



PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY
OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS



Physician groups deeply troubled by Pa. Department of Health's COVID-19 vaccine distribution changes

(Harrisburg, Pa. Feb. 12, 2021) The Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians, Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Society, and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American College of Physicians collectively expressed disappointment, today, in the Acting Secretary of Health's misguided allocation changes to the state's COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan, removing primary care providers from the list of those permitted to administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

Without sound justification and demonstrating a lack of understanding in the way most Pennsylvanians receive their health care, the Administration is making a woeful mistake by cutting out primary care physicians as eligible providers. The order was implemented without consultation with physician stakeholder groups who represent many thousands of primary care physicians across the Commonwealth.

Acting Secretary of Health Beam today moved the goal post for primary care, stating that the initial shipment of doses to primary care offices was to assist in vaccinating health care workers. This was not the initial plan outlined by the Department, nor the reason that hundreds of private practices across the state signed up to be COVID-19 vaccine providers.

Many people will 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 practices 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 creates yet another hurdle for a demographic who is already struggling with navigating the vaccine distribution landscape.

We urge Acting Secretary of Health Beam and Governor Wolf to immediately rescind the order to avoid further problems in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

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