



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## New York State's Disorganized, Chaotic, and Confusing Rollout of the COVID-19 Vaccination

DAHPNE JORDAN January 14, 2021

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I've heard from many of my constituents who are understandably frustrated and rightfully concerned with New York State's disorganized, chaotic, and confusing rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination. I share your concerns and want this broken process fixed ASAP! I'm attaching with this post a copy of the recent letter from our Senate Republican Leader Rob Ortt and Assembly Republican Leader Will Barclay (sent on behalf of our respective Conferences) calling for much-needed changes to the state's vaccine rollout.

Constituents have shared that their calls to the state's vaccination hotline (1-833-NYS-4-VAX or 1-833-697-4829) have only caused frustration. Constituents have also shared that when they've called that number -- at all hours of the day -- they only get an automated message and are disconnected. That needs to stop: the state hotline needs to be staffed with real people who can answer real questions. There are literally thousands of employees all across state government. Just as I advocated for in addressing New York's massive unemployment claim backlog in the spring and summer, we need to get people answering the phones who can provide real assistance.

Our counties are 100% ready, willing, and able to carry out emergency plans that they've had

for years, yet have been given little to no vaccine supply to work with. Some vaccines have even been thrown away due to state protocols of only distributing to the group in Phase 1A, but not having enough people in that category show up, while thousands of other residents remain waiting. That's unacceptable. The state's approach is overly bureaucratic and isn't working. Local governments -- counties like Rensselaer, Saratoga, Columbia, and Washington -- have previously performed mass vaccinations, have multiple distribution sites already set up, and can get the job done, safely, effectively, and expeditiously. Albany needs to stop micromanaging this process and start empowering local governments.

The vaccine rollout by the State has been neither thoughtful nor effective. That's why I'll continue fighting for a better process. My Senate Republican colleagues and I will keep pushing the Governor and State Department of Health to fix this broken process and get COVID-19 vaccines out the door to local governments ASAP.

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