



VACCINE: PRIORITIES AND URGENCY

It has come to our attention at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) that there may be unnecessary delays in administering all allocated vaccines and reporting those administered doses to the state's immunization registry, ImmTrac2. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate that we direct all entities that have been allotted vaccine to administer their entire allotment with all deliberate speed. Keep in mind, more vaccine will be delivered over the coming days, weeks and months. The time to vaccinate willing individuals is now.

Based on data reported to ImmTrac2, it has become clear that a significant portion of vaccine in Texas may not be administered yet. We know you have valid reasons as to why this has happened in some cases – but we also know that every day a vaccine sits on the shelf is another day that prolongs the pandemic that is hindering our state's economy and way of life.

Once all readily available and willing members of the primary Phase 1A priority populations have been served – including 1A persons outside your facility – we urge you to pivot quickly and begin providing vaccine to as many readily available and willing Phase 1B persons as possible. There is **no** need to ensure all of your 1A group has been vaccinated *before* starting 1B vaccinations. If, in a given situation, all readily available and willing 1A and 1B persons have been served, we urge you to pivot again and provide vaccine to any additional available and willing persons, regardless of their priority designation. Every shot administered matters.

Put another way, we urge you to add timeliness – indeed, a sense of urgency – to your priorities in your vaccination planning and operations. Further, we need you to report your administered doses timely to ImmTrac2 – to ensure accurate data on our progress in achieving herd immunity in Texas.

We trust that you know your situation far better than we could, so we ask you to take the initiative and push forward aggressively with administering all the vaccine dose you have received. We want every dose administered and we assure you there is more on the way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Hellerstedt", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Hellerstedt, MD.