



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH
SECRETARY

January 27, 2021

Dear Commissioner Thompson:

Thank you for your January 8th letter to Governor Cooper regarding vaccine supplies in Brunswick County. We are grateful for your partnership and your commitment to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

We are committed to getting every available dose of vaccine into the hands of vaccine providers, and into the arms of North Carolinians, as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the supply of vaccines coming into the state remains extremely limited, while the number of vaccine providers continues to increase. This constrains the number of doses we can send to jurisdictions.

In Brunswick County, your providers have taken an innovative approach. The Brunswick County Health Department, Doshier Memorial Hospital and Novant Health Brunswick Medical Center are partnering to provide vaccinations at mass vaccination events on the Brunswick Community College campus. By pooling their resources, including their doses of vaccine, your providers are able to get around some of the supply limitations and reach more people.

Last week, in response to indications that the federal government might base future allocations on the supply states have on hand, our state and local providers worked tirelessly to rapidly administer vaccinations and exhaust North Carolina's current supply. We ramped up to a high level of vaccinations to meet the federal government's expectations, but we know that we are not getting enough vaccine week over week to sustain that high level. That is why, even though they did a heroic job getting shots into arms last week, many vaccine providers did not get as many doses as they had hoped this week.

Going forward, we are working to give providers more predictability and transparency when it comes to our allocation process. Starting with this week's allocation, we will reserve 89,550 doses of the federal government's allocation for enrolled providers. Using these doses, NCDHHS will guarantee a minimum baseline allocation each week, for the next three weeks. Each county's minimum baseline allocation will be determined based on population. Then, the per-county allocation will be divided among providers in that county. We believe this strategy will help providers anticipate the number of appointments they should schedule each week.

We expect the number of doses coming into our state will still remain below providers' capacity. However, we will be able to use some doses to correct for disparities in allocations to date between counties. If we continue to receive 127,125 doses per week, reserving the 89,550 doses for enrolled providers leaves an estimated 37,575 doses to prioritize for efforts addressing concerns you highlighted in your letter. We will work to provide increased allocations to counties that, over the past several weeks, have received relatively less vaccine than other counties, when controlling for population. We will also provide increased vaccine for counties to account for larger historically marginalized populations and larger populations over 65.

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We commend your county's flexibility and creativity in addressing the current supply limitations. We want to support, and not detract from, your providers' operations and we hope the coming changes will help further that goal. Thank you for your hard work to get North Carolinians vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mandy K. Cohen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mandy" being the most prominent.

Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH
Secretary