



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Kate Brown, Governor

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Health
Authority

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January 14, 2021

Hon. Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

Oregon was pleased to learn Tuesday of the Department of Health and Human Services' plan to accelerate distribution of vaccine by releasing a reserve of second doses. To quote your January 12 statement: ". . . we are releasing the entire supply we have for order by states, rather than holding second doses in physical reserve." While releasing second doses to be used as first doses entails considerable risk, we were encouraged by your assurances that production is accelerating at a rate sufficient to meet future demand. Based on these developments, the State of Oregon made plans to begin making seniors age 65 and older eligible for vaccination beginning January 23. Governor Kate Brown announced that expansion on January 12.

Earlier today, we became concerned when we discovered there were no additional doses available for allocation in the Tiberius system beyond what we had been told to expect prior to your announcement. Earlier this evening, I joined a call with Governor Kate Brown and General Gustavo Perna with Operation Warp Speed. During that call, he informed us there is no reserve of doses, and we are already receiving the full allocation of vaccines. If true, this is extremely disturbing, and puts our plans to expand eligibility at grave risk. Those plans were made on the basis of reliance on your statement about "releasing the entire supply" you have in reserve. If this information is accurate, we will be unable to begin vaccinating our vulnerable seniors on January 23rd, as planned.

Please reconcile your statement Tuesday, which we relied on to announce an expansion of vaccination eligibility, with the information provided by Gen. Perna this evening.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Allen
Director

CC: General Gustave Perna, COO, Operation Warp Speed
Robert R. Redfield, MD, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Sen. Ron Wyden
Sen. Jeff Merkley
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici
Rep. Cliff Bentz
Rep. Earl Blumenauer
Rep. Peter DeFazio
Rep. Kurt Schrader