



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

August 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership and assistance to states during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are extremely proud that, as of August 22, Maryland has vaccinated 80 percent of adults and nearly 95 percent of seniors, making our state one of the most vaccinated in the country. However, the challenges states around the country are facing with the Delta variant has proven that we cannot be complacent and must continue taking all possible steps to protect our citizens, particularly those most vulnerable to serious illness and death.

As Governor of Maryland, I am writing to urgently advocate for your administration to lead on several critical actions to combat the COVID-19 virus and save lives. Inexact and changing guidance at the federal level has a real impact on states' ability to do the frontline work of fighting this pandemic. **We desperately need the following actions:**

1. **Make Booster Shots Available Immediately For Seniors And Vulnerable Populations.** As states plan booster operations, clear guidance from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will allow patients and clinicians to understand expectations and procedures regarding a third COVID-19 vaccination. In December, January, February, and March, Maryland fully vaccinated over one million residents. This means that one million Marylanders are currently or will soon be eight months from their COVID-19 vaccination. Additionally, early data gathered by the Maryland Department of Health indicates the potential for waning immunity among our most vulnerable seniors well ahead of the eight month mark. Guidance from FDA regarding a third vaccine is critical to these Marylanders and will mitigate rising numbers of post-vaccination infections.
2. **Immediately Address Boosters For Americans Who Received The Johnson & Johnson Vaccine.** Over 280,000 Marylanders have been vaccinated with the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, including those in some of our most vulnerable communities. Timely and accurate guidance on boosters for these citizens is critical to ensure equity and public trust.
3. **Advance Full FDA Approval Of All Vaccines.** According to both national and Maryland public opinion research, FDA approval of the COVID-19 vaccines remains the most significant hurdle to reaching those who are still hesitant about getting vaccinated. Full approval would be a

significant boost to states' vaccine distribution operation. We are heartened by today's full approval of the Pfizer vaccine; however, full approval of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines is vital to our efforts. I ask your administration to encourage the FDA to act with appropriate urgency.

4. **Expedite Approval of Vaccines For 5- To 11-Year-Olds.** With more and more children heading back to in-person school, it is critical that the FDA does everything in its power to expedite the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) of vaccines for youth aged 5-11 years old. Over 450,000 Marylanders aged 12-17 have been immunized with the Pfizer vaccine, and significant data exists on the impact on the younger population. Now is not the time for bureaucratic delays.

Combating COVID-19 is a seminal challenge that will be with us for the foreseeable future, and I appreciate your partnership in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,



Larry Hogan
Governor

Cc: Jeffrey Zients, White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator