

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

As the COVID-19 pandemic extends into a second year, we commend the scientific community for its outstanding achievements in developing diagnostic tests, therapeutics, and vaccines. In particular, the development and fair distribution of a safe and effective vaccine are critical to successfully containing the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring a smooth roll-out will require seamless coordination at every level.

Two promising vaccine candidates have already sought Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other vaccine candidates are on the horizon. As these vaccine candidates move towards FDA approval, it is imperative that states have accurate and transparent information about vaccine allocations. In recent weeks, Operation Warp Speed significantly changed its projections on the number of vaccine doses that states should expect to receive through the Tiberius portal without an accompanying explanation for the change. Regrettably, the lack of a real-time explanation to state officials resulted in considerable public confusion in Maine.

We acknowledge the fluidity of this procurement process. Changes in timelines for the vaccine approval process, supply shortages, and other manufacturing challenges all contribute to a shifting landscape. At the same time, in order for states to better refine their distribution plans and to avoid a misunderstanding of what may be driving those projection changes, states need immediate clarity when major changes are made. Without clear and timely communication, public confidence in the distribution process could waver.

We also encourage HHS to provide greater public transparency on state-by-state allocations, allocation methodologies, as well as distributions. These types of public disclosures will help ensure greater accountability and ensure equitable access.

We appreciate your attention to these concerns. Please reach out if we can be of assistance as this important process continues.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jared Golden
Member of Congress