



## Senate of Pennsylvania

March 18, 2021

To the COVID-19 Vaccine Joint Task Force, Governor Wolf, and Acting Secretary Beam,

As the state Senators representing Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware, and Chester Counties, we are writing to express our concerns regarding plans for a mass COVID-19 vaccination site in the region. While we appreciate the Pennsylvania Department of Health's intention to make such a site available to our constituents, several factors make it abundantly clear that our existing county infrastructures are currently better equipped to vaccinate more residents. We support the request by county officials that the additional 42,000 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine being sent to the collar counties be distributed among the four to be administered as they see fit.

This four-county region is home to nearly 2.5 million residents spread across nearly 2,500 square miles. There is simply no way that a single vaccination site, no matter how large or how centrally located, could equitably and efficiently provide vaccinations to those who so desperately need them. Transportation, especially for the elderly, residents with serious health challenges, families with work and childcare obligations, and those with limited resources, will no doubt represent a major obstacle. Even with a car, this is prohibitive for essential workers, caregivers for children, and other constituents; for those without cars, regardless of employment, this poses a near impossibility.

Inequity in vaccine distribution is not a new issue in the collar counties. Last week, a representative of the Department of Health wrote in the Delaware County Daily Times that it did not matter that the collar counties had not received the same dose allotments as comparable counties because our vaccination rates remained consistent with the statewide average. What they failed to consider is that this vaccination rate is largely due to residents of the collar counties traveling to other counties and other states to receive their vaccine doses, meaning the vaccination rate of the collar counties already reflects an inequitable distribution of vaccine – by not allocating sufficient doses to the collar counties, the Department of Health has allowed those with the means to travel to receive their doses, leaving vulnerable residents behind. To have a single mass vaccination site for all four collar counties will only serve to exacerbate the inequitable distribution of vaccine our counties are already encountering.

We appreciate the Department's intentions and efforts to get more vaccines into the arms of our constituents. However, we respectfully request that you reconsider the way those doses are deployed. The creation of a mass vaccination clinic presents an additional, and unnecessary, step to getting residents vaccinated. After thorough deliberation and conversations with local and county government and public health officials, the consensus is that residents would be better served by additional doses of the vaccine being allocated through the existing county infrastructure as county officials see fit. As you know, our supply is already severely limited. It only makes sense to utilize the existing framework and allow our counties the opportunity to

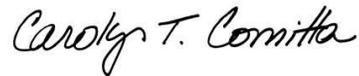
vaccinate more residents efficiently, effectively, and equitably across their sites. Each of these counties is prepared to expand vaccine distribution as additional doses are allotted, including the new doses that are currently designated for a mass vaccination clinic. Instead of needing to find, coordinate, and establish a new site, county officials are asking to utilize our existing infrastructure, and the vaccination sites in each county that are already visible to the public, for the distribution of the increased doses.

Our county officials have been working for months to prepare for vaccination clinics, to address the specific health needs of their communities, and to communicate up-to-date vaccination information to residents of each county. We join them in asking that additional vaccine allotments be split evenly among the four county governments to distribute as they determine is appropriate to increase equitable vaccine distribution and allow for the most efficient distribution of the additional vaccine doses. We look forward to working with you going forward to support our counties in ensuring all Pennsylvanians can be vaccinated.

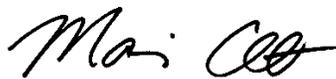
Sincerely,



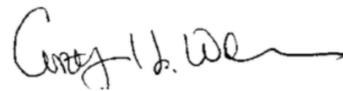
Senator John Kane



Senator Carolyn Comitta



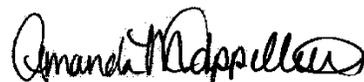
Senator Maria Collett



Senator Anthony Williams



Senator Steve Santarsiero



Senator Amanda Cappelletti



Senator Tim Kearney



Senator Robert Tomlinson



Senator Katie Muth