



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Gustavo Rivera

Senator Rivera on State's Coordination of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

GUSTAVO RIVERA January 11, 2021

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I am appalled by the confusion being sowed at the state level as we navigate COVID-19 vaccination distribution. Misinformation and neglect of available resources are delaying getting vaccines into New Yorkers' arms. New York City and counties across our state have been developing and running drills for mass vaccinations for years. Yet, localities and providers are being kept in the dark by the state until the last possible minute while people continue to get sick and die. It is not enough to say that is unacceptable. The lack of collaboration between the State and localities like the City of New York has created an unnecessarily confusing and bifurcated system of vaccination sites and scheduling for New Yorkers to navigate.

Our health care system is under immense pressure and needs clear and timely notice to perform its responsibilities. Excluding local health departments from the decision-making process and constricting their flexibility to get shots into arms is exacerbating the complexity of a historic vaccination effort. Confusion, last-minute guidance, and an unwillingness to cooperate effectively create a reluctance among healthcare providers and hesitancy in the public domain.

New York City releases data on vaccine progress daily, including the number of first and second doses administered throughout the City. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publicizes the number of doses delivered and administered in New York and other states. I call on the state to make vaccination data transparent and to provide timely notice to activate new phases and systems. It is literally the least the state can do and only the first step in better organizing this effort.

We need decisive action that is driven by data and cooperation, not political showmanship. New Yorkers cannot afford for the vaccination process to be riddled with bureaucratic delays and should have clear thresholds that allow anticipation of the next phase or marked progress. Phases must be rolled out effectively so that resources, whether they be vaccine doses, scheduling interfaces, or inoculation sites, can be utilized sufficiently and so New Yorkers can get vaccinated.

The lives of at-risk New Yorkers depend on us getting this right.