

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We salute your unwavering leadership that has restored trust in America and the Administration's comprehensive national strategy to beat the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain committed to work with you and Congress to overcome pandemic challenges and to advance the health and prosperity of all Americans.

We were extremely gratified to learn that the Administration has more than doubled – from 17,000 to nearly 40,000 – the number of pharmacies in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program (FRPP), as part of your “90-90” plan that 90% of American adults will be eligible for a vaccination by April 19 and 90% of Americans live within 5 miles of a vaccinating pharmacy. To successfully achieve the new goal of vaccinating 200 million Americans within the first 100 days of your presidency, we must reach Americans where they live. We thank you for recognizing the importance of leveraging retail pharmacies, including traditional pharmacies, grocery and mass merchants, in allowing individuals to stay in their local neighborhoods when scheduling a vaccination appointment.

We applaud this expansion of the number of pharmacies activated in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, and urge you to adequately allocate vaccines to accomplish program goals. These 40,000 retail pharmacies have the capacity to provide millions of vaccinations per week, dramatically increasing the number of Americans who are vaccinated in a short period of time. In fact, even without full activation and even with continuing vaccine supply constraints, the FRPP provided over 1 million doses in a single day, compared to 67,000 doses at mass vaccination hubs. While it is important to leverage all vaccination sites, it is clear that pharmacies have unmatched reach into all communities and patients are familiar with and comfortable obtaining their vaccinations from their local pharmacies. As such, we urge appropriate COVID-19 vaccine allocation and coordination to meet the demand our community pharmacies are experiencing.

Retail pharmacies are particularly well suited and prepared to assist with equitable distribution and administration - including people of races and ethnicities most severely affected by healthcare disparities and including rural communities. Studies show that on an annual basis pharmacy encounters outweigh primary care encounters among Medicaid and Medicare patients, including Black Americans and Hispanic Americans. This trend is even more pronounced in rural areas. During the COVID-19 vaccination effort, pharmacies are using a data-driven approach – including demographic, social and health data – to prioritize equity.

As the Administration continues its critical pandemic work, we thank you for leveraging community pharmacies as viable and sustainable vaccination access options for all Americans. With eyes on the future, we commend your Administration on its achievements and we look forward to working with you to ensure pharmacies receive adequate allocation to rescue America from this pandemic. We also look forward to working with you to leverage pharmacies as sustainable vaccination sites to meet the ongoing needs related to COVID-19 and to future public health crises.

Sincerely,



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Tony Cárdenas in blue ink.

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Ann McLane Kuster in blue ink.

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of G. K. Butterfield in blue ink.

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress