

JOINT STATEMENT FROM HOUSE & SENATE SOUTHEAST DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS

We are a bipartisan, bicameral group of legislators, representing Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties in Southeastern PA coming together now to request immediate action by the Wolf Administration and Department of Health to allocate the appropriate amount of vaccine to our region, for greater and more accurate and transparent data, and immediate corrective action to resolve the historic vaccine under-allocation our region has faced. Our region was the hardest hit in the commonwealth, our constituents have suffered tremendously, and it is past time to help the citizens of the Southeast.

For weeks, we have all been advocating for more vaccine doses for our constituents, who are angry, desperate, and confused. We believe, based on the data that we have reviewed from our local health departments and the data provided by the Department of Health, that we have not received an equitable allocation of vaccine doses relative to the number of residents in our counties and the devastating impact that COVID-19 has had on Southeastern Pennsylvania—the epicenter of the pandemic in Pennsylvania.

Last weekend, our advocacy resulted in a meeting with the PA Department of Health that included state Representatives, Senators, and county commissioners from the Southeastern region. We were hoping to receive plans on a course of action that would immediately bring our counties up to par with counties in other regions of the Commonwealth. Instead, we were presented with partial and unclear data showing the state allocation of doses to our region with no corrective action plan to fix the arrears of vaccine doses. The data presented did not include the federal allocations, leaving us unable to determine how many vaccines our counties have received.

The PA Department of Health has been using a COVID-19 Index since February 1, 2021 to determine how many vaccines would be distributed to each county. The index factors include: total population (weighted 20%), population age 65+ (weighted 30%), total COVID cases (weighted 20%), and COVID deaths (weighted 30%). An analysis done by the PA Department of Health shows that if this index had been applied retroactively since the vaccine rollout began, Bucks and Delaware Counties have received fewer doses than the other collar counties. While we appreciate the fact that our county vaccination rates are on par with the state average, we are painfully aware of how many residents who qualify in Phase 1A in the Southeast are still waiting with no idea of when they will receive their vaccine. It is also unclear if the percentage of residents vaccinated is taking into consideration the number of residents who are traveling to other parts of the state, or to other states, to get vaccinated. We are aware that a piecemeal and inefficient allocation method is adding to this burden and affecting equitable distribution, a stated goal of the administration and department. **We encourage the Pennsylvania Department of Health to reconsider their COVID-19 Index to include the percentage of residents who qualify for Phase 1A as a factor.**

Our region is the most populous region in the state, and we contribute greatly to the economic success of the Commonwealth. We want to ensure that our residents are being vaccinated so

we can help get Pennsylvania back on track, and we are committed to working together to ensure this happens.

We also join the call of our local county commissioners in requesting the following information from the Pennsylvania Department of Health:

- 1. Create a publicly available chart showing the amount of vaccine from all sources, including Federal partnerships, that has been delivered to each county each month; a description of the "COVID-19 County Index" that PA Department of Health is currently using to allocate doses to each county; how the Index has been applied to each County since the Index came into use in late January.**
- 2. Explain how and when counties that are lagging in vaccine delivery will receive additional vaccine.**
- 3. Explain how vaccine providers will be monitored going forward to ensure that no vaccine provider moves on to vaccinate 1B individuals (beyond the teachers and educational support personnel) until all counties in the Commonwealth have received sufficient vaccine to vaccinate their 1A population.**

Rep. Joe Ciresi, 146th District, Montgomery County
Rep. Dave Dellosa, 162nd District, Delaware County
Rep. Liz Hanbidge, 61st District, Montgomery County
Rep. Tim Hennessy, 26th District, Chester & Montgomery Counties
Rep. Jennifer O'Mara, 165th District, Delaware County
Rep. Tracy Pennycuick, 147th District, Montgomery County
Rep. Chris Quinn, 168th District, Delaware County
Rep. Ben Sanchez, 153rd District, Montgomery County
Rep. Christina Sappey, 158th District, Chester County
Rep. Todd Stephens, 151st District, Montgomery County
Rep. Perry Warren, 31st District, Bucks County
Rep. Craig Williams, 160th District, Chester & Delaware Counties
Rep. Mike Zabel, 163rd District, Delaware County
Sen. Bob Mensch, 24th District, Berks, Bucks & Montgomery Counties