



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Senator Cooney Leads 30+ Senators to Call on Governor To Change Pharmacy Vaccine Restrictions

JEREMY COONEY March 19, 2021

| ISSUE: **COVID-19, VACCINATIONS, HEALTH EQUITY**

**(Rochester, NY)** Today, Senator Jeremy Cooney (Rochester-SD56) led a group of 37 Senate Democrats to call on Governor Cuomo to lift restrictions on pharmacists for administering the COVID19 vaccine. Sen. Cooney and over 85% of the Majority Conference sent a letter to the Governor outlining their request (attached).

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*With vaccine supply on the rise, we need to remove these confusing rules for pharmacists and their patients,” said Senator Cooney. “I have spoken with my colleagues across the state, and we urge Governor Cuomo to update state guidelines immediately to expand access to this lifesaving vaccine and get more New Yorkers vaccinated.”*

Centers for Disease Control’s Federal Retail Pharmacy Program allows states to use their discretion in selecting populations who are eligible for vaccination and how the vaccines are administered. Currently, pharmacists in NYS are only permitted to vaccinate New Yorkers aged 60+ or teachers. While the vaccine supply is increasing, the shelf life for these doses are short which could mean vaccines are needlessly wasted.

“As a small independent pharmacist, I know first hand how confusing these restrictions are to potential patients,” said **Kalpita Patel from Alexander Pharmacy in Rochester, NY**. “These are avoidable challenges that cost us valuable time and put lives at risk.”

The Pharmacists Society of the State of New York (PSSNY) supports this change.

“There is no medical or practical need to distinguish between vaccine doses for pharmacists or other providers” said **Steve Moore, PharmD, Chairman of the Board of the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York (PSSNY)**. “We are committed to expanding vaccination options and believe that pharmacists play a vital role in moving New York state from a public health crisis into recovery.”

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*This is an issue of vaccine equity. Vulnerable populations need more opportunities to receive the vaccine, not less. We are committed to safely reopening the state, but need the Governor to simplify vaccine distribution in New York,” Sen. Cooney concluded.*