



**PENNSYLVANIA
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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December 23, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf, Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Office of the Governor
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

The Honorable Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary and Physician General
Pennsylvania Department of Health
625 Forster Street, 8th Floor West
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution – Private Physician Practices

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL TRANSMISSION ONLY

Dear Governor Wolf and Secretary Levine:

On behalf of the physician organizations listed below, we would first and foremost like to thank you for your ongoing efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We will all have many details to consider objectively once this dark period is finally over, and we look forward to the opportunity to debrief with you. In addition, we collectively want to express our appreciation and recognition for all you and your team have done given the limited information and resources available.

The approval of two vaccines has provided much promise to protect the public against the COVID-19 virus. Our hospital and long-term care facility workers, including physicians who work in both in-patient and out-patient settings, are well on their way to receiving vaccinations. We support this vaccine prioritization.

As you know however, each of our physician organizations have received numerous communications from our members in private practice who have little to no information on when, or even if, they and their staff will get the vaccine for COVID-19. Physicians of all specialties in private practice and at outpatient clinics see patients every day and in many of these offices, patients are testing positive for COVID-19. These physicians do not have the benefit of large institutions to deal with COVID-19, but these same practices continue to comply and operate under PA Department of Health requirements, creating a safe patient environment. In addition, these offices are keeping patients of all ages out of emergency rooms across the state. Unfortunately, the current interim immunization plan does not clearly address where and how the providers and staff at these independent practices and clinics are to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. This is creating a two-tiered healthcare provider immunization system for COVID-19 – those who have large economic bargaining power and those who do not.

We are aware that you are working on this issue. However, we urge you to disseminate information and your action plan on how the Commonwealth will ensure all private practice physician offices and outpatient clinics will receive COVID-19 vaccinations in a timely matter. This is especially important as

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private practice physicians see their employed colleagues receiving vaccinations in the community without any word from the Department of Health.

We collectively stand ready to help you and the Wolf Administration address this systemic shortcoming so that all physician offices and outpatient clinics receive timely vaccinations for COVID-19 in order to continue safely treating patients.

Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians

Pennsylvania Academy of Ophthalmology

Pennsylvania Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Pennsylvania Chapter, American College of Physicians

Pennsylvania Medical Society

Pennsylvania Orthopaedic Society

Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association

Pennsylvania Section, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Pennsylvania Society of Anesthesiologists