

March 19, 2021

Via Email Only

Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

Dear Governor Northam:

We appreciate your continued leadership and partnership as our Commonwealth addresses the ongoing pandemic. We know that your background as a physician has informed your focus on health equity throughout the past year.

We are writing on behalf of the health districts serving Northern Virginia. With equity as our focus, we have assembled the capacity to administer many more doses of coronavirus vaccine than we are currently administering. That capacity has included partnerships with partner organizations to access communities that have been disproportionately impacted, including lower-income and communities of color.

Our region has the capacity to administer more doses of vaccine. With additional doses allocated to our health districts immediately, we can put that capacity to work to quickly assist the Commonwealth in achieving its vaccination and equity goals.

High Demand

Each of our health districts have waiting lists for vaccines for individuals in the 1A and 1B categories that far outstrip the supply we have received to date. We stand ready to meet your expectation that everyone, even those who have not yet registered, will have a place in line six weeks from now, but we will need more doses immediately to make that reality.

City of Alexandria: Over 20,000 awaiting scheduling
Arlington County: Over 28,000 awaiting scheduling
Fairfax County: Over 102,000 awaiting scheduling
Loudoun County: 99,942 awaiting scheduling
Prince William County: 92,000 awaiting scheduling

High Capacity

City of Alexandria will be able to scale to deliver 15,000 doses per week. Currently we are receiving 5,000 doses per week. The Inova regional facility can add an additional 84,000 doses per week.

Arlington County will be able to rapidly scale to deliver 14,000 doses per week. Right now, we have received a maximum of 8,000 doses per week.

Fairfax County will be able to scale to deliver 34,000 doses per week. The Inova regional facility can add an additional 84,000 doses per week.

Loudoun County will be able to rapidly scale to deliver 49,000 doses per week. Right now, we have received a maximum of 18,000 doses per week.

The *Prince William Health District* will be able to rapidly scale to deliver 28,000 doses per week, above and beyond the forthcoming Community Vaccination Center capacity.

Diversity and Equity

As you are aware, from 2000 to 2010, 88 percent of the net population increase in Northern Virginia came from increases in minority populations. From 2010 to 2019, it was 92 percent. In 2019, Northern Virginia was nearly “majority-minority,” with a minority population of 49.7%. Northern Virginia's rate of increase of the minority population is much greater than the United States and Virginia. The region is now 10 or 11 percentage points higher than Virginia and the United States.

Further, Northern Virginia's foreign born population share is 27.4%. All Northern Virginia jurisdictions have a foreign-born population share that is greater than the Commonwealth of Virginia and the United States. Out of all 3,142 jurisdictions in the USA, Northern Virginia's Cities and Counties are ranked #135 or higher. The City of Manassas Park is 13th nationally.

Each of our Health Districts have plans to ensure equity in expanded distribution.

Community Partnerships

Our districts have partnered with the Commonwealth, Inova Health System, and other partners to stand-up high-capacity vaccination centers across the region.

In **Fairfax County**, we have been targeting our vulnerable populations through various faith and neighborhood organizations to arrange clinics in their communities. Similarly, those leaders are working within those communities to register people who might otherwise be unlikely to do so. The Health Department has also begun using mobile clinics to facilitate vaccinations at community centers. On a staff level, we have stood up an Equity Team to discuss and improve upon our efforts. In terms of expanding vaccination sites, to date, there are 113 providers who have completed the VDH application and CDC agreement and are vaccinating individuals.

The **Prince William Health District** has partnered with the Greater Prince William Community Health Center and the GMU Mason and Partners clinic to reach underserved areas, including many frontline workers in phase 1b. The District has a Unified Command structure with the

Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, and Prince William County, that includes a robust Community Engagement Branch that is actively engaging with faith leaders and community organizers to encourage their congregations and constituents to be vaccinated and to better understand the types of vaccine clinic settings they will be most comfortable in.

In **Arlington County**, we have partnered with the Arlington Free Clinic to administer vaccinations to our underinsured and uninsured individuals. This week we will roll out a partnership with Neighborhood Health (FQHC) to offer locations directly in certain neighborhoods with the highest percentages of COVID case rates and lowest percentages of overall vaccinated individuals. We are conducting on the ground sign ups and pre-registration with our social safety net and community-based partners and have already pre-registered a list of almost a thousand individuals. We are ready to immediately schedule these individuals given more vaccine supply.

In **Loudoun County**, we have conducted extensive outreach and collaborated with our human and community services networks, faith-based organizations, and fraternal and sororal orders to identify and facilitate vaccination events for high-risk residents, particularly those disproportionately impacted populations. The Loudoun County Health Department is currently reallocating several hundred doses of vaccine weekly to Inova Health System-Sterling and MedsPack to assist in vaccinating these groups. As of March 18, Loudoun County has vaccinated more than 440 individuals through small, targeted clinics that have reached African Americans and people with disabilities. Our plans currently include more than a dozen other vaccination clinics targeting more than 3,000 residents through partnerships with groups including—but not limited to—a Panhellenic sorority, faith-based organizations with predominantly African American and Latinx congregations, organizations that serve people with disabilities, one of the largest Muslim communities in the DC Metropolitan area, and the Loudoun County Chapter of the NAACP.

In the **City of Alexandria**, we have worked closely with community partners such as faith-based organizations, non-profits, and advocacy groups led by people of color to conduct outreach and directly address access barriers. Those efforts include partnering with Senior Services to proactively contact Alexandria's seniors and help them procure transportation to appointments and working with a group of African American residents for door-to-door pre-registration and on the spot appointment booking in public housing neighborhoods. We've also organized vaccination events for our grocery store and childcare workers to ensure that our frontline workers without paid time off, who are predominantly people of color, have access to vaccines. Alexandria has a mobile vaccine plan, built in coordination with community leaders, ready for when supply allows.

Need for Flexibility

While this letter focuses on the need to allocate the necessary doses to conclude Phase 1B, our health districts are working to plan for the next phase. We believe that providing our health districts with flexibility after Phase 1B will best allow us to prioritize equity. We request the

Commonwealth allow the Northern Virginia Health Directors to govern how we will administer vaccinations from this date forward, both to ensure speed and equity.

We fully understand it is very difficult to balance the diverse needs and interests of different parts of the Commonwealth. However, it is hard to explain to our residents how we will meet the expectations the Commonwealth has laid out if we do not have the vaccines to do it. We take seriously, as do you, the commitment to communities that have been disproportionately impacted. In addition, by some estimates, close to 90% of some of our other resident communities desire the vaccine.

As always, we thank you for your tireless work on behalf of all residents of the Commonwealth and look forward to discussing this issue as we continue our progress in beating the COVID-19 virus.

Sincerely,

Justin M. Wilson, Mayor
City of Alexandria

Matthew de Ferranti, Chairman
Arlington County

Jeffrey McKay, Chairman
Fairfax County

Phyllis Randall, Chair
Loudoun County

Ann Wheeler, Chair
Prince William County

P. David Tarter, Chairman
Northern Virginia Regional Commission

cc: Honorable Clark Mercer, Chief of Staff
Secretary Daniel Carey
Dr. Norman Oliver
Dr. Danny Avula
Northern Virginia Health Directors