



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

BIPARTISAN COALITION REQUESTS STATE/LOCAL VACCINE DISTRIBUTION SITE FOR MID-HUDSON VALLEY

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HYDE PARK, NY— With the Mid-Hudson Valley lacking a state vaccine distribution site, a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers is coming together today to urge the state to partner with Dutchess County officials to establish a joint State/County site at the former JCPenney store at the Poughkeepsie Galleria. In a letter to Governor Cuomo, the lawmakers point out that many Mid-Hudson Valley residents would need to travel over 100 miles to make it to an appointment at one of the two closest state-operated vaccination sites, which are located in Albany and Westchester counties—an impossible task for many of our neighbors, especially for senior residents who already face tremendous challenges securing an appointment.

Last week, the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health distributed approximately 1,200 vaccinations, but the County has the capacity to administer between 5,000-7,000 vaccines if it has sufficient doses to do so. Furthermore, the lawmakers argue that a joint site would also enable the County to coordinate local vaccination pop-up sites in the north, south and east ends of Dutchess, which are drastically underserved within the state's current distribution plan.

Senator Sue Serino said, *"Despite multiple requests made to bring a state vaccine distribution site to the community, the Mid-Hudson Valley has gone months now without one. While we understand that an overall lack of supply is at the heart of the distribution issue, there are commonsense steps that the state can take to streamline and improve the process, and that starts by effectively partnering with*

local governments who have a proven ability to get thousands of shots into arms quickly and efficiently. A joint site would be a gamechanger for frustrated residents, and seniors in particular, and we are urging the state to partner with the County, which has a proven track record of getting vaccines directly to those who need them most."

"More than a quarter million people call Dutchess County home. Many county residents, particularly those who live in more rural parts of the county, have had few options to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. My office hears daily from constituents of all ages who are enormously frustrated by trying to schedule a vaccine appointment that doesn't require a long drive to Albany or White Plains, or farther. It's time for the state to open a COVID vaccine distribution center in the Mid Hudson Valley." - **Assemblymember Didi Barrett, 106th Assembly District**

Assemblymember Jonathan Jacobson said, *"I have called for a permanent vaccination site in the City of Poughkeepsie. It makes sense to also have a permanent regional site at the old J.C. Penny store at the Galleria Mall. The past year has been difficult enough without forcing residents of the Hudson Valley to spend hours online or on the phone trying to secure a Covid-19 vaccination only to have to drive five hours to receive it. The J.C. Penny location is central, has plenty of parking, and is already up and running. Yesterday, the Biden administration announced that there will be enough vaccine available for every adult in the nation by the end of May. Our job is to make sure those doses get administered, so let's make it this last step as easy and efficient as possible."*

"Vaccine appointments should be more readily accessible within the mid-Hudson area. Residents have had to travel to Albany, Westchester or even further in order to gain state availability of vaccines. The elderly and those without accessible technology have also faced great difficulty in scheduling their appointments. The JC Penney site in Poughkeepsie would serve as a solid solution to these problems, as would a central appointment system. My colleagues and I will work together to assist New York State and Dutchess County in establishing a local COVID-19 vaccination distribution site." -**Assemblyman Kieran Michael Lalor, 105th Assembly District**

Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said, *"Our vaccination site at the former JCPenney stands ready to accept thousands more doses of vaccine and willing arms to receive them. We have had countless residents commend the site as*

well as our team of Department of Behavioral & Community Health staff and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers for the convenience and efficiency of the operation. By having the state supplement our existing operation, we can ensure widespread and more equitable distribution of the vaccine.”

In their letter, the lawmakers also reiterate the need for a centralized vaccination appointment system that would accept appointments electronically and over the phone to ease the tremendous frustration countless constituents are expressing day after day.

[To view a full copy of the letter, please click here.](#)