



December 3, 2020

National Governors Association
444 North Capitol Street, NW
#267
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Ensuring long term care residents and caregivers are the first group to receive COVID vaccine

Dear Governors,

Thank you for your leadership in response to this unprecedented health crisis and the action your administrations have undertaken to help nursing homes and assisted living communities protect our residents and dedicated caregivers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our long term care residents and staff are now counting on your leadership again to ensure they are prioritized for the initial '1a' distribution of the COVID vaccine in your states.

The American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL), representing more than 14,000 nursing homes and assisted living communities across the country that provide care to approximately five million people each year, applauded the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), a panel of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), for including long term care residents and staff, both nursing homes and assisted living communities, for the first round of vaccine distribution.

While this recommendation from the CDC panel of leading health experts is non-binding, we ask that your state public health agencies follow this guidance for distributing the vaccine in your state and take it a step further by ensuring long term care residents and caregivers are the first to receive the vaccine given the anticipated initial limited supply.

Prioritizing long term care residents and staffers for the vaccine is crucial given the fact that more than 100,000 long term care residents have died from this virus in the U.S. and our nursing homes are now [experiencing the worst outbreak of new cases](#) since last spring with more than 2,000 residents succumbing to this virus each week.

Given the asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic spread of this virus combined with the outbreak of community spread across the U.S., we are extremely hopeful this vaccine will literally be a lifesaver for thousands of residents and expedite the reopening of our facilities to family members and loved ones.

An expediated rollout of the vaccine for our long term care residents and caregivers is vitally important given the level of COVID in our community and in long term care facilities right now. A one-month delay in administering the vaccine at long term care facilities could cost more than 10,000 of our residents their lives. The speed of which states can vaccinate our residents has significant life or death consequences.

The long term care industry, including nursing homes and assisted living communities, urge you to direct your public health agencies to ensure long term care residents and staff are the first group to receive the vaccine within this initial Phase 1a distribution to save as many lives as possible.

We know our collective priority is the wellbeing of our most vulnerable and our health care heroes, and by working together we can protect them through this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Mark Parkinson
AHCA/NCAL President & CEO



Scott Tittle
NCAL Executive Director

cc: State Governors, Territory Governors, Mayor Muriel Bowser

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