

DOUG LAMBORN
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0605

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The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor, State of Colorado
200 E. Colfax Ave.
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis:

During the pandemic keeping places of worship, schools, and restaurants open are critical to the well-being of our community. Most importantly, places of worship provide comfort and spiritual care to individuals and faith communities. Specifically, priests, clergy, pastors, and faith leaders have the unique opportunity to reach broad swaths of our community. Their countless interactions with congregants and the needy providing spiritual care benefit our state and our communities in enormous ways.

Your efforts along with the Colorado Department of Public Health to quickly and safely distribute the vaccine have helped many. We must continue to distribute the vaccine in a rapid manner, allowing the full reopening of our businesses, schools, and places of worship. According to the vaccine distribution plan of Colorado, we are finishing Phase 1A which is for the highest-risk healthcare workers and individuals. I am grateful that we are quickly progressing into Phase 1B. Phase 1B includes those who are older than 70, moderate-risk health care workers, first responders, and other essential frontline workers. It is crucial that we continue to vaccinate these essential workers.

While I was pleased to see your request for more vaccine doses, I am concerned by the lack of inclusion of faith leaders in your plans for vaccine prioritization. Throughout the entire pandemic, these faith leaders have been on the front lines faithfully fulfilling their duties as comforters, counselors, and prayer-warriors. They also provide services in nursing homes and hospitals giving communion, last rites, and other bedside religious services. In addition, faith leaders are essential to funeral services and providing comfort to grieving families. It is unconscionable that pastors, priests, and faith-leaders are not currently prioritized for vaccine distribution. I strongly urge you to include faith leaders in the bottom half of the 1B vaccine distribution phase. Our faith leaders must be given prioritization to receive the vaccination.

In this time of need, we turn to our churches and places of worship. Our faith leaders should be able to have the peace of mind that they will not transmit the virus when interacting with the countless individuals in their congregations. I urge you to prioritize our faith leaders who play such a vital part to communities across Colorado.

Sincerely,

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress