate needing in order to ensure every Floridian who wants a vaccine can get one in a timely manner?

Your hard work and transparency is greatly appreciated as we continue to fight to end the coronavirus and make sure every Floridian that wants a vaccine can get one. It is vital that we get the vaccine out as safely and efficiently as possible, without unnecessary delays.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor, State of Florida
Mr. Jared Moskowitz, Director, Florida Department of Emergency Management