

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

MAYOR DE BLASIO PLEDGES PARTNERSHIP TO BIDEN WHITE HOUSE COVID-19 RESPONSE EFFORT

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NEW YORK— Mayor Bill de Blasio today issued a letter to President Joe Biden, pledging the City’s partnership to the new Administration’s vaccine distribution effort. To reach the maximum number of New Yorkers, the City needs more doses of the vaccine and the flexibility to administer all available doses.

The text of the letter is in full below:

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the City of New York, I extend my deepest congratulations to you in your new role as President of the United States of America. We look forward to working closely with your team to address the needs of New Yorkers and ensure a strong, fair recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are heartened by the clear, comprehensive plan you have laid out to tackle the pandemic. It speaks to key issues we have identified here relating to multilevel government coordination, advance notice of dosage allocations to facilitate vaccine planning and community trust, and the need for sufficient resources to ensure we all reach the communities hardest hit by the pandemic.

New York City has begun the largest vaccination effort in recent history. Through this effort, over 500,000 doses have been administered here. We are proud of that achievement, but we know it’s not enough. We are ready to do more, and faster, but we can’t do it alone: swift action from your administration on the key strategies you laid out will make a real difference for New Yorkers, helping us speed up this process and get the vaccine to more people.

Supply continues to be our biggest challenge. We have exceeded our weekly vaccination targets for two weeks in a row. Demand has been extraordinary, and our effort to build capacity has been effective at getting shots into arms. However, we are now on the verge of running out of vaccine. At the current rate, New York City’s supply will be exhausted by the end of this week. But with enough vaccine doses, we are confident we can rev back up, increasing our output to be able to vaccinate at least 500,000 people per week, leveraging existing and new infrastructure, all while prioritizing equity. Instead, as supply dwindles, we are actively canceling appointments—

starting with this weekend, and now going into next week, as we await re-supply. New York City has come too far and New Yorkers have fought too hard to allow that to go on.

We deeply appreciate your administration's commitment to enhancing manufacturing through the Defense Production Act. Supporting increased speed of vaccine manufacturing to increase overall supply is critical in this fight. We are ready to partner with you and our allies to get this done.

Relatedly, we urge you to look at the allocation of doses across the county, as New York City and other commuter jurisdictions are vaccinating more than just their residents. Vaccine doses are currently allocated pro-rata based on resident population, but here in New York City, we are vaccinating more than just our residents: as the center of a highly interconnected regional economy, we are also vaccinating all eligible populations who work in the city even if they do not live here— which is the right thing to do. To date, non-residents make up 30% of all vaccinated within New York City. But we are not receiving the doses to match, as these additional vaccinations are not incorporated in calculating the New York City allocation. This is true of other commuter jurisdictions, like the Capitol Region, Los Angeles, and Chicago. We are well-positioned to efficiently vaccinate eligible populations, including those who live and work in NYC, as we should, but we need to be allocated an equitable share of doses to keep up with demand.

We are also seeking flexibility to administer the doses we have now to protect as many New Yorkers as possible. In this moment of accelerated demand and growth in capacity, curtailed by extremely limited supply, we hope to work with your administration to optimally utilize existing supply, in line with your plan. While maintaining a secure reserve of second doses (two-week supply), the City is seeking the flexibility during this time to temporarily use the remaining supply of second doses to bridge the gap to a time of increased production, replenishing the second dose supply as production ramps. This would allow the City to maximize first dose vaccinations, while continuing to stay on target for the FDA-recommended second dose regimen.

The availability of the COVID-19 vaccine has restored optimism across the country. Your election and inauguration have given us hope. New York City is well-positioned to contribute significantly to your goal of 100 million doses administered. It's going to take all we've got, and New York City stands ready to do our part.

Sincerely,
Bill de Blasio
Mayor

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