

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Jeffrey Zients  
Coordinator of the COVID-19 Response and Counselor to the President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Zients:

We write to urge you to integrate office-based clinicians, including primary care physicians, into the plan for COVID-19 vaccine administration as expeditiously as possible in order to maximize the number of shots in arms and thwart the ongoing spread of this virus, and overcome the general fears of receiving COVID-19 vaccines among the minority public.

Office-based clinicians are highly trusted by their patients and play a pivotal role administering the flu and other vaccines. Critically, primary care clinicians can play a vital role in educating and counseling patients on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines to those patients who may be especially hesitant to receive the vaccine. As such, we request that the administration incorporate office-based clinicians, including primary care physicians, into COVID-19 vaccine delivery.

According to the demographic data of vaccinated individuals collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) between the period of December 14, 2020 and January 14, 2021, 60.4 percent of the individuals vaccinated were White, 11.5 percent Hispanic/Latino, 5.4 percent Black, and 6 percent Asian.<sup>1</sup> In New York City alone, COVID-19 vaccination demographic data has also revealed deep racial disparity where White New Yorkers who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccines outnumber Asian, Latino, and Black recipients by more than double.<sup>2</sup> This trend is present in rural and suburban areas outside of metropolitan hubs and remains a concern as the state-wide vaccination campaign continues to grow throughout the country and more individuals become eligible for the vaccine.

Published research shows that nearly 70 million vaccination visits have occurred annually on average across the U.S. in office-based settings and that primary care clinicians have delivered the most vaccines to the high-risk Medicare beneficiary population of any provider

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7005e1.htm#F1\\_down](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7005e1.htm#F1_down)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data-vaccines.page>

type.<sup>3</sup> This extensive experience with vaccine administration clearly demonstrates that office-based clinicians are well-positioned to provide patients with the new COVID-19 vaccines, which do not face the complex storage and handling requirements of the initial vaccines on the market. Furthermore, office-based clinicians practice in a wide range of communities including urban, rural and suburban settings. They are on the frontlines serving the poor, our seniors, individuals and communities of color, and millions of Americans with unique medical histories and challenging comorbidities.

A recent Kaiser Family Foundation survey found that more than a quarter of adults in the U.S. are hesitant to receive the vaccine, with Black and rural residents reporting higher rates of hesitancy than other adults.<sup>4</sup> Trusted primary care clinicians with whom patients have established relationships can help assuage such concerns and effectively educate patients on the importance and safety of vaccines – particularly to individuals in communities of color who have disproportionately suffered from COVID-19 and cited general lack of trust in vaccines and concern about getting the virus as reasons for vaccine hesitancy.<sup>5</sup> Patients in rural settings, who do not have access to personal or mass transportation, or lack the financial resources or flexibility to reach conventional vaccination sites, may have greater access to vaccines through their office-based clinicians.

Office-based clinicians have a presence in every community across the nation. To combat this pandemic, we urge you to broadly integrate as many qualified health care practitioners into the administration’s COVID-19 vaccine delivery plan as quickly as possible.

We thank you and the Biden administration for the significant efforts already undertaken to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. We stand ready to work with you and the Administration as you continue to address this unprecedented public health and economic crisis that has impacted far too many individuals and families across the United States.

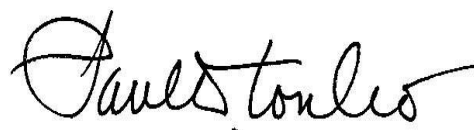
Sincerely,



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson et al. “Primary Care’s Historic Role in Vaccination and Potential Role in COVID-19 Immunization Programs.” *Anal of Family Medicine, COVID-19 Collection*. January 29, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Hamel et al. “[KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: December 2020](#).” December 15, 2020. Accessed February 8, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*.

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

/s/ Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress

/s/ Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

/s/ Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

/s/ Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

/s/ Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

/s/ Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

/s/ Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

/s/ Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

/s/ André Carson  
Member of Congress

/s/ Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

/s/ Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

/s/ Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress