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AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT BALKS AT VACCINE OVERSIGHT, SENATOR LIU INTRODUCES BILL TO EXPAND ACCESS TO VACCINATIONS IN NEW YORK

Albany, NY - As pharmacies across the state are forced to stop offering the COVID-19 vaccine due to federal inaction, State Senator John Liu on Wednesday introduced legislation, [S8495](#), to ensure New Yorkers can access lifesaving immunizations at their local pharmacies.

Currently, pharmacists in New York only administer vaccines approved by the federal CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). But after Secretary of Health Robert F. Kennedy Jr. purged all 17 members of the committee, major pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens stopped offering COVID-19 vaccines, leaving New Yorkers without access to this critical vaccine just as students head back to school.

The legislation empowers the New York State Commissioner of Health to fill this void by authorizing licensed pharmacists to administer FDA-approved vaccines recommended by the New York State Immunization Advisory Council (IAC) or the Department of Health.

State Senator John Liu stated, "The CDC is no longer doing its job, and New Yorkers should not have to wait on federal inaction to protect their own health. New York needs to pick up where the federal government is failing us by allowing pharmacists, who are the most accessible healthcare providers in our communities, to provide timely vaccines to anyone who needs them."

By granting the Commissioner of the Department of Health the ability to authorize pharmacists to administer vaccines, New Yorkers can sidestep federal inaction, empower the IAC, and gain access to FDA-approved vaccines. Created in 1994, the IAC comprises healthcare providers, vaccine developers, insurers, consumer advocates, and public health officials, and meets several times a year to review and make recommendations for improving immunization coverage and access.

Senator Liu's legislation comes amid growing concerns that the federal government is hamstringing public health policy, putting vulnerable populations at risk. As states like Florida move to end vaccine mandates, and pharmacies at home stop stocking COVID-19 vaccines, New Yorkers are already feeling the impact: days before the start

of school, Senator Liu's office received inquiries from constituents asking why they couldn't get the latest COVID-19 shot at their local pharmacy.

Yesterday, Governor Hochul announced she would issue an executive order temporarily authorizing pharmacies to administer COVID-19 vaccines, underscoring the need for a permanent legislative fix.

Liu added, "I applaud Governor Hochul's quick action yesterday to ensure access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Now we need a permanent solution that allows New Yorkers to receive vaccines without any reliance on the dysfunctional CDC."

Liu's legislation was [endorsed](#) by Dr. Howard Zucker, who served as state health commissioner during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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